

The Cherry Orchard

A Comedy in Four Acts

By Anton Pavlovich Chekhov

*[A new translation by Graham Schmidt,
this draft completed September 18, 2009]*

For James — GS

Characters

Ranyevskaya, Lyubov Andreevna, a landowner

Anya, her daughter, seventeen

Varya, her foster-daughter, twenty-four

Gaev, Leonid Andreevich, Ranyevskaya's brother

Lopakhin, Yermolay Alekseevich, a merchant

Trofimov, Pyotr Sergeevich, a student

Simeonov-Pishchik, Boris Borisovich, a landowner

Charlotta Ivanovna, a governess

Yepikhodov, Semyon Panteleevich, a bookkeeper

Dunyasha, a maid

Firs, a butler, old man of 87 years

Yasha, a young valet

A Passerby

A Stationmaster

A Postal Clerk

Guests, Servants

Act I

A room that is still called the nursery. One door leads to Anya's room. Dawn. Soon the sun will come out. It is already May and the cherries are in bloom, but in the orchard it's cold with a morning frost. The windows are drawn shut. Dunyasha enters holding a candle, and Lopakhin holding a book.

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

Dunyasha: Going on two. *(Puts out the candle.)* It's getting light out.

Lopakhin: So the train was how late? A couple of hours, at least. *(Yawns and stretches.)* Well aren't I a lay-about. Came out here specifically to meet them at the station and slept right through....Dozed off in a chair. Stupid....You should have woke me up.

Dunyasha: I thought you'd left. *(Listens.)* Wait, that's them now.

Lopakhin: *(Listens.)* No... there's luggage to load, this and that...

Pause

Lyubov Andreevna's lived abroad for five years. I wonder what she's like now...She's a good person...easy, straightforward. I remember when I was

a boy, just fifteen years old, my father used to run a shop in the village. He was still alive back then. One day he punched me so hard in the nose that I started bleeding...We came here, to the house, for some reason. He'd had something to drink...I remember Lyubov Andreevna, she was still so young and thin, so pretty...she brought me right into this room, the nursery. She takes me to the washstand: 'Don't cry, little peasant,' she says, 'you'll make it to your wedding day.'

Pause

Little peasant...My father was a peasant, true enough, and here I am in a white waistcoat and fancy yellow shoes. Like a pig in a parlor...'Course I'm rich now, got piles of money, but take a look and a peasant's still a peasant...*(flips through the book.)* I was reading this book and didn't understand a blessed word. Fell asleep over it.

Pause

Dunyasha: The dogs haven't slept all night. They can sense the mistress coming.

Lopakhin: What are you on about, Dunyasha, you're...

Dunyasha: My hands are trembling. I'm going to faint.

Lopakhin: You're too soft, Dunyasha. Dressing up like a lady, doing your hair like one too. You've got to remember who you are.

Yepikhodov enters with a bouquet. He's in a jacket with brightly shined boots that squeak loudly. Entering, he drops the bouquet.

Yepikhodov: *(Picks up the bouquet.)* It's from the gardener. He said to put them in the dining room. *(Gives the bouquet to Dunyasha.)*

Lopakhin: Bring me some kvass.

Dunyasha: Yes, sir. *(Exits.)*

Yepikhodov: There's a frost out in the orchard, but the cherries are in bloom. I cannot condone our climate. *(Sighs.)* Can't do it. The seasons get no cooperation whatsoever. Oh, by the way, Yermolay Alekseevich, allow me inquire: three days ago I purchased these boots, and they persistently squeak, squeak beyond all question of decency. What might I grease them with?

Lopakhin: Stuff your grease. Leave off.

Yepikhodov: Every day it's something, some new misfortune. But I don't grumble, I'm used to it. I just smile.

Dunyasha enters, gives Lopakhin kvass

I'll go. *(Knocks over a chair.)* Indeed...*(As if triumphantly.)* What did I tell you? Pardon the expression, but such co-insequences meet me daily. Absolutely splendid! *(Exits.)*

Dunyasha: I have a confession to make, Yermolay Alekseevich: Yepikhodov proposed to me.

Lopakhin: Akh!

Dunyasha: I don't know what to think...He's a quiet man, but sometimes when he starts to talk he gets all mixed up! You can tell it's nice and he really means it, it just makes no sense. I kind of like him. He's madly in love with me. An unlucky man, every day there's something. Everyone teases him. They call him Troubles Galore.

Lopakhin: *(Listens.)* Listen, they're coming...

Dunyasha: They're coming! What am I to do...I've got chills.

Lopakhin: They're coming, I can hear it. We'll go to meet them. Will she recognize me? We haven't seen each other for five years...

Dunyasha: *(Flustered.)* I'm going to faint!...Oh, I'll faint, I know it!...

Two carriages can be heard pulling up to the house. Lopakhin and Dunyasha exit quickly. Noise builds in the neighboring rooms. Firs, who has been to meet Lyubov Andreevna, hurriedly shuffles across the stage, leaning on a cane. He is dressed in old livery and a top hat. He mutters something to himself, but it's impossible to make out a single word. The noise beyond the stage grows louder. A voice: "Here we are...This way..." Lyubov Andreevna, Anya, and

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Comment: 1.1, Includes Lopakhin, Dunyasha, Yepikhodov

Charlotta Ivanovna, with a dog on a leash, all dressed for travelling, Varya in a coat with a shawl, Gaev, Simeonov-Pishchik, Lopakhin, Dunyasha with a bundle and an umbrella, a servant with bags— everyone enters the room.

Anya: This way, Mama. Do you recognize this room?

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Joyfully, through tears.)* The nursery!

Varya: It's so cold. My hands went numb. *(To Lyubov Andreevna.)* Everything is just like when you left, Mama.

Lyubov Andreevna: The nursery...my wonderful nursery...I used to sleep here when I was little...*(Cries.)* I'm a little girl again...*(Kisses her brother, then Varya, then her brother again.)* And Varya is just the same as ever, she still looks like a nun. And I knew Dunyasha when I saw her...*(Kisses Dunyasha.)*

Gaev: The train was two hours late. How could that be? Where's the sense in it?

Charlotta: *(To Pishchik)* My dog eats nuts.

Pishchik: *(Surprised):* Just imagine!

Everyone exits, except for Anya and Dunyasha.

Dunyasha: It was so hard waiting for you...*(Takes off Anya's coat and hat.)*

Anya: I didn't sleep for four whole nights on the train...Now I'm frozen solid.

Dunyasha: You left during Lent, when there was snow and frost, and now it's warm and beautiful! My darling! *(Laughs, kisses her.)* It was so hard waiting for you, my joy, my angel... I have something to tell you, I can't hold back another minute...

Anya: What is it now?...

Dunyasha: The bookkeeper Yepikhodov, just after Easter...he proposed to me.

Anya: That's all you ever think about...*(Adjusts her hair.)* All my pins fell out...*(She's exhausted, even staggers a little.)*

Dunyasha: What does it all mean? He just loves me so much!

Anya: *(Glances at her room, speaks affectionately.)* My room, my windows, everything feels just like I never even left. I'm home! Tomorrow morning I'll wake up and run into the orchard...Oh, if only I could sleep! I haven't slept at all. I was sick with worry.

Dunyasha: Pyotr Sergeich got here the day before yesterday.

Anya: *(Joyfully.)* Petya!

Dunyasha: He's asleep in the bathhouse. That's where he's staying. He says he's afraid of bothering anybody.

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Comment: 1.2 Includes: Ranyevskaya, Anya, Charlotta, Varya, Gaev, Simeonov-Pishchik, Lopakhin, Dunyasha, Servant (FEATURE SCENE)

(Looks at her pocket watch.) I should go get him. Varvara Mikhailovna said not to. Don't you dare wake him up, she says.

Varya Enters. She has a ring of keys on her belt.

Varya: Dunyasha, bring the coffee right away...Mama asked for coffee.

Dunyasha: Yes Ma'am. *(Exits)*

Varya: Thank God, you all made it home safely. You're home again. *(Tenderly)* My darling, my angel is home!

Anya: The trip was just awful.

Varya: I can imagine!

Anya: When we left it was Holy Week. It was so cold. Charlotta talked the whole way and kept doing magic tricks. Why on earth you stuck me with Charlotta...

Varya: You couldn't go alone, darling. At seventeen!

Anya: We got to Paris and it was cold there, too, even snowing. My French is horrible. Mama lived on the fifth floor. I walked up the stairs. There were these French people, women, an old priest with a book, and it reeked of cigars and mildew. All of a sudden I felt so sorry for Mama, I grabbed her, held her in my arms and I wouldn't let go. Then Mama started kissing me and crying...

Varya: *(Through tears.)* No, oh no....

Anya: She sold her cottage near Menton. She has nothing left, nothing. I don't have anything either, we barely made it back. And Mama doesn't understand! We had lunch on the train, and she ordered the most expensive food on the menu and tipped the waiters a ruble each. Charlotta's the same way. And Yasha orders for himself, too. It's just awful. Yasha is Mama's footman, now. We brought him along...

Varya: I saw the good-for-nothing.

Anya: So? What happened? Did we get the interest paid?

Varya: With what?

Anya: God, oh my God...

Varya: In August the whole estate will go up for sale...

Anya: Oh God...

Lopakhin: *(Glances through the door and bleats.)* Ba-a-a...*(Exits.)*

Varya: That *man!* I'd like to smack him...*(Shakes her fist.)*

Anya: *(Hugs Varya, softly.)* Varya, did he propose to you? *(Varya shakes her head, 'no'.)* But he loves you...Why don't you talk things over with him? what are you waiting for?

Varya: The way I see it, there's no point. He's busy with his affairs, no time for me...and he pays no

attention, anyway. Well, best of luck to him. I don't want to see him, it's too hard...Everyone talks about our wedding, everyone congratulates me, but it's all built on nothing, it's like a dream...*(In a different tone.)* Your pin looks like a bumble bee.

Anya: *(Sadly.)* Mama bought it for me. *(Goes into her room. Joyfully, in a childish voice.)* In Paris, I went up in a hot air balloon!

Varya: My beautiful girl is home again!

Dunyasha comes in with the coffee pot and boils coffee.

(Near the door to Anya's room.) I'm busy with my chores all day, but you know, sometimes I'm carried away, imagining what could be. If we got you married to a rich man, then I would be happy. I would make a pilgrimage, I'd go off on a retreat into the wilderness, then Kiev...then Moscow. I'd go from one holy place to another, I'd wander further and further. It would be heavenly!

Anya: Listen to the birds in the orchard. What time is it?

Varya: About three o'clock. Time for you to go to sleep, my angel. *(Goes into Anya's room.)* Heavenly!

Yasha enters with a blanket and a travelling bag.

Yasha: *(Cross the stage, officiously.)* May one pass through this way, madam?

Dunyasha: Is that you, Yasha? You look different. Being abroad changed you.

Yasha: *I'm sorry...and you are?*

Dunyasha: When you left, I was so-high...*(indicates low height, with her hand.)* Dunyasha, Fyodor Kozoyevdov's daughter. You don't remember!

Yasha: Hm...Come here, sugarplum! *(Looks around, then hugs her close. She screams and drops a saucer. Yasha quickly exits.)*

Varya: *(From the door, in an angry voice.)* What is it now?

Dunyasha: *(Through tears.)* I broke a saucer...

Varya: Oh, don't worry—it's good luck.

Anya: *(Enters from her room.)* We should warn Mama: Petya's here...

Varya: I ordered the servants not to wake him up.

Anya: *(Pensively.)* Six years ago Father died. A month after that, Grisha drowned in the river. He was Mama's sweet little seven-year-old boy. She couldn't bear it. She ran away and never looked back...*(Shudders.)* If only she knew how well I understand her!

Pause

Petya Trofimov was Grisha's tutor. He might remind her...about Grisha...

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Comment: 1.3: Anya, Varya, Dunyasha

Firs enters. He is wearing a jacket and a white waistcoat.

Firs: *(Goes to the French press, anxiously.)* The mistress will take her coffee in this room...*(Puts on white gloves.)* Is the coffee ready? *(Severely, to Dunyasha.)* Where's the cream?!

Dunyasha: Ah! Goodness me... *(Quickly exits.)*

Firs: *(Bustles near the coffee pot.)* Young snuffle-wit...*(Mutters to himself.)*...The mistress came home from Paris...the Master used to go to Paris too...in his coach...*(Laughs.)*

Varya: What are you muttering about, Firs?

Firs: What's that? *(Joyfully.)* She's home! The Lord above saw me through it. My long wait is over! Now I can die...*(Cries with joy.)*

Enter Lyubov Andreevna, Gaev, Lopakhin and Simeonov-Pishchik. Simeonov-Pishchik is in a long woolen coat and trousers. Gaev, entering, with his hands and torso pretends to play billiards.

Lyubov Andreevna: How does it go? Let's see...Carom off the yellow, kick shot into the side pocket—

Gaev: And drawn right back into the corner! Sister, do you remember how we used to sleep in this very room once upon a time? Now, I'm fifty-one years old, strange as it seems....

Lopakhin: Yes, time passes.

Gaev: I beg your pardon?

Lopakhin: Time. I said it passes.

Gaev: It smells of cheap scent in here.

Anya: I'm going to sleep. Good night, Mama. *(Kisses her mother.)*

Lyubov Andreevna: My precious child. *(Kisses her hand.)* Are you happy to be home? I'll still can't believe it.

Anya: Goodnight, Uncle.

Gaev: *(Kisses her face, her hands.)* May the lord keep you. You're so much like your mother! *(To his sister.)* At her age, Lyuba, you were exactly like her.

Anya gives her hand to Lopakhin and Pishchik, then exits and closes the door behind her.

Lyubov Andreevna: What a long journey.

Varya: *(To Lopakhin and Pishchik.)* Well, gentlemen? It's nearly three, time to say our goodbyes.

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Laughs.)* You haven't changed at all, have you, Varya? *(Draws her near and kisses her.)* I'll just take my coffee and then we'll go.

Firs places a pillow beneath her feet.

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Comment: 1.4 Yasha, Dunyasha, Varya, Anya, Firs

Thank you, my dear. I'm used to coffee now. I drink it day and night. Thank you, my old friend. (*Kisses Firs.*)

Varya: I'll check to see if they unloaded everything...(*Exits.*)

Lyubov Andreevna: Is this real? Am I actually sitting in this chair? (*Laughs.*) I feel like dancing and swinging my arms around. (*Covers her face with her hands.*) Oh, my God, what if I'm just dreaming? I love it here so much. When we crossed the border into Russia I couldn't even look out the train window. I cried and cried. (*Through tears.*) Still, we must have our coffee. Thank you, Firs. Thank you, my old friend. It's such a comfort to know you're still alive.

Firs: Day before yesterday.

Gaev: He's hard of hearing.

Lopakhin: I'm leaving soon, heading off to Kharkov at five in the morning. A pity. I just wanted to look at you, exchange a few words...You still look just as gorgeous as I remember.

Pishchik: (*Sighs deeply.*) Even more so...Dressed in the latest Paris fashions... (*Sings.*) "My cart went tumbling when I caught her eye"...

Lopakhin: Your brother here, Leonid Andreich, says I'm nothing but a dirty peasant, but that doesn't matter to me. Let him talk all he wants. I just want you to believe me like you did before. I want your beautiful, tender eyes to look at me like they did before. Merciful

God! My father was a serf, he was owned by your father and grandfather, but you—you alone—you've done so much for me that I've forgotten all about it and I love you like one of my own...more than one of my own.

Lyubov Andreevna: I can't sit still, my body won't let me...(*Leaps up and walks about, very excited.*) I could die from happiness...Go ahead and laugh, I've gone silly...oh, my bookcase...(*Kisses the bookcase.*) My lovely little table.

Gaev: Nanny died while you were away.

Lyubov Andreevna: (*Sits and drinks coffee.*) Yes, God be with her. They wrote me.

Gaev: And Anastasy died. Petrusha the squint went away. now he lives at the police office in town.

Pishchik: My daughter, Dashenka...sends her regards...

Lopakhin: I'd like to tell you something very hopeful, very cheerful. (*Looks at his watch.*) I'm leaving now, so I suppose it'll have to wait...Oh, alright, I'll make it quick. You already know that your cherry orchard is being sold against your debts. The auction is set for the 22nd of August, but don't you worry, my dear, sleep easy in your bed, there is a way out...Here is my proposal. Your attention please! Your estate is situated only thirteen miles from town. A railroad runs nearby, and if the cherry orchard and the land along the river were divided up into plots for summer cottages that

could be leased to vacationers, then you'll have an income of at least twenty-five thousand a year.

Gaev: I beg your pardon, but what nonsense!

Lyubov Andreevna: I'm afraid I don't understand you, Yermolay Alekseich.

Lopakhin: You'll collect at least twenty-five rubles a year for every two-and-a-half-acre plot, and if you advertise now, I'll guarantee that you won't have a single plot left by the time autumn comes: They'll all be snatched up. In short: Congratulations, you're saved. The location is extraordinary. There's a deep river nearby. Except, of course, it needs some sprucing up, some cleaning...for example, we should get rid of all the old buildings, like this house, which doesn't really fit, and we'd have to cut down the cherry orchard...

Lyubov Andreevna: Cut it down? My friend, I'm afraid you don't understand. If there's one thing in the district that's interesting—no, amazing—why then it's our cherry orchard.

Lopakhin: The only thing amazing about it is it's very big. It produces cherries just once every couple of years, and even then there's no use for them. Nobody buys them.

Gaev: Our orchard is mentioned in the Encyclopedia.

Lopakhin: (*Looks at his watch.*) If we think of nothing and arrive at no conclusions, then on the 22nd of August, not only the cherry orchard, but the whole

estate will be sold at auction. Make a decision! There is no other way out, I promise you. None.

Firs: In the old days, forty or fifty years ago, they used to dry the cherries, preserve them, boil them into jam, and sometimes—

Gaev: Firs, be quiet.

Firs: —Sometimes they sent dried cherries by the cartload to Moscow, to Kharkov. Oh, and what money they had! And back then the dried cherries were soft, juicy, and sweet...They had the recipe.

Lyubov Andreevna: And where is that recipe now?

Firs: Forgotten. Nobody remembers.

Pishchik: (*To Lyubov Andreevna.*) Do you have any news from Paris? What's it like? Did you eat frogs?

Lyubov Andreevna: I ate crocodiles.

Pishchik: Just imagine...

Lopakhin: Until very recently, the only people in the countryside were either landowners or peasants. But now we're seeing a new class: vacationers. All the towns, even small ones, are surrounded by summer cottages. Their numbers are going to expand, even explode. For now, these visitors are content to sit on their balconies and drink tea, but suppose they decide to plant their own gardens? It won't be long until your

cherry orchard is once again beautiful, joyful, and prosperous...

Gaev: What nonsense!

Varya and Yasha enter.

Varya: Two telegrams came for you, mama. *(Takes a key and noisily opens the old bookcase.)* Here they are.

Lyubov Andreevna: It's from Paris. *(Tears up the telegrams, without reading them.)* I'm through with Paris...

Gaev: Do you know how old this bookcase is, Lyuba? Last week I pulled out the bottom drawer and found some numbers burned on it. This bookcase was made precisely one hundred years ago. Really something, wouldn't you say? We could have celebrated its centenary. Of course it's a lifeless object, but like it or not—it's a *bookcase*.

Pishchik: *(Surprised.)* A hundred years...just imagine!

Gaev: Yes...*(Touches the bookcase.)* Dear, honored bookcase! I salute your existence, which for over a hundred years has been dedicated to the noble virtues of goodness and integrity. We heed your call to fruitful labor, a call that grows in strength for every...*(Through tears.)* every generation of our family, renewing our faith in a hopeful future, and sustaining in us the ideals of decency and social consciousness.

Pause

Lopakhin: Yes....

Lyubov Andreevna: You're haven't changed at all, Lyonya.

Gaev: *(Embarrassed.)* Carom into the corner! Draw shot to the middle!

Lopakhin: *(Looks at his watch.)* Well, I should be going.

Yasha: *(Gives Lyubov Andreevna medicine.)* Maybe you should take your pills now?

Pishchik: Froget those medicinals, my dear...There's neither harm nor charm in them ... Please, allow me. *(Takes the pills, pours them into his hand, blows on them, puts them in his mouth, drinks kvass.)* Done!

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Startled.)* Why, you've lost your mind!

Pishchik: I've taken all the pills.

Lopakhin: Well, hunger is the best sauce.

Everyone laughs.

Firs: The gentleman was here for Holy week. He ate half a bucket of cucumbers... *(Mumbles.)*

Lyubov Andreevna: What's he talking about?

Varya: He's been mumbling like that for three years. We're used to it.

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Comment: 1.5: Lopakhin, Gaev, Ranyevskaya, Pishchik, Firs, (possibly Varya & Anya, but can be done without them)

Yasha: Second childhood.

Charlotta Ivanovna crosses the stage. She is wearing a white dress that's very tightly laced, and has a lorgnette on her belt.

Lopakhin: Forgive me, Charlotta Ivanovna: I never got the chance to welcome you back. *(Wants to kiss her hand.)*

Charlotta: *(Takes her hand away.)* If I allow you to kiss my hand, next you'll want the elbow, then the shoulder...

Lopakhin: Today's not my lucky day.

Everyone laughs.

Charlotta Ivanovna, show us a magic trick!

Charlotta: Not now. I want to sleep. *(Exits.)*

Lopakhin: We'll see each other in three weeks. *(Kisses Lyubov Andreevna's hand.)* Until then, goodbye. I have to go. *(To Gaev.)* Goodbye. *(Kisses Pishchik.)* Goodbye. *(Gives his hand to Varya, then Firs and Yasha.)* I wish I could stay. *(To Lyubov Andreevna.)* If you rethink this cottage business and decide to do it, just let me know. I'll set up a loan for fifty thousand. Seriously, think it over.

Varya: *(Angry.)* Are you going or not?!

Lopakhin: I'm going, I'm going...*(Exits.)*

Gaev: The brute—I mean, *pardone...* Varya's going to marry him. He's our Varya's betrothed.

Varya: Uncle, don't talk like that.

Lyubov Andreevna: Varya, what's wrong? It will make me very happy. He's a good man.

Pishchik: A very fine man, if you want to know the truth...and my daughter Dashenka also says...she says a lot of things. *(Snores, then immediately wakes up.)* By the way, Madam, would you extend me...a loan of two hundred forty rubles...paying interest on the mortgage tomorrow...

Varya: *(Startled.)* No! We can't!

Lyubov Andreevna: I'm afraid I honestly have nothing.

Pishchik: That's fine. It'll turn up, somehow. *(Laughs.)* Never lose hope. As soon as I thought "it's all over, I'm cooked," then do you know what happened? They built a railroad through my property...and paid me. It'll turn up. If not today, then tomorrow, maybe the next day...Dashenka might win two hundred thousand...she has a lottery ticket.

Lyubov Andreevna: The coffee's finished, time to go to sleep.

Firs: *(Brushes Gaev's clothing, scolds him.)* You wore the wrong trousers again. What am I going to do with you?

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Comment: Lopakhin, Varya, Yasha, Charlotta, Gaev, Pishchik, Ranyevskaya (possible without Yasha)

Varya: *(Softly.)* Anya's asleep. *(Softly opens the window.)* The sun is up. It's not cold anymore. Take a look, Mama: What glorious trees! My God, the air! The starlings are singing!

Gaev: *(Opens another window.)* The orchard's all in white. Do you remember, Lyuba? This long pathway stretches straight into the distance. It shines like a ribbon on moonlit nights. Lyuba, Do you remember?

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Looks at the orchard through a window.)* Oh, my childhood, my innocence! I slept in this room, I could see the orchard through these windows. I used to wake up with joy in my heart. Everything looked just like it does now. Nothing's changed. *(Laughs with joy.)* White, all white! Oh, my orchard! In the fall you lost your leaves, you shivered all winter long, but now you're young again, shining and happy! The angels in heaven didn't forget you after all...Oh, if only this great millstone could be lifted from my shoulders, if only I could forget my past!

Gaev: Indeed. How could they sell the orchard against a debt? It's all so strange ...

Lyubov Andreevna: Look! It's mother! She's walking in the orchard...in a white dress! *(Laughs with joy.)* It's her.

Gaev: Where?

Varya: God save you, Mama.

Lyubov Andreevna: There's nobody there, I just imagined it. Out there, next to the pavilion, I saw a sappling bending in the wind...it looked like a woman...

Trofimov enters in a ragged student's overcoat and glasses.

The orchard looks magnificent. Look... white blossoms on a deep blue sky...

Trofimov: Lyubov Andreevna!

She turns her head to see him.

I just want to pay my respects, then I'll go. *(Passionately kisses her hand.)* I was ordered to wait until morning, but I didn't have the patience...

Lyubov Andreevna looks at him, bewildered.

Varya: *(Through tears.)* It's Petya Trofimov...

Trofimov. Petya Trofimov, I used to be Grisha's tutor...have I changed so much?

Lyubov Andreevna embraces him and quietly weeps.

Gaev: *(Embarrassed, confused.)* There now, Lyuba, there now...

Varya: *(Weeps.)* I told you, Petya, you should have waited until morning.

Lyubov Andreevna: My Grisha...my boy...Grisha...my son...

Varya: What can we do, Mama? It was God's will.

Trofimov: *(Softly, through tears.)* Shh...there now....

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Cries softly.)* My boy died, he drowned...What for? Why, my friend? *(More quietly.)* Anya's asleep, and here I am yelling and crying...making a fuss...And you, Petya! What happened to your looks? Why did you get so old?

Trofimov: On the train, an old woman called me "mangy lordship."

Lyubov Andreevna: Back then you were just a boy, a fine young student, but now your hair is thinning and you have glasses. Are you really still a student? *(Goes to the door.)*

Trofimov: I suppose I'll be a student all my life.

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Kisses her brother, then Varya.)* Well, time for bed...You've grown old, too, Lyonya.

Pishchik: *(Follows her.)* Time for bed...Oh, my gout...I'll stay here for the night...If you could, Lyubov Andreevna, in the morning...a trifle...two hundred forty rubles...

Gaev: He never gives up.

Pishchik: Two hundred forty rubles...to pay interest on the mortgage.

Lyubov Andreevna: I simply have no money, darling.

Pishchik: I'll pay it back, my dear...A paltry sum...

Lyubov Andreevna: Well, I suppose, Leonid could spare that much...Go on, Leonid.

Gaev: I'll give it to him. Just hold out your pockets.

Lyubov Andreevna: What's the difference? Just give it to him...he needs it...He'll pay us back.

*Lyubov Andreevna, Trofimov, Pishchik and Firs exit.
Gaev, Varya and Yasha are left.*

Gaev: My sister still scatters money to the four winds. *(To Yasha.)* Go away, my good man. You smell of chicken.

Yasha: *(Stifles a laugh.)* And you, Leonid Andreich, are just like you used to be.

Gaev: I beg your pardon? *(To Varya.)* What did he say?

Varya: *(To Yasha.)* Your mother came here from the village. She's been waiting in the servants' hall for two whole days. She wants to see you...

Yasha: Let her wait, for all I care!

Varya: Shameless man!

Yasha: It's not my problem. She could have come tomorrow. *(Exits.)*

Graham Schmidt 9/18/09 8:21 AM

Comment: 1.7: Ranyevskaya, Trofimov, Pishchik, Firs, Gaev, Varya, Yasha

Varya: Mama's the same as she's always been; she hasn't changed at all. If it were up to her, she'd give everything away...

Gaev: Indeed...

Pause

When doctors prescribe a thousand remedies for an illness, it probably means the illness can't be cured at all. I've wracked my brains and invented countless solutions, so many that I can't settle on a single one. Maybe we'll receive an inheritance from somewhere; maybe we could marry Anya to a rich man; maybe we could go to Yaroslavl and try our luck with my aunt, the countess. My aunt is very rich, you know.

Varya: *(Crying.)* If only God would help us.

Gaev: Now stop whining, Varya. My aunt is very rich, but she doesn't love us for several reasons. First off, my sister married a lawyer instead of a nobleman...

Anya appears in the doorway.

So she didn't marry a nobleman, and it can't be said that she's a model of civility and virtue. She is gracious and kind, and I love her dearly, but no matter how you look at it, you have to admit that she's a fallen woman. You can see it in her slightest movements.

Varya: *(Whispers.)* Anya's standing in the doorway.

Gaev: I beg your pardon?

Pause

Oh, how vexing, something's gotten into my right eye...I couldn't see very well. And on Thursday, when I was at the county courthouse...

Anya enters

Varya: What's keeping you up, Anya?

Anya: I can't sleep. I feel restless.

Gaev: My beautiful child. *(Kisses Anya's face, then her hand.)* My little one...*(Through tears.)* You're not just my niece. You're my angel, you're everything to me. You must believe me...

Anya: I believe you, Uncle. Everyone loves and respects you...But dear Uncle, you must stop talking. Just stop. What did you just say about my Mama? She's your sister. Why did you say that?

Gaev: Yes, indeed...*(Covers his face with her hands.)* It's simply awful! May God forgive me! And today I gave a speech to the bookcase...it was so stupid of me. And it was only when I finished that I realized how stupid it was.

Varya: It's true, Uncle. You shouldn't talk so much. Stop talking, that's all.

Anya: If you'd only be quiet, you'll be much happier.

Gaev: I am silent. *(Kisses Anya's hand, then Varya's.)* I am silent. Except for one thing. On Thursday at the

county courthouse, I heard some people talking about this, that, and the other—you know how people talk—and it turns out that in spite of our debts, we can sign a promissory note, and simply borrow money to pay the interest to the bank.

Varya: If only God would help us!

Gaev: On Tuesday I'll go back and find out more. *(To Varya.)* Stop sniveling, Varya. *(To Anya.)* Your Mama will have a chat with Lopakhin. He certainly won't refuse her...And Anya, after you've rested, we'll go to Yaroslavl to see your great Aunt, the countess. We'll advance on three fronts. It'll be over before you know it—we'll settle our affairs with the bank and we're as good as saved. *(Pops a candy into his mouth.)* I swear it, my child, the estate shall not be sold! *(Excited.)* I swear on my happiness! I give you my word, you can call me a feckless, twopenny scoundrel if I allow this auction to take place! With every fiber of my being, I swear!

Anya: *(Calmed, she returns to her room. She is content.)* You're so good, Uncle! You're so smart! *(Embraces him.)* Now I feel better. I'm happy!

Firs enters.

Firs: *(Scolding.)* Leonid Andreich, have you no fear of God! When shall you be off to bed?

Gaev: Oh, be quiet. Go away, Firs. I'll undress myself. Well, children, bye-bye...Tomorrow we'll make arrangements, but now it's time for bed. *(Kisses Anya*

and Varya) I'm a man of the eighties, you know....No one has a kind word for those years anymore, but I've suffered a great deal for my convictions, you know. Do you think the peasants love me for no reason at all? You have to know your peasants, you have to understand...

Anya: Uncle, you're doing it again!

Varya: You should be quiet, Uncle.

Firs: *(Angrily)* Leonid Andreich!

Gaev: I'm coming, I'm coming...Go to sleep. Doublette into the middle! And clean into the pocket...*(Exits, Firs after him, still fussing)*

Anya: Now I feel better. I don't want to go to Yaroslavl, I don't like our Great Aunt, but still, I feel better. Uncle solved everything. *(Sits.)*

Varya: It's almost time for bed. We had some trouble while you were gone. You remember how only the older servants live in the servants' hall: Yefim, Poly, Yevstigney, and...oh, and Karp. They invited some vagrants to spend the night. I didn't say a word. But then I heard a rumor—something about how I ordered them fed on nothing but beans. Because I'm stingy, of course...It was all Yevstigney, he started it...Alright, I said to myself. If that's how you'd like it to be.... I sent for him...*(Yawns)* He came to see me...I said, Yevstigney, how could you...don't you have any sense at all...*(Looks over at Anya)* Anya!...

Pause

She's asleep!...(Takes Anya by the arm) Let's go to your room...Come on!...(Leads her out.) My little baby fell asleep! Let's go now...

They go. Somewhere deep in the orchard, somebody is playing on a pipe. Trofimov enters and crosses the stage, catches sight of Varya and Anya, and stops.

Shhh....She's asleep...This way, darling.

Anya: (Softly, half-asleep.) I'm so tired...All the bells...Uncle...love...Mama and Uncle...

Varya: This way, my girl, this way...(Exits with Anya into Anya's room.)

Trofimov: (Deeply moved.) My sunshine! My spring!

Curtain.

Act II

An open field. An old, long-abandoned chapel that leans to one side; beside it a well; large stones that seem to have once been headstones for graves; an old bench. The path leading to Gaev's estate can be seen. To the side, towering poplars cast their shadows: this is the edge of the cherry orchard. In the distance can see a row of telegraph poles. Further in the distance, on the horizon, the outlines of a large city can barely be discerned. It is visible only in good, clear weather. It is almost sunset. Charlotta, Yasha and Dunyasha are sitting on the bench; Yepikhodov stands nearby and plays on the guitar. Everyone listens, deep in thought. Charlotta is wearing an old forage cap; she has removed a rifle from around her shoulder, and adjusts the buckle on its strap.

Charlotta: (Pensively.) I have no real birth certificate, I don't know how old I am, and I always feel like a child.

Graham Schmidt 9/18/09 8:22 AM

Comment: 1.8: Gaev, Anya, Varya, Trofimov

When I was a little girl, father and mother used to travel with the carnival and perform, they were talented. And I was, too. I danced the salto mortale, and performed stunts. And when my parents died, a German Lady took me in and started to educate me. Fine. I grew up, then I became a governess. But who I am and where I'm from...I don't know...And my parents...maybe they were never married...I don't know (*Takes a cucumber from her pocket and eats it.*) I don't know anything.

Pause

I want to talk so much, but there's nobody...I have no one.

Yepikhodov: (*Plays on the guitar and sings.*) "What's here in this noisy world for me? / Who cares about friends and enemies?" I love to play on the mandolin.

Dunyasha: It's a guitar, not a mandolin. (*Looks in a mirror and powders her nose.*)

Yepikhodov: For those of us who are mad with love, it's a mandolin...(*Sings.*) "It's all for nothing, my heart is frozen, for the one I love doesn't notice me..."

Yasha sings harmony.

Charlotta: These people sing so badly....Foo! They sound like jackals.

Dunyasha: (*To Yasha.*) Don't you think it's lovely to go abroad?

Yasha: Yes, of course. I would have to agree with you. (*Yawns, takes a puff on his cigar.*)

Yepikhodov: I should think so. Abroad everything is decidedly more advanced.

Yasha: It certainly is.

Yepikhodov: I'm an educated man, I have read most exemplary books, but I can in no-ways comprehend the trajectory most desirable for me, personally. Shall I live, or shoot myself? It's a personal choice. I always carry a revolver on my person. Here it is...(*Shows his revolver.*)

Charlotta: Enough of this. I'm going. (*Puts her gun back on.*) Yepikhodov, you're a very clever person, and very frightening. Women must think you're irresistible. Brrrrr! (*Goes.*) These wise men are really fools. I have no one to talk with...Alone, alone, always alone, nobody to talk with...and who I am, why I'm here, nobody knows...(*Exits slowly.*)

Yepikhodov: Speaking for myself—irrespective of other subjective viewpoints—I cannot help but recognize how fate treats me: She is pitiless. She is the storm, while I am the tiny, misbegotten boat. I'm wrong, you say? Let us allow the possibility. But then why—*why* did I wake up this morning, look down and see a spider of ghastly dimensions...Like so (*Demonstrates with both hands.*) *Oh, a co-insequence, you say? Perhaps. But then what—what* did I see in my glass of kvass the other day? A cockroach.

Yes...Barring unforeseeable evidence to the contrary, the matter's must be closed.

Pause

I am reminded of a certain theoretician...a certain Buckle...Thomas Buckle...You're no doubt familiar with his work...

Pause

Avdotya Fyodorovna, would you favor me with a moment's conversation? A couple of words, no more.

Dunyasha: Go ahead.

Yepikhodov: I would prefer to speak with you in private...*(Sighs.)*

Dunyasha: *(Embarrassed.)* Very well...Only first, bring me my shawl...look next to the bookcase...It's a bit damp out...

Yepikhodov: Right away, *mistress*...I'll bring it, *mistress*...Now I know what to do with my revolver...*(Takes up his guitar and exits, playing.)*

Yasha: Troubles Galore! A witless man, *entre nous*. *(Yawns.)*

Dunyasha: Pray God he doesn't shoot himself.

Pause

I've gotten so anxious. I worry all the time. I was still a girl when Master and Mistress took me in, but now I forgot what it's like to lead a simple life. See? Pale-white hands, like a lady's. I got more sensitive, delicate and pure, everything puts me in a titter...It's dreadful. And Yasha, if you break my heart, I just don't know what I might do...

Yasha: *(Kisses her.)* Come here, Sugarplum! A girl should know what's expected of her. If there's one thing I can't stand, it's when girls forget their place.

Dunyasha: Goodness, Yasha, you're so educated, there's nothing you can't discuss.

Pause

Yasha: *(Yawns.)* True, true...The way I see it, if a girl loves someone, that means she's gone and dirtied herself.

Pause

There's nothing like a cigar in the fresh air...*(Listens.)* Wait...Somebody's are coming...

Dunyasha hurriedly embraces him

Go home, act like you went to the river to swim. Go down that path, or else they'll think we're together. I couldn't stand that.

Dunyasha: *(Quietly coughs.)* Your cigar is giving me a headache...*(Exits.)*

Graham Schmidt 9/18/09 8:22 AM

Comment: 2.1: Charlotta, Yasha, Dunyasha, Yapikhodov

Yasha stays, takes a seat near the chapel. Enter Lyubov Andreevna, Gaev, and Lopakhin.

Lopakhin: You must decide, once and for all—time doesn't stand still. The question couldn't be simpler. Do you agree to divide up the land for summer cottages or not? All it takes is a single word: Yes or no? Just one word!

Lyubov Andreevna: Who is smoking those filthy cigars...*(Sits.)*

Gaev: Ever since they built the railroad, things are far more convenient. *(Sits.)* I rode straight into town for breakfast...Yellow in the corner! I should get home soon and play a few games...

Lyubov Andreevna: You'll be alright.

Lopakhin: Just one word! *(Begging.)* Just a single word!

Gaev: *(Yawns.)* I beg your pardon?

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Looks into her clutch.)* Yesterday I had plenty of money, and today there's almost nothing. Poor Varya is so short of money that she feeds us milk soup, the kitchen servants eat nothing but beans, and I don't think—I just spend, I don't know how...*(Drops her clutch, gold coins fall out.)* And now I've dropped money everywhere...

Yasha: Allow me—at your service...*(Gathers the coins.)*

Lyubov Andreevna: Thank you, Yasha. Why did I go out for breakfast...in that shabby restaurant? The music was stale, the tablecloths smelled like soap...Why drink so much, Lyonya? Why eat so much? Why talk so much? Today in the restaurant you were doddering on again, about everything under the sun. You stopped a waiter to talk about the seventies, the decadents. What did he care about the decadents?!

Lopakhin: Indeed.

Gaev: *(Wrings his hands.)* I'm incurable, that's obvious...*(Annoyed, to Yasha.)* For goodness sake, you're always twittering about...

Yasha: *(Laughs.)* You have a very funny voice.

Gaev: *(To his sister.)* Either he goes, or I go...

Lyubov Andreevna: Run along now, Yasha...

Yasha: *(Gives Lyubov Andreevna her clutch.)* Right away. *(Barely keeps from laughing.)* This minute...*(Exits.)*

Lopakhin: Do you know who wants to buy your estate? Deriganov. He's making a special trip, just for this auction.

Lyubov Andreevna: Where did you hear that?

Lopakhin: It's what they're saying in town.

Gaev: My great aunt in Yaroslavl promised to send money, but I'm not sure how much...or when.

Lopakhin: How much is she sending? A hundred thousand? Two?

Lyubov Andreevna: Well...Maybe fifteen, maybe twenty thousand. And we should be grateful.

Lopakhin: I'm sorry, but I've never met people who know so little about business. It's strange. You have been told in perfect Russian that your estate will be sold, and you don't understand.

Lyubov Andreevna: What do you want us to do? Tell us—what?

Lopakhin: I tell you every day. Every day I say the same thing. The cherry orchard and the land it's planted on must be divided into plots for summer cottages. Do it right now! the auction's staring you in the face! Just decide once and for all to build the cottages. You'll have more money than you know what to do with, and you'll be saved.

Lyubov Andreevna: Summer cottages, vacationers—Forgive me, but it's just so common.

Gaev: I agree, one hundred percent.

Lopakhin: That's it. I'm going to cry, or yell at the moon, or fall over and pass out. You've done me in. *(To Gaev.)* You're an old woman!

Gaev: I beg your pardon?

Lopakhin: Woman! *(Starts to leave.)*

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Frightened.)* No! Please don't go. Stay with us. Who knows? We might think of something!

Lopakhin: What's there to think about?

Lyubov Andreevna: Just please don't go. It's...more fun with you here...

Pause

I keep waiting for something to happen. It's like the house is going to collapse in on us.

Gaev: *(Deeply pensive.)* Doublette into the corner...off the cushion, side pocket...

Lyubov Andreevna: We have sinned so much for so long...

Lopakhin: How have you sinned?

Gaev: *(Pops a candy into his mouth.)* They say I frittered away my whole fortune on candy...*(Laughs.)*

Lyubov Andreevna: Oh, my sins...I've always strewn money around without thinking, like a foolish little girl, and I married a man who did nothing but spend and left me nothing but debts. He had a weakness for champagne. He died from it. And after that came a second misfortune: I fell in love with another man, had an affair, and right around that time I endured my first punishment. It fell like a blow to the neck. Here in the river...my boy drowned, and I went abroad. I left so I'd

never have to see that river again...I closed my eyes and ran away, I forgot who I was, but *he* followed me...Without mercy, without kindness. I bought a cottage near Menton, since *he* fell sick there, and for three years I cared for him, day after day. He was so cruel....my spirit wasted away. Then last year, when I sold the cottage to pay my debts, I left for Paris, but then he took everything I had and left me all alone. He took up with another woman. I tried to poison myself...It was so stupid and cowardly...and then I was brought back to Russia, to my home and my daughter...*(Wipes away tears.)* God, please have mercy on me! Take away my sins! Stop these punishments! *(Takes a telegram from her pocket.)* This came from Paris today...He begs forgiveness and wants me to come back...*(Tears up the telegram.)* Is that music I hear? *(Listens.)*

Gaev: It's our famous Jewish orchestra. You remember: Four violins, a flute, and a contrabass.

Lyubov Andreevna: It still exists? They should come over, we could arrange an evening.

Lopakhin: *(Listens.)* I don't hear anything...*(Sings quietly.)* "And for money the Prussians will swindle the Russians..." *(Laughs.)* I went to the theater last night. It was a funny play. The plot...

Lyubov Andreevna: There's nothing funny about the world. You shouldn't go to see plays. Take a look at

yourselves, instead. Think what dreary lives you lead, how much nonsense you speak.

Lopakhin: It's true. There's no way around it—this life we lead is foolish...

Pause

My father was a peasant...no culture, no learning, and he didn't so much raise me as drank vodka and beat me with a switch. When you get down to it, I'm the same as him...a pig like him. I never learned anything, my handwriting is horrible and I'm ashamed for people to see it...I'm a pig.

Lyubov Andreevna: You should get married, my friend.

Lopakhin: Yes...yes.

Lyubov Andreevna: What about our Varya? She's a good girl.

Lopakhin: Indeed.

Lyubov Andreevna: I took her in from simple folk. She works hard, and most importantly, she loves you. And you've liked her for a long time.

Lopakhin: Who knows? I'm not against it...She's a good girl.

Pause

Graham Schmidt 9/18/09 8:25 AM

Comment: 2.2: Ranyevskaya, Gaev, Lopakhin, Gaev, Yasha (can be done without Yasha)

Gaev: I've been offered a job in a bank. Six thousand a year...Have you heard?

Lyubov Andreevna: There you are! Stay right there...

Firs enters. He's carrying a coat.

Firs: (To Gaev.) Please, sir, put this on, it's damp out.

Gaev: (Puts on coat.) You wear me out, my man.

Firs: Never mind that, this morning you left with nary a word for me. (Looks him over.)

Lyubov Andreevna: My but how old you've grown, Firs!

Firs: What's you will?

Lopakhin: She says you're really old!

Firs: I've lived a long time. Afore they wanted to marry me off, back when your papa wasn't e'en a-twinklin' in his papa's eye...(Laughs.) But when the freedom came, I was already the master's personal attendant. I didn't go along with the freedom, I stayed with the masters...

Pause

And I remember how they were all glad, but glad for what? They themselves didn't know.

Lopakhin: Things were better back then. At least they beat you.

Firs: (Didn't hear him completely.) Oh bless me, and how. Peasants stood by their masters, masters by their peasants, and now it's all higgledy-piggled, you can't figure anything out.

Gaev: Oh, be quiet, Firs. Tomorrow I need to go to town. I've been promised an introduction with a certain general who might arrange a loan for us.

Lopakhin: It won't do you any good, I can tell you that. Why go to the trouble? You'll never get the interest paid.

Lyubov Andreevna: They're just empty words. There's no general.

Trofimov, Anya and Varya enter.

Gaev: (Affectionately.) Look who it is!

Anya: There's mama.

Lyubov Andreevna: (Tenderly.) Come here...my little angels...(Embraces Anya and Varya.) If only you knew how much I love you. Sit close to me, there, just like that.

Everyone sits.

Lopakhin: Our eternal student's fancies the young ladies.

Trofimov: That's none of your business.

Lopakhin: He'll be fifty years old, and still a student.

Graham Schmidt 9/18/09 8:26 AM

Comment: 2.3: Lopakhin, Ranyevskaya, Gaev, Yasha, Firs (Can be done without Yasha)

Trofimov: Keep shut with your stupid jokes.

Lopakhin: What's wrong, silly old chum? You're not getting angry, are you?

Trofimov: Leave off.

Lopakhin: *(Laughs.)* Oh-ho-ho, very well, your worship, just allow me to ask, what have you learned about me?

Trofimov: I've learned this, Yermolay Alekseich: You're rich and soon you'll be a millionaire. Just as carnivorous beasts who gobble up everything they see are necessary for the cycle of life, I think you're necessary, too.

Everybody laughs.

Varya: Petya, why don't you tell us about the planets instead?

Lyubov Andreevna: No, let's continue yesterday's conversation.

Trofimov: What was that about?

Gaev: Human pride.

Trofimov: Yesterday we talked for a long time, but we didn't get anywhere. In your mind, human pride has something mystical about it. Maybe you're right in your own way, but if we consider it more simply, what is there to be proud about? Where's the basis for this pride when, from a physiological perspective, human

beings are built so crudely, and the vast majority of us are crude, foolish, and profoundly unhappy? We have to stop admiring ourselves. We have to get down to work.

Gaev: In the end you're just as dead.

Trofimov: Who knows? And what does it mean—to die? Maybe we have a hundred senses and when we die only the five we know about die off, while the other ninety-five live on.

Lyubov Andreevna: Oh, Petya, you're so smart!...

Lopakhin: *(Ironically.)* Sharp like a hammer!

Trofimov: Humanity is moving forward, toward its full potential. Everything we consider beyond our reach will someday be second-nature to us, but we have to work, we must devote our strength to helping those who seek the truth. In Russia, only a few of us are actually working. The vast majority of the intelligentsia whom I know seek nothing, do nothing and if you asked them to work, they wouldn't know how. They call themselves the intelligentsia, but they treat their servants like children, their peasants like animals, they barely study and read trivial books, they sit and obsess over science, while they understand nothing about art. They're all serious people with serious faces. They discuss serious issues, and meanwhile Russia's workers eat gruel, sleep on bare floors, live thirty or forty to a room, and everywhere stench, bugs, filth, and moral corruption...And obviously all these lofty

conversations only serve to distract us from suffering—theirs and ours. Where are the nurseries everyone talks about? Where are the reading halls? You read about them in novels, but they don't really exist. There's only filth, backwardness and banality...I fear these serious faces with their serious conversations. It's better to say nothing at all.

Lopakhin: You know, I'm up every morning at five o'clock, I work from dawn 'til dusk, I handle money all the time, mine and other people's, so I know what people are like. You only have to try to start doing something, anything, to realize how few decent, reliable people there really are. Sometimes when I can't sleep I think, God in heaven, you gave us these vast forests, enormous fields, broad horizons, and living here, we really should be giants...

Lyubov Andreevna: You want giants now?...They're only good in fairy tales, otherwise they're scary...

In the distance, Yepikhodov crosses and plays his guitar.

(Pensively.) There goes Yepikhodov...

Anya: *(Pensively.)* There goes Yepikhodov...

Gaev: The sun has set, ladies and gentlemen.

Trofimov: Yes it has.

Gaev: *(Subdued, perhaps reciting.)* Oh, wondrous nature, glowing with an eternal flame, majestic,

indifferent, you whom we call mother, in you being and nothingness are united, you give life and you destroy it...

Varya: *(Pleadingly.)* Uncle!

Anya: Uncle, please!

Trofimov: You should try knocking the yellow into the side pocket.

Gaev: Quite right, quite right, I'll stop.

Everyone sits, deep in thought. Silence. Only Firs' mumbling can be heard. Suddenly, as if from the sky, the distant sound of a breaking string, dying away, mournful.

Lyubov Andreevna: What was that?

Lopakhin: I don't know. Somewhere in a mineshaft a cable broke. But somewhere far, far away.

Gaev: Perhaps it was some sort of bird...maybe a heron.

Trofimov: Or an eagle...

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Gives a start.)* Whatever it was, it was frightening.

Pause

Firs: That happened before the troubles, too: The owl cried and the samovar moaned and moaned.

Graham Schmidt 9/18/09 8:27 AM

Comment: 2.4: Ranyevskaya, Trofimov, Anya, Varya, Yasha, Lopakhin, Gaev, Firs (can be done without Yasha)

Gaev: Before what troubles?

Firs: Before the freedom.

Pause

Lyubov Andreevna: Well, my friends, come along now, it's getting dark. *(To Anya.)* You have tears in your eyes...What's wrong, my child? *(Embraces her.)*

Anya: Nothing, Mama. It's fine.

Trofimov: Someone's coming.

A passerby appears in a torn white cap and a coat. He is slightly drunk.

Passerby: I'm sorry to bother you, but can I get straight to the station this way?

Gaev: You can. Go along this road.

Passerby: Most sincerely grateful. *(Coughs.)* Magnificent weather...*(Declaims.)* My brother, suffering brother...Go to the Volga: Hear the anguished moans...*(To Varya.)* Mademoiselle, you couldn't spare thirty kopeks for a hungry Russian...

Varya gives a start, yells.

Lopakhin: *(Angrily.)* Now that's quite enough!

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Hurriedly.)* Take this...Here...*(Searches in her clutch.)* I've got no silver left...Never mind, take this gold coin...

Passerby: Most sincerely grateful! *(Exits.)*

Laughter.

Varya: *(Flustered.)* I'm going...I'm going...Oh, Mama! At home there's nothing to eat, and you gave him a gold coin.

Lyubov Andreevna: I'm so silly, I don't know what came over me! When we get home, I'll give you everything I have. Yermolay Alekseich, would you give me another loan...

Lopakhin: I will.

Lyubov Andreevna: Alright, everyone, time to be going. Varya, just look what a match we've made for you. Congratulations are in order.

Varya: *(Through tears.)* Please don't joke about it, Mama.

Lopakhin: Cordelia, get thee to a nunnery...

Gaev: My hands are trembling: it's been so long since I've played billiards.

Lopakhin: Cordelia, nymph, in your orisons my sins were last December.

Lyubov Andreevna: Come along, everyone. It's almost time for dinner.

Varya: He frightened me. My heart is pounding.

Graham Schmidt 9/18/09 8:27 AM

Comment: 2.5: Ranyevskaya, Trofimov, Anya, Varya, Lopakhin, Gaev, Firs, Yasha (can be done without Yasha)

Lopakhin: Let me remind you, ladies and gentleman: On August twenty second, your cherry orchard will be sold. Think about it!...Think!...

Everyone exits, except for Trofimov and Anya.

Anya: *(Laughs.)* Thanks to that vagrant frightening Varya, we're finally alone.

Trofimov: Varya's afraid we'll fall in love with each other. She won't leave us alone, not even for a second. It's beyond her comprehension that we're above love. We have to shake off the trifles and illusions that smother freedom and happiness. That's our goal, our purpose in life. Forward! On to that bright star, burning in the distance! Forward, friends, don't fall behind!

Anya: *(Waiving her hands.)* You talk so beautifully!

Pause

It's so gorgeous here!

Trofimov: Yes, the weather is magnificent.

Anya: What have you done to me, Petya? Why don't I love the cherry orchard like I did before? I loved it so deeply. I thought there was nothing on earth more beautiful than our orchard.

Trofimov: All Russia is our orchard. This land is vast and beautiful, and there are many gorgeous places in it.

Pause

Just think, Anya: Your father, your grandfather and all your ancestors were slave-owners—they owned living souls, and in every cherry in the orchard, every leaf and tree—those souls remain. Can't you feel their eyes watching you? Can't you hear their voices...Owning human souls...it's corrupted you all, all who came before and are still alive. That's why your mother, you, your uncle—you can't understand that you're living in debt, a debt to those who perished, a debt to those whom you wouldn't allowed past the front door...Right now in Russia we're at least twenty years behind. We have nothing, no sustainable relationship with our past. We just philosophize, get depressed, complain or drink vodka. It's undeniable that to live in the present we have to redeem our past, be done with it, and the only way to redeem it is through suffering, through persistent, backbreaking labor. Understand that, Anya.

Anya: The house where we live hasn't been ours for a long time. I'll leave, I give you my word.

Trofimov: If you have the keys, then throw them down the well and go! Be free, free as the wind!

Anya: *(In ecstasy.)* You say it so well!

Trofimov: Believe in me, Anya, believe in me! I'm not thirty yet, I'm young, I'm still a student, but I've endured a great deal! In winter I've been hungry, racked with sickness and worry, poor as a beggar and...and if you could know where fate has driven me, the places I've been! And every second of every day

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Comment: 2.6: Passerby, Anya, Varya, Ranyevskaya, Lopakhin, Gaev, Firs, Trofimov, Yasha

and night, in my soul I've felt this inexplicable...It's happiness, Anya, I can already feel it, already see it...

Anya: (*Pensively.*) The moon is rising.

Yepikhodov continues playing the same mournful tune on his guitar. The moon rises. Somewhere near the poplars Varya is searching for Anya and calls out, "Anya! Where are you?"

Trofimov: Yes, the moon is rising.

Pause

There it is, Anya, it's happiness, it's coming closer and closer, I can hear its footsteps. And if we don't live to see it, then what does it matter? Others will!

Varya's voice: "Anya! Where are you?"

Trofimov: Varya again! (*Angrily.*) Why doesn't she just give up!

Anya: Never mind her, let's go to the river. It's nice there.

Trofimov: Let's go.

They exit. Varya's voice: "Anya! Anya!"

Curtain.

Act III

A living room, separated by an arch from a great hall. Chandeliers are lit. The Jewish orchestra can be heard playing—the same one that was mentioned in Act II. Evening. In the hall, revelers are dancing a grand-rond. Simeonov-Pishchik's voice: "Promenade une paire!" Characters enter the living room in pairs: First, Pishchik and Charlotta Ivanovna; second, Trofimov and Lyubov-Andreevna; third, Anya with the postal clerk; fourth, Varya with the stationmaster, and so on. Varya is crying quietly, and wipes away tears as she dances. Dunyasha is in the final pair. They enter the living room, and Pishchik cries out, "Grand-ron, balancez!" then "Les cavaliers a genoux et remerciez vos dames."

Firs, in tails, carries a tray with seltzer water across the stage. Pishchik and Trofimov cross from upstage into the living room.

Pishchik: I've got high blood pressure and already had two strokes, dancing is hard on me, but you know what they say: when in rome, do as the romans do. I'm healthy as a horse. My father—he's dead now—he loved his jokes...Used to say the ancient house of Simeonov-Pishchik started with the horse that Caligula appointed to the Senate...(Sits.) If only I could scrape together a few kopeks! The hungry dog recks only

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Comment: 2.8: Anya, Trofimov

meat...*(Snores and immediately wakes up.)* That's my story...Money on the brain...

Trofimov: Now you mention it, there is something horsey about your figure...

Pishchik: What if there is?...A horse is a fine beast...You can sell a horse...

The sound of people playing billiards carries from the next room. In the great hall, Varya appears.

Trofimov: *(Teasing her.)* Madam Lopakhin! Madam Lopakhin!...

Varya: *(Angrily.)* Mangy Lordship!

Trofimov: Yes, I'm the Mangy Lordship and I'm proud of it!

Varya: *(Troubled, pensive.)* How are we going to pay the musicians? *(Exits.)*

Trofimov: *(To Pishchik.)* If only you'd spent your life doing something other than finding money, you might have turned your fortunes around.

Pishchik: Nietzsche...Philosopher...eminent, legendary...a man of astonishing wisdom. He says in his essays it's fine to counterfeit money.

Trofimov: You've read Nietzsche?

Pishchik: Well...Dashenka told me. I'm afraid I've reached a point where I'd even make counterfeit

money...Day after tomorrow I have to pay three hundred ten rubles...Drummed up a hundred thirty so far...*(Frantically digs through his pockets.)* The money's gone! I lost the money! *(Through tears.)* Where's the money? *(Joyfully.)* Here it is, in the lining...I broke into a sweat...

Lyubov Andreevna and Charlotta Ivanovna enter.

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Sings a under her breath.)* What's taking Leonid so long? What's he doing in town? *(To Dunyasha.)* Dunyasha, offer the musicians some tea...

Trofimov: The auction probably never took place.

Lyubov Andreevna: So the musicians came for nothing, and we arranged the ball for nothing...What did I expect...*(Sits and quietly sings.)*

Charlotta: *(Gives Pishchik a deck of cards.)* Take this deck. Now think of a card and memorize it.

Pishchik: Got it.

Charlotta: Now shuffle the cards. Very good. Give them to me, Lord Pishchik. Ein, zwei, drei! Now look, it's in your side pocket...

Pishchik: *(Takes a card from his side pocket.)* The eight of spades, absolutely right! *(Surprised.)* Just imagine!

Charlotta: *(Holds the deck in the palm of her hands, speaks to Trofimov.)* Quick: Tell me which card's on top?

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Comment: 3.1: Pishchik, Trofimov, Varya (Can be done without Varya)

Trofimov: The queen of spades. So what?

Charlotta: Thank you! *(To Pishchik.)* Now you. Which card's on top?

Pishchik: The ace of hearts.

Charlotta: Thank you!...*(Taps on her palm, the deck of cards disappears.)* What fine weather today!

She's answered by a concealed female voice, which seems to come from the floor: "Oh, yes, mistress, the weather is splendid,"

You're such a fine ideal of mine...

Voice: "Thank you, mistress, I really like you, too."

Stationmaster: *(Applauds.)* Lady ventriloquist, bravo!

Pishchik: *(In surprise.)* Just imagine! The ventriloquist, Charlotta Ivanovna...Ladies and gentlemen, I'm in love...

Charlotta: In love? *(Shrugs her shoulders.)* Can you really love me? Guter Mensch, aber schlechter Musikant.

Trofimov: *(Claps Pishchik on the shoulder.)* You old horse, you...

Charlotta: Your attention please, one more illusion. *(Takes a blanket from a chair.)* Here is a very fine rug, I'd like to sell it...*(Shakes it.)* What am I bid?

Pishchik: *(In surprise.)* Just imagine!

Charlotta: Ein, zwei, drei! *(Quickly raises the rug.)*

Behind the rug stands Anya; she curtsies, runs to her mother, embraces her and runs back into the hall amid general excitement.

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Applauds.)* Bravo, bravo!..

Charlotta: Once more! Ein, zwei, drei!

She raises the rug; behind it stands Varya, who bows.

Pishchik: *(Surprised.)* Just imagine!

Charlotta: Finita! *(Throws the rug on Pishchik, curtsies and runs into the hall.)*

Pishchik: *(Runs after her.)* A sorceress...Astonishing!

Lyubov Andreevna: Leonid's nowhere to be seen. What is he still doing in town? I don't understand—everything must be decided already: either the estate is sold or there was no auction at all. Why keep us in suspense?

Varya: *(Tries to comfort her.)* Uncle bought the estate, I'm sure of it.

Trofimov: *(Through laughter.)* Of course.

Varya: Our great aunt sent him power of attorney so he could purchase the estate in her name and transfer

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Comment: 3.2: Charlotta, Pishchik, Station master, Trofimov, Ranyevskaya, Anya, Varya

the debt. She did it for Anya. And I'm sure God will help us. Uncle will buy the estate.

Lyubov Andreevna: Our Aunt in Yaroslavl doesn't trust us. She sent fifteen thousand to buy the estate in her name, but that's not even enough to pay the interest on the mortgage. *(Covers her face with her hands.)* Today will decide my fate, my fate...

Trofimov: *(Teases Varya.)* Madam Lopakhin!

Varya: *(Angrily.)* Eternal Student! You've already been kicked out of university twice.

Lyubov Andreevna: What's got into you, Varya? So he's teasing you about Lopakhin, so what? Just marry Lopakhin, if that's what you want. He's a good, interesting man. But don't marry him if you don't want to. Nobody's forcing you, darling...

Varya: This is serious for me, Mama. We have to be honest about it. He's a good man, I like him.

Lyubov Andreevna: Then marry him, what are you waiting for? I don't understand!

Varya: Mama, I can't propose to *him*. Everyone's been telling me about him for two years now, everyone talks, but he's either quiet or makes bad jokes. I understand. He's getting rich, busy with his affairs, so he's got no time for me. If only we had just a little money, even a hundred rubles, then I'd leave, I'd go somewhere far away. I'd join a holy sisterhood.

Trofimov: That would be heavenly!

Varya: *(To Trofimov.)* Didn't your studies teach you anything?! *(In a soft tone, through tears.)* How ugly you've become, Petya, how old you've grown. *(To Lyubov Andreevna, not crying anymore.)* But I can't live without work, Mama. I have to have something to do every minute.

Enter Yasha.

Yasha: *(Barely holding back laughter.)* Yepikhodov broke a billiard cue!...*(Exits.)*

Varya: What is Yepikhodov doing here? Who told him he could play billiards? I don't understand these people...*(Exits.)*

Lyubov Andreevna: Don't tease her, Petya. You can tell she's already heartbroken.

Trofimov: She's persistent, if nothing else. She was after Anya and me all summer long and hardly gave us a minute's peace; she was afraid we'd start a romance. What's it to her? Anyway I never let an angry word slip, nor had any vulgar thoughts about it. We're above love!

Lyubov Andreevna: And I suppose I'm beneath love. *(Extremely upset.)* What's keeping Leonid? If we only knew: is the estate sold or not? This catastrophe seems so unbelievable that I don't know what to think...I'm at a loss...I could scream...I might do something foolish. Save me, Petya. Just say something, anything...

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Comment: 3.3: Ranyevskaya, Trofimov, Varya, Yasha

Trofimov: Whether or not the estate is sold today—does it make any difference? It's over, it's been that way for a long time, there's no going back. Love yourself, as we love you, abandon this self-deception. For once in your life, look the truth square in the eyes.

Lyubov Andreevna: What truth? You see everything, you know where the truth is, but I've lost my sight. I can't find my way. You stare down the hardest questions, but tell me, dear friend, could that be because you're young? Because you've never lived, never suffered through any of your hard questions? You look to the future without fear, but could that be because you haven't learned to expect anything frightening, because life is still hidden from your tender eyes? You're braver, wiser, and more honest than we are, but for once, think before you speak. Show me just a thimble-full of kindness and pity. I was born here, my mother lived here, my father, my grandfather, I love this home, without the cherry orchard I wouldn't understand my life and if the orchard really has to be sold then sell me along with it...*(Hugs Trofimov, kisses his forehead.)* My son drowned here...*(Cries.)* You're a decent, kind person. Take pity on me...

Trofimov: You know that I sympathize with all my heart.

Lyubov Andreevna: That's not what I mean, not those words...*(Takes out her handkerchief, a telegram falls to the floor.)* Today has been harder on me than you can

imagine. It's noisy here, and my heart shakes with every sound. I can't stop shaking or pull myself together. I'm afraid I'll be alone when things go quiet. Don't judge me, Petya...I love you like my own family. I'll gladly give you my Anya's hand in marriage, I swear to you, but listen to me, I love you, and you have to finish your studies, you have to graduate. You don't *do* anything, you only go wherever fate chases you. It's so strange...I'm serious, it's the truth. And you should do something with your beard, fix it up somehow...*(Laughs.)* You're so funny!

Trofimov: *(Picks up the telegram.)* I have no interest in physical beauty.

Lyubov Andreevna: It's a telegram from Paris. Every day a new one arrives. That silly man got sick again, again he's not well...He asks forgiveness and begs me to come back...I really should take a trip to Paris to be with him. Petya, you're making a serious face, but what can I do? Tell me, you're my friend, what can I do? He's sick. He's depressed and lonely. Who'll look after him? Who'll give him his medicine on time? Who'll keep him safe? How can I just hide here and be silent when I love him? Yes. I love him, I love him...This stone is hung around my neck, it drags me down and I don't know where but I love this stone and I can't live without it. *(Presses Trofimov's hand.)* Don't judge me, Petya, don't say anything, don't speak...

Trofimov: *(Through tears.)* Forgive my openness but in God's name, he robbed you blind!

Lyubov Andreevna: No, no, no, don't talk like that...*(Covers her ears.)*

Trofimov: He's a villain and you're the only one who doesn't know it! A miserable wretch, a worm...

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Furious, evenly.)* You're what, twenty six, twenty seven years old? And you're still a schoolboy.

Trofimov: Enough!

Lyubov Andreevna: You should be a man. At your age you should understand people who love. You should love somebody, yourself...You have to *fall* in love! *(Angrily.)* Yes, yes! And there's nothing pure about you, you're just a prig, a buffoon, a twisted little elf...

Trofimov: *(In horror.)* What is she saying!

Lyubov Andreevna: "Above love!" You're not above love, Firs has just the word for you—you're a snifflewit. Twenty six years old and you've never been in love!...

Trofimov: *(In horror.)* This is horrible! What is she saying?! *(Goes quickly to the hall [upstage], holds his head in his hands.)* This is horrible...I can't take this. I'm leaving...*(Exits, but immediately returns.)* Everything is finished between us! *(Exits upstage.)*

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Calls after him.)* Petya, wait! Don't be silly, I was joking! Petya!

Beyond the stage, the sound of a person hurrying along the stairs, then falling down, can be heard. Anya and Varya cry out, but soon after laughter can be heard.

What's going on?

Anya runs onstage.

Anya: *(Laughing.)* Petya fell down the stairs! *(Runs out.)*

Lyubov Andreevna: You're so funny, Petya...

The stationmaster pauses in the hall and reads "The sinner," by Alexei Tolstoy. Everyone listens to him, but he's barely read a few lines before the sound of a waltz interrupts his reading. Everyone dances. Trofimov, Anya, Varya, and Lyubov Andreevna cross into the hall.

Wait, Petya...you're so sensitive and kind...Please forgive me...Would you dance with me?...*(Dances with Petya.)*

Anya and Varya dance. Firs enters, places his cane by the side-door.

Yasha also enters from the living room and watches people dance.

Yasha: What do you say, granddad?

Firs: Feeling a bit queasy. In the old days, balls used to bring the generals, the barons, the admirals, but now

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Comment: 3.4: Ranyevskaya, Trofimov, Anya (Can be done without Anya)

we send for a postal clerk and a stationmaster, and they'd rather not come. My belly won't settle down. The old Master, God rest his soul, used to give out sealing wax. That used to cure any illness. I took sealing wax every day for twenty years...More. Maybe that's why I'm still alive.

Yasha: *(Ironically.)* You bother me, mossback. *(Yawns.)* Do us a favor—Hurry up and die already.

Firs: What?...Young snifflewit! *(Mumbles.)*

Trofimov and Lyubov Andreevna dance in the hall, then move to the living room.

Lyubov Andreevna: *Merci!* I'll sit a while...*(Sits.)* I'm so tired.

Anya Enters.

Anya: *(Frightened.)* In the kitchen somebody's saying the cherry orchard is sold!

Lyubov Andreevna: To whom?

Anya: He didn't say. He's gone. *(Dances with Trofimov, both exit into the hall [upstage].)*

Yasha: Some old geezer was flapping his gums. He doesn't live here.

Firs: Leonid Andreich hasn't come yet. That light coat he's wearing wasn't made for between-the-seasons—he'll catch a cold, just watch. Akh, green tenderfoot...

Lyubov Andreevna: I'll die right now. Yasha, go find out who bought the orchard.

Yasha: That old fossil left ages ago. *(Laughs.)*

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Slightly pained.)* But why are you laughing? What for?

Yasha: Yepikhodov is an absolute riot! What a simpleton. Troubles Galore.

Lyubov Andreevna: Firs, if the cherry orchard is sold, where will you go?

Firs: Wherever you bid, there shall I go.

Lyubov Andreevna: Why do you make that face? Aren't you feeling well? You should go to sleep...

Firs: Yes...*(Grins.)* I go to sleep, then who'll serve the guests, who'll look after things? It's me alone for the whole house.

Yasha: *(To Lyubov Andreevna.)* Lyubov Andreevna! Please allow me to make a humble request? If you return to Paris, then could you find it in your heart to take me with you? I can't stay here—it's simply intolerable. *(Looks around, lowers his voice.)* Don't believe what everyone says; look for yourself. There's nothing but uncivilized brutes here, no morals, nothing but grayness and boredom, they serve beans in the kitchen, meanwhile that Firs wanders around mumbling nonsense to himself. Please, take me with you!

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Comment: 3.5: Firs, Yasha, Ranyevskaya

Pishchik Enters

Pishchik: Allow me to make a request...Would you favor me with a dance, mademoiselle...*(Lyubov Andreevna goes with him.)* You'll spare a hundred eighty rubles for me...I know you will...*(They dance.)* A hundred eighty little rubles...

They go into the hall [upstage]

Yasha: *(Quietly sings.)* "Will you know my soul's unrest..."

In the hall, a figure in a top-hat and checkered trousers wrings his hands and leaps. Cries of "Bravo, Charlotta Ivanovna!"

Dunyasha: *(Stops to powder her nose.)* The mistress asked me to join the dancing—not enough ladies for all these gentlemen. But dancing makes my head spin. My heart runs wild, Firs Nikolaevich, and the postal clerk just told me things that took my breath away!

The music dies down.

Firs: Well what did he say?

Dunyasha: He says I'm a flower.

Yasha: *(Yawns.)* Simpleton...*(Exits.)*

Dunyasha: Like a flower...You know how delicate I can be—those pretty words make me melt.

Firs: You're in quite a tizzy.

Yepikhodov Enters.

Yepikhodov: Avdotya Fyodorovna, you don't wish to see me...I'm an insect, for all you care. *(Sighs.)* Ah, life!

Dunyasha: What is it you want?

Yepikhodov: No, no, I won't argue the point. *(Sighs.)* But then, admit it! if you look at things differently...I'll be blunt: Frankly at this point I'm lost in a sea of despond. I understand my fate, every day I come across new troubles, and I'm used to it, so I look on my fate with a smile. See? But you gave me your word, and therefore with regret I say...

Dunyasha: I'm sorry, but could we talk later on? I'd rather be left alone right now. It's like a dream *(Plays with her fan.)*.

Yepikhodov: Every day it's some misfortune, but I still have the strength to smile. I can even laugh!

Varya enters from the hall.

Varya: You're still here, Semyon? You're an impertinent man, do you know that? *(To Dunyasha.)* Run along, Dunyasha. *(To Yepikhodov.)* So when you're not playing billiards or breaking our cue, you're prancing through the living room like a guest.

Yepikhodov: I apologize and beg forgiveness...for my bluntness...but...but you have no right to cavil with me thus!

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Comment: 3.6: Firs, Yasha, Dunyasha, Yepikhodov, Pishchik

Varya: I'm not cavilling with you thus, I'm talking. You've said yourself how you wander from place to place, but you don't *do* anything. I, for one, have no idea why we need a bookkeeper.

Yepikhodov: (*Offended.*) If I work or wander, dine or play billiards—I'll submit to judgment by those who're older and wiser than you.

Varya: How dare you talk to me like that! (*Explodes.*) How dare you? I'm a nobody now? Is that it? Get out, now! Get out of here this minute!

Yepikhodov: (*Cowering.*) I beg you to choose your words more carefully.

Varya: (*Losing control.*) Get out this minute! Go!

He goes to the door, she follows him.

Troubles Galore! Get out, I want to forget you ever set foot in this house! Forget I ever saw you!

Yepikhodov exits, speaks from behind the door: "I shall report this behavior!"

Varya: Back for more? (*Picks up the cane Firs left by the door.*) Come on...come on...Here, I'll show you behavior...Well? Are you coming? Come on, report THIS....(*Swings the cane.*)

Lopakhin enters.

Lopakhin: Thank you, Highness...

Varya: (*Angrily, mockingly.*) My mistake!

Lopakhin: It's nothing. Thank you, Highness, for this gift...

Varya: There's no need for thanks. (*Goes away, then looks back at him and asks softly.*) Did I hurt you?

Lopakhin: It's really nothing. There'll be an enormous bump, though.

A voice from the hall: "Lopakhin is here! Yermolay Alekseich!"

Pishchik: Oh, sights to be seen, sounds to be heard...(*Kisses Lopakhin.*) Cognac! You smell like you've had a drop, old friend. We're making merry here, as well.

Lyubov Andreevna enters.

Lyubov Andreevna: Is that you, Yermolay Alekseich? What took you so long? Where is Leonid?

Lopakhin: Leonid Andreich came with me, he's coming.

Lyubov Andreevna: (*Frightened.*) Well? Was there an auction? Speak!

Lopakhin: (*Embarrassed, confused, trying to hide his joy.*) The auction closed at four o'clock...We missed the train, and had to wait until half-past nine. (*Sighs deeply.*) Oof! My head's a little woozy...

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Comment: 3.7: Varya, Yepikhodov, Dunyasha (can be done without Dunyasha)

Gaev enters. In his right hand is a package, with his left he wipes away tears.

Lyubov Andreevna: Lyonya, what happened? Tell me, Lyonya. *(Impatiently, through tears.)* Say something, for the love of God...

Gaev: *(Doesn't answer, just waves his hand. To Firs, crying.)* Take this...There's anchovies and smoked herring...I haven't eaten anything today...Oh, how I've suffered!

The door to the billiard room is open. From there, the sound of billiard balls and Yasha's voice: "Seven and eighteen!" Gaev's expression changes, and he stops crying.

I'm awfully tired. Firs, please help me change out of these clothes. *(Goes through the hall into his room. Firs follows.)*

Pishchik: What happened at the auction? Tell us!

Lyubov Andreevna: Is the cherry orchard sold?

Lopakhin: It's sold.

Lyubov Andreevna: Who bought it?

Lopakhin: I bought it.

Pause

Lyubov Andreevna collapses as if stricken; she would have fallen if she were not standing near a chair and

a table. Varya takes the keys from her belt, throws them onto the floor in the middle of the living room [downstage], and exits.

I bought it! Wait just a moment, ladies and gentlemen, my head is spinning, I can't find the words...*(Laughs.)* We got to the auction, and there's Deriganov. Leonid Andreich had only fifteen thousand, and Deriganov straightaway bid thirty over and above the mortgage. And I'm thinking, so that's your scheme, is it mate? I dug in my heels and bid forty. Him, forty-five. Me, fifty-five. See, he's going up by fives, and I'm going up by tens...And that's how it ended. On top of the mortgage I bid ninety thousand—that sealed it, so the cherry orchard is now mine! Mine!! *(Roars with laughter.)* God above, God of mercy, the cherry orchard is mine! Somebody say I'm drunk, I've lost my mind, that none of this is real...*(Stomps his feet.)* Don't laugh at me! If only my father and grandfather could rise from their graves and watch what's happening, how their Yermolay, their beaten, half-literate Yermolay, who ran barefoot in winter—if only they could see this same Yermolay buying the estate, the most beautiful thing in the entire world! I have bought the estate where my father and grandfather were slaves, where they weren't even allowed into the kitchen. I'm asleep, it's all just a dream, it can't be what it seems...It's the dark and mysterious work of my imagination..*(Picks up the keys, smiles affectionately.)* She threw down the keys...wants to show how she's not in charge

anymore...*(Shakes the keys.)* Well...what's the difference.

The orchestra is heard, tuning.

Hey you, musicians, play something, I want to hear you! Everyone, come and watch Yermolay Lopakhin set loose upon the cherry orchard, see the trees crack and tumble! We'll build summer cottages, and our children and our grandchildren will have a new life here...Music! Let's have music!

Music plays, Lyubov Andreevna sinks into the chair and quietly weeps.

(Scolds her) Tell me why—why didn't you listen to me? You poor woman, there's no going back anymore. *(With tears)* Oh, if only this could pass more quickly, if only something quick would change our graceless, joyless life.

Pishchik: *(Takes him by the arm, speaks under his breath.)* She's crying. Let's go into the hall, leave her alone...Come...*(Takes him by the arm and goes into the hall.)*

Lopakhin: What's this about? Strike up, music! Let's have everything the way I want! *(Ironically.)* There goes the new master, the owner of the cherry orchard! *(Accidentally bumps into a table, almost knocks over a candelabra.)* I can pay for everything! *(Exits with Pishchik.)*

In the hall and the living room, no one is onstage except for Ranyevskaya, who sits, trembles, and weeps bitterly. Music quietly plays. Anya and Trofimov quickly enter. Anya approaches her mother and kneels before her. Trofimov stands at the door to the hall [halfway upstage].

Anya: Mama!...Mama, are you crying? Dear, kind, gentle mama, beautiful mama, I bless you, I love you so. The cherry orchard is sold, it's gone now, that's true, but don't cry, mama, you still have life before you, you still have your pure, innocent soul...Come with me, Mama, come, let's go...We'll plant a new orchard, more glorious than this one, you'll see it and you'll understand, happiness—a deep, quiet happiness—will fill up your soul, like the sun in the early evening, and you'll smile, mama! Come with me, Mama, let's go...

Curtain.

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Comment: 3.8: Lopakhin, Gaev, Varya, Firs, Ranyevskaya, Pishchik, Anya, Trofimov (can be done without Trofimov)

Act IV

The set is arranged just as in Act I. There are neither curtains on the windows, nor paintings hung on the walls; all that's left is furniture, which has all been stacked in a corner, as if ready for sale. Onstage, a sense of emptiness. Near the upstage door leading outside: Suitcases and travelling bags. The voices of Varya and Anya can be heard through the open stage-right door. Lopakhin stands and waits. Yasha holds a serving tray with full champagne glasses. Upstage, Yepikhodov ties up a trunk. Beyond the stage there is a muffled din: the peasants have come to say goodbye.

Gaev's voice: "Thank you, my brothers, thank you all."

Yasha: The peasants came to say goodbye. They're a kind people, Yermolay Alekseich, but not very bright.

The din subsides. Lyubov Andreevna and Gaev enter from upstage; she's crying, pale. Her face is trembling and she can't speak.

Gaev: You gave them your clutch, Lyuba. Quite uncalled for. It's just not done.

Lyubov Andreevna: I couldn't help it! I couldn't help it!

They exit.

Lopakhin: *(In the doorway, calling after them.)* Please, accept this small gift! A few drops of champagne before we part. I couldn't make it into town, and they only had one bottle at the station. Please, help yourselves!

Pause

What's wrong? You'd rather not? *(Walks away from the door.)* If I'd known, I wouldn't have bought it. Well, I won't drink either.

Yasha carefully places the tray on a chair.

Drink up, Yasha. You, if nobody else.

Yasha: To those departing! And to those we leave behind! *(Drinks.)* This isn't real champagne, I can tell you that much.

Lopakhin: Eight rubles a bottle.

Pause

It's cold as hell around here.

Yasha: No fire in the hearth today...Anyway we're leaving. *(Laughs.)*

Lopakhin: What's so funny?

Yasha: Happiness.

Lopakhin: It's October, but outside it's sunny and calm, like summertime. Good building weather. *(Looks*

at the clock on the wall.) Ladies and gentlemen, remember that we have to be at the station in forty seven minutes! That means we're leaving in twenty minutes. Let's move quickly, now.

Trofimov enters from the yard, in a coat.

Trofimov: It seems like time to go already. The horses are hitched. God knows where my galoshes are. I lost them. *(In the door.)* Anya, my galoshes are gone. I can't find them!

Lopakhin: Well, I'm off to Kharkov. On the same train as you, in fact. I'll be in Kharkov for the winter. I've niggled away the whole summer with you all. If I'm not working, I turn into a wreck. I don't know what to do with my hands. They hang down by my side, like they belong to somebody else.

Trofimov: We're leaving, and soon you'll go back to some kind of useful work.

Lopakhin: Here, have a drink.

Trofimov: I'd rather not.

Lopakhin: So now you're headed back to Moscow?

Trofimov: Yes, I'm escorting them to the station, and tomorrow I'll leave for Moscow.

Lopakhin: Right...How does that work? The professors probably cancel their classes and wait for you!

Trofimov: That's none of your business.

Lopakhin: How many years have you been at university?

Trofimov: Think of something new to say. That's old and stale. *(Reaches in his pockets.)* You know, it occurs to me we'll never see each other again, so let me give you some advice before we part: stop waving your arms around! Get out of that habit. It's all a form of armwaving, this talk of summer cottages, vacationers who turn into landowners—it's all just waving your arms around...But in spite of all that, I like you. You have fine, sensitive hands, like an artist, and you have a gentle heart...

Lopakhin: *(Embraces him.)* Farewell, my friend. Thank you for everything. Here, take some money for the road. Just in case.

Trofimov: What's this about? I don't need it.

Lopakhin: But you don't have anything!

Trofimov: Yes I do. Thank you. I make money on translations. They're right here, in my pocket. *(Suddenly agitated.)* But my galoshes are nowhere to be found!

Varya: *(Calls from another room.)* Here's your junk! *(Hurls a pair of rubber galoshes onto the stage.)*

Trofimov: What's got into you, Varya? Why...wait, these aren't my galoshes!

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Comment: 4.1: Lopakhin, Yasha, Ranyevskaya, Gaev

Lopakhin: Last year I planted nearly three thousand acres of poppies, worth forty thousand rubles. And when my poppies were in bloom, what a picture that was! Just think of it like that—I made forty thousand rubles, and I'm loaning you this money because I can. Why fight over it? I'm a peasant...it's from the heart.

Trofimov: Your father was a peasant, mine was a pharmacist, and from that follows absolutely nothing.

Lopakhin takes out his wallet.

Just stop, stop....If you offered me two thousand, I wouldn't take it. I'm a free man. Everything that's lofty and dear to you—to all of you, rich or poor—it means nothing to me. Feathers in the wind. I'll make it without you, I can overtake you, I'm proud and strong. Humanity is marching toward a higher truth, toward the greatest possible happiness on earth, and I'm in the foremost ranks!

Lopakhin: Will you get there?

Trofimov: I will.

Pause

Either that, or I'll show others the way.

In the distance, the sounds of axes in the orchard can be heard.

Lopakhin: Well, goodbye, my friend. It's time to go. We stand here furrowing our brows, and meanwhile life

just drifts along. When I work for days at a time, my thoughts feel simpler, and it seems like I, too, know why I exist. Think, brother: How many people in Russia have no idea why they exist? Anyway it makes no odds, that's not what makes things tick. I heard Leonid Andreich took a job at the bank for six thousand a year...'Course he's too lazy to stick with it...

Anya: *(In the doorway.)* Mama asks you to wait until she's gone before you cut down the orchard.

Trofimov: Haven't you the slightest hint of tactfulness...*(Exits through upstage door.)*

Lopakhin: Quite right, quite right...God, these people *(Exits after him.)*

Anya: Has Firs been sent to the hospital?

Yasha: I gave the order this morning. I'm pretty sure they sent him.

Anya: *(To Yepikhodov, who is walking through the hall.)* Semyon Panteleich, please find out whether Firs was sent to the hospital.

Yasha: *(Offended.)* I told Yegor this morning. Go ahead, ask him a dozen times!

Yepikhodov: Venerable Firs, in my considered opinion, is beyond rejuvenation. He needs eternal rest. And I can only envy him. *(Places a suitcase on a box, crushes a hat.)* Well, there you go. Should have known. *(Exits.)*

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Comment: 4.2: Lopakhin, Trofimov, Anya, Yasha, Varya (Can be done without Varya/Yasha)

Yasha: *(Ironically.)* Troubles galore...

Varya: *(In the doorway.)* Did they send Firs to the hospital?

Anya: Yes.

Varya: Then why didn't they take the letter for the doctor?

Anya: We'll have to send it after him...

Varya: *(From the next room.)* Where is Yasha? Tell him his mother came to see him. She wants to say goodbye.

Yasha: *(Waves his hand.)* When will it end...

Dunyasha bustles near the pile of luggage. Now that Yasha is alone, she approaches him.

Dunyasha: Can't you even look at me, Yasha? You're leaving...You're abandoning me...*(Cries and throws her arms around his neck.)*

Yasha: What's there to cry about? *(Drinks champagne.)* In six days I'll be back in Paris. Tomorrow we'll hop an express train, and zoom, off we go! I can hardly believe it. *Veev lah France!*...I don't belong here, I can't live...and that's all there is to it. I've given it a chance, had my fill of this old backwater. *(Drinks champagne.)* What's there to cry about? Pull yourself together—ladies don't bawl like that.

Dunyasha: *(Powers her nose, looks in a mirror.)* Write me from Paris! Oh, I loved you, Yasha, I loved you so. I'm a dainty creature, Yasha!

Yasha: Someone's coming. *(Bustles near the suitcases, quietly sings.)*

Lyubov Andreevna, Gaev, Anya, and Charlotta Ivanonva all enter.

Gaev: We should be off. Not much time left. Who's that smells of herring?

Lyubov Andreevna: We should load up the suitcases in ten minutes...*(Looks at the room.)* Farewell, dear home, home where my fathers lived. Winter will pass, spring will arrive, but you'll be all gone. They're going to tear you down. How much these walls have seen! *(Warmly kisses her daughter.)* My treasure, you're simply glowing, your eyes sparkle like twin diamonds. Are you happy?

Anya: So happy! We're starting a new life, Mama!

Gaev: *(Cheerfully.)* As it turns out, everything is fine now. Before the cherry orchard was sold we were all worries and frets, but then, when the issue was finally and irrevocably decided, those fears dissolved, we even became cheerful...I was a bank clerk, and now I'm a financier...Off the yellow, into the corner, and Lyuba, think what you like, but you look better off, that's certain.

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Comment: 4.3: Dunyasha, Yepikhodov, Anya, Varya, Yasha.

Lyubov Andreevna: Yes. My nerves are better now, it's true.

She's given her hat and coat.

I sleep better now. Take my luggage out, Yasha, would you? It's time. *(To Anya.)* My little darling, we'll see each other again soon. I'm leaving for Paris, I'll live there on the money our Aunt in Yaroslavl sent to buy the estate. Hurray for our Great Aunt! Of course that money won't last long.

Anya: You'll come back soon, Mama...Won't you? When I finish my exams I can start working and I'll be able to help you. We'll read books together, mama...won't we? *(Kisses her mother's hands.)* We'll read in the autumn twilight, we'll read so many books, and we'll see a new and wondrous world open up before us...*(Imagining.)* Mama, come back...

Lyubov Andreevna: I will, my angel. *(Hugs her daughter.)*

Lopakhin enters. Charlotta quietly hums a tune.

Gaev: Charlotta is happy! She's singing!

Charlotta: *(Picks up a bundle that looks like a child in a wrap.)* Bye bye, my child...

The baby can be heard to cry: "Wuaaah, wuaaah!"

Quiet, my darling little boy.

"Wuaaah, wuaaah!"

I feel so bad for you! *(Throws down the bundle.)* And that, you see, is how you'll find a place for me. I can't take it.

Lopakhin: We'll find a place, Charlotta Ivanovna, don't worry.

Gaev: We're all being abandoned, Varya's leaving...All of a sudden, nobody needs us.

Charlotta: There's nowhere for me to live in town. I have to go...*(Sings.)* Oh, it makes no odds...

Pishchik enters.

Lopakhin: It's a miracle!

Pishchik: *(Out of breath.)* Phew, let me catch my breath...I'm spent...Can I have a glass of water...

Gaev: Scrounging again, eh? I'll dodge this bullet...*(Exits.)*

Pishchik: Long time since I darkened this door...You look ravishing...*(To Lopakhin.)* You're here...Glad to see you...A man of prodigious intellect...Here...For you...*(Gives money to Lopakhin.)* Four hundred rubles...Still eight hundred forty left...

Lopakhin: *(Shrugs his shoulders in astonishment.)* Is this a dream?...Where'd you get all this?

Pishchik: This?...Sweltering...Extraordinary happening. A couple of Englishmen came and on my land they discovered some kind of white clay...*(To*

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Comment: 4.4: Ranyevskaya, Gaev, Lopakhin, Anya, Charlotta, Yasha, Dunyasha (Can be done without Yasha and Dunyasha)

Lyubov Andreevna.) And four hundred to you...Ravishing creature...Breathtaking...*(Gives her money.)* The rest later. *(Drinks water.)* A young man on the train just told me about how...a renowned philosopher jumped off a roof..."Jump!" he said, and that solves everything. *(Surprised.)* Just imagine! Some water!...

Lopakhin: Who are these Englishmen?

Pishchik: I leased them the plot with the clay for twenty four years...Forgive me, no time for details...Have to dash...I'm off to Znoikov...to Kardamonov...I owe money all over...*(Drinks.)* Here's to your health...I'll swing by on Thursday...

Lyubov Andreevna: We're going to town right now, and tomorrow I'll be on a train to Paris.

Pishchik: How's that? *(Alarmed.)* Why town? 'S'ounds, look at the furniture...Luggage...Well, no matter...*(Through tears.)* No matter...People of insuperable intelligence...Those Englishmen...Be well...God will help you—no matter...All things on earth eventually end...*(Kisses Lyubov Andreevna's hand.)* And if you ever hear I've met my end, just remember that...horse and say: "On earth once lived the scoundrel...Simeonov-Pishchik...God rest his soul...Magnificent weather...Yes...*(Exits, deeply troubled and embarrassed, and says from behind the door.)* My daughter, Dashenka, asked to be remembered! *(Exits.)*

Lyubov Andreevna: Now we can go. Only two things still trouble me. The first is Firs—he's ill. *(Looks at her watch.)* We can wait five more minutes...

Anya: Mama, Firs went to the hospital. Yasha sent him off this morning.

Lyubov Andreevna: The other worry is Varya. She's used to rising at dawn and getting straight to work, and now without work she's like a fish out of water. The poor thing has grown pale and thin, she cries all the time...

Pause

You know this only too well, Yermolay Alekseich. I've always dreamed...I'd give you her hand, and everyone could see that someday, you two would be married. *(Whispers to Anya, who nods to Charlotta. They both exit.)* She loves you and you're fond of her. It makes no sense to me why you keep passing each other like ships. I don't understand!

Lopakhin: I don't understand, myself, to be honest. It's all a bit weird...If there's still time, then I'm ready for my part...We'll settle it straightaway—*basta*. But I don't think I can make the proposal on my own.

Lyubov Andreevna: Perfect. It won't take more than a minute. I'll call her in...

Lopakhin: And there's even some champagne left. *(Looks at the glasses.)* Empty, someone already drank it.

Yasha coughs.

I hope you were thirsty...

Lyubov Andreevna: *(Exuberantly.)* Splendid. She's coming...Yasha, allez! I'll call her in...*(At the door.)* Varya, drop everything and come in here. Come on! *(Exits with Yasha.)*

Lopakhin: *(Looks at his watch.)* Alright...

Pause

At the door one hears stifled laughter, whispers, finally Varya enters.

Varya: *(Waits at the door for a long time.)* That's strange, I can't find it anywhere...

Lopakhin: Find what?

Varya: I packed it myself, and now I don't remember where I put it.

Pause

Lopakhin: So where do you go now, Varvara Mikhailovna?

Varya: Me? The Ragulins...We agreed on a fee, they needed a housekeeper...And somebody to look after things, you know.

Lopakhin: Is that in Yashnevo? That's fifty miles from here.

Pause

So life is over in this house...

Varya: *(Searches in the luggage.)* Now where could it be...I must have packed it in a trunk...Yes, life is over in this house...Nothing here anymore...

Lopakhin: And I'm headed to Kharkov now...On the same train as you. Lots of work. I'm leaving Yepikhodov in charge...I hired him.

Varya: What?!

Lopakhin: Last year around this time snow was falling, if you remember, but now it's clear and sunny. Only thing is the cold...Three degrees of frost.

Varya: I didn't notice.

Pause

Besides, our thermometer's broken...

Pause

Voice from upstage door: "Yermolay Alekseich!..."

Lopakhin: *(As if he'd been waiting a while to be called.)* Coming! *(Exits quickly.)*

Varya, sitting on the floor, lays her head in a bundle with a dress, quietly sobs. The door opens, Lyubov Andreevna carefully enters.

Lyubov Andreevna: What happened?

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Comment: 4.5: Pishchik, Lopakhin, Ranyevskaya, Gaev, Yasha (Can be done without Gaev and Yasha)

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Comment: 4.6: Lopakhin, Varya

Pause.

We're leaving.

Varya: *(She has stopped crying, wipes her eyes.)* Yes, it's time, Mama. I'll make it to the Ragulins' today, I just can't miss the train...

Lyubov Andreevna: *(In the doorway.)* Anya, get your things!

Anya enters, then Gaev, Charlotta Ivanovna. Gaev is wearing a heavy overcoat with a hood. The servants and coachmen gather. Yepikhodov bustles by the stack of possessions.

Now we can be on our way.

Anya: *(Joyfully.)* On our way!

Gaev: My dear, beloved friends! As I leave this house for the last time, how can I hold my peace, how can I furl my tongue, and not give expression to those feelings as now are welling up within my breast...

Anya: *(Pleading.)* Uncle!

Varya: Dear Uncle, you mustn't!

Gaev: *(Deflated.)* Doublette off the yellow into the center...I am silent...

Trofimov enters, followed by Lopakhin.

Trofimov: Well, ladies and gentlemen? Time to go!

Lopakhin: Yepikhodov, my coat!

Lyubov Andreevna: I'll sit for one more minute. It's as if I'm seeing these walls, this ceiling...all for the first time, and I love them so much...I want to look at them forever...

Gaev: I remember when we were six years old, on Trinity Sunday, I sat at that window and watched as my father went to Mass...

Lyubov Andreevna: Did we forget anything?

Lopakhin: Seems like everything. *(To Yepikhodov, as he puts on his coat.)* Yepikhodov, be sure you keep the place in order.

Yepikhodov: *(Says in a booming voice.)* Rest assured, Yermolay Alekseich, I will!

Lopakhin: What's wrong with your voice?

Yepikhodov: Drank some water, down the wrong pipe.

Yasha: *(Suspiciously.)* Simpleton.

Lyubov Andreevna: We're leaving—and there won't be a soul left behind...

Lopakhin: Not until the spring arrives.

Varya: *(Picks up an umbrella that's leaning in a corner, pretends to swing it at him.)*

Lopakhin pretends to be frightened.

Oh, no, no...that's not what I meant.

Trofimov: Ladies and gentlemen, come take your seats on the coach....It's time! The train is on its way!

Varya: Petya, here they are—your galoshes, next to the luggage. *(Through tears.)* But they're so dirty, so old...

Trofimov: *(Putting on his galoshes.)* We're off, ladies and gentlemen!

Gaev: *(Deeply troubled, afraid to cry.)* The train...the station...doublette into the middle, bank the white into the corner pocket...

Lyubov Andreevna: We're going!

Lopakhin: Is this everyone? Nobody in there? *(Locks the stage-right door.)* Here some items will be stowed, have to lock up the place. We're off!

Anya: Goodbye, home! Goodbye, old life!

Trofimov: Hello, new life!...*(Exits with Anya.)*

*Varya looks around, lingers a moment, and exits.
Yasha exits, and Charlotta with her dog.*

Lopakhin: Until Spring, then. Let's go, ladies and gentlemen....Until we meet again!...*(Exits.)*

*Lyubov Andreevna and Gaev are left alone onstage.
It's as if they've been waiting for this, fall into one another's arms and sob, with restraint, quietly, afraid of being heard.*

Gaev: *(In despair.)* My sister, my sister...

Lyubov Andreevna: Oh, my beautiful orchard!...My life, my youth, my happiness...Goodbye!...Goodbye!...

Anya's voice: *(cheerful and inviting.)* "Mama!..."

Trofimov's voice: *(cheerful, excited.)* "Hallo!..."

Just one more look at the walls, the windows...My mother loved walking through this room...

Gaev: My sister, my sister!...

Anya's voice: "Mama!..."

Trofimov's voice: "Hallo!..."

Lyubov Andreevna: We're coming!...

They exit. One can hear the doors being locked, then the sound of coaches departing. It's quiet. Amid the silence, one can hear the dull thud of axes against the trees. It sounds forlorn and dismal.

Footsteps are heard. From the stage-left door, Firs appears. He is dressed, as always, in a jacket and white waistcoat, slippers on his feet. He is sick.

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Comment: 4.7: Lopakhin, Ranyevskaya, Gaev, Varya, Yasha, Charlotta, Trofimov, Anya, Yepikhodov, Yasha

Firs: *(Approaches the door, tries the handle.)* Locked. They're gone...*(Sits on the divan.)* They forgot...Oh, well...I'll sit down here...And Leonid Andreich of course forgot his overcoat, he's got a jacket on...*(Nervously sighs.)* I didn't notice...Green little tenderfoot...*(Mumbles something unintelligible.)* Life is over, like I never even lived at all...*(Lies down.)* I'll lie down...No zip in these bones, nothing left, just nothing...Akh...you snifflewit!...*(Lies motionless.)*

Suddenly a distant sound, as if from the sky, the sound of a breaking string, dying away, mournful. Fades into silence. The only sound that can be heard is the distant thud of axes falling in the orchard.

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Comment: 4.8: Ranyevskaya, Gaev, Firs

