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Masaru Uchida, Gifu University

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About This Edition

This book is a simplified English adaptation created for extensive reading practice. The text was generated using ChatGPT and prepared for intermediate English learners as part of an educational project.

Target reading level: CEFR A2-B1

This edition aims to support fluency development through accessible vocabulary, expanded narration, and improved readability while preserving the original story structure.

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Anton Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard* (Simplified Edition, Adapted and Simplified by ChatGPT)

Part 1

Dramatis Personae

LUBOV ANDREYEVNA RANEVSKY, a landowner. ANYA, her daughter, aged seventeen. VARYA, her adopted daughter, aged twenty-seven.

LEONID ANDREYEVITCH GAEV, Mme. Ranevsky's brother. ERMOLAI ALEXEYEVITCH LOPAKHIN, a merchant. PETER SERGEYEVITCH TROFIMOV, a student.

BORIS BORISOVITCH SIMEONOV-PISCHIN, a landowner. CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA, a governess. SIMEON PANTELEYEVITCH EPIKHODOV, a clerk.

DUNYASHA, a maidservant. FIERS, an old footman. YASHA, a young footman. Also a tramp, a station-master, a post-office clerk, guests, and servants.

ACT ONE

[A room still called the nursery. One door leads to Anya's room. It is almost sunrise in May, and the cherry trees are in flower outside. The garden is beautiful, but the air is cold, there has been frost in the night, and the windows are shut.]

LOPAKHIN. Thank God, the train has come at last. What time is it now? It must be nearly two o'clock.

DUNYASHA. It will soon be two. Look, it is already getting light, so we do not need the candle now. [She blows it out.]

LOPAKHIN. The train was very late, at least two hours late. I made a stupid mistake, though, and I am angry with myself. I came here so that I could meet them at the station, but I fell asleep in my chair and missed the right time.

DUNYASHA. I thought perhaps you had gone away. I keep listening because I feel they must be near now. Every small sound makes my heart jump.

LOPAKHIN. No, not yet. They still have to get their bags and all the rest of their things. [He pauses and looks around the room.] Lubov Andreyevna has been abroad for five years, and I do not know what she is like now, but I remember her kindness.

LOPAKHIN. She was a good woman, simple and gentle, and I have not forgotten it. When I was a boy of fifteen, my father struck me in the face in the yard and made my nose bleed. He was only a peasant shopkeeper, but she took me to this very room, washed me, and said, “Don’t cry, little man; it will be all right before your wedding.”

LOPAKHIN. She called me little man then, and I still hear it in my ears. My father was a peasant, and I am rich now, with a white waistcoat and yellow shoes, but if you look closely you will see that I am still a peasant to the bone. I was reading this book just now, but I understood nothing in it and fell asleep over it.

DUNYASHA. The dogs did not sleep all night. They know the family is coming home, and even the animals are restless. Everything in the house seems to be waiting.

LOPAKHIN. And what is wrong with you, Dunyasha? Your face is pale, and your hands are moving. You look as if you will fall down.

DUNYASHA. My hands are shaking badly. I feel weak, and I think I may faint. I do not know why I am so troubled.

LOPAKHIN. You are too delicate. You dress like a lady and do your hair like a lady too, but that is not the right thing for you. A servant should remember who she is.

EPIKHODOV. [Entering with a bouquet, dropping it, and picking it up again.] The gardener sent these flowers. He says they must be put in the dining room at once. [He gives the bouquet to Dunyasha.]

LOPAKHIN. Bring me some kvass. I have been here a long time, and my throat is dry. Be quick about it.

DUNYASHA. Yes, at once. [She goes out.]

EPIKHODOV. There is frost this morning, three degrees of frost, and yet the cherry trees are in flower. I do not respect our climate, and I say that openly. Our weather never wishes to help us.

EPIKHODOV. And also, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, I bought myself new boots two days ago, but they squeak so loudly that I can hardly bear it. Every step is like a complaint. What should I rub on them?

LOPAKHIN. Go away. You tire me the moment you begin to speak. You always bring trouble with you.

EPIKHODOV. Trouble comes to me every day, and I no longer complain. I am

used to it now, so I even smile. [Dunyasha returns with kvass.] I shall leave you now.

EPIKHODOV. [Knocking over a chair.] There, you see. That is exactly how life treats me. It is almost wonderful in its own way. [He goes out.]

DUNYASHA. I may tell you in secret that Epikhodov has proposed to me. He spoke to me after Easter, and now I do not know what to think. He is not a bad man, but when he talks, it is often impossible to understand him.

DUNYASHA. I think perhaps I like him a little. He is terribly in love with me, and everyone laughs because something goes wrong for him every day. They call him “Two-and-twenty troubles.”

LOPAKHIN. [Listening.] I think they are here now. Yes, this time I really hear them. The wheels are coming closer.

DUNYASHA. They are coming. Oh, what is happening to me? I am cold all over, and I truly may faint.

LOPAKHIN. Yes, that is them. Let us go and meet them. I wonder whether she will know me after five whole years.

[They go out quickly. The stage is empty for a moment. Noise is heard in the next room. Fiers crosses the stage quickly, leaning on a stick, speaking to himself. Then Lubov Andreyevna, Anya, Charlotta Ivanovna with her little dog, Varya, Gaev, Simeonov-Pischin, Lopakhin, Dunyasha, and servants with luggage pass through.]

ANYA. Let us come through this room. Mother, do you remember it? Do you remember what this room is?

LUBOV. [With joy and tears.] The nursery. It is the nursery. Oh, my dear old room.

VARYA. How cold it is in here. My hands are quite numb. Mother, your rooms are just as they always were, the white one and the violet one too.

LUBOV. My dear nursery, my beautiful room. I slept here when I was a little girl, and now I feel like a child again. [She kisses Gaev, Varya, and Dunyasha.] Everything is still alive for me here.

GAEV. The train was two hours late. There is Russian order for you. There is our fine railway service.

CHARLOTTA. [To Pischin.] My dog eats nuts too. He really does, and he likes them. Think of that.

PISCHIN. Just think of it. What a clever dog. What strange things one sees in this world.

[All go out except Anya and Dunyasha.]

DUNYASHA. We waited and waited for you. It felt as if the night would never end. [She helps Anya take off her cloak and hat.]

ANYA. I did not sleep for four nights on the journey. I am tired to the point of pain. I am still freezing.

DUNYASHA. You left in Lent, when it was snowing and bitterly cold, but now look at the spring. My dear darling, my sweet one, how glad I am to see you. I must tell you something at once because I cannot keep it inside.

ANYA. [Tiredly.] Something else now? I can hardly stand. My head is heavy.

DUNYASHA. Epikhodov proposed to me after Easter. It happened just as I told you before. He says he cannot live without me.

ANYA. Everything is just the same as before. [She adjusts her hair.] I have lost all my hairpins somewhere on the road, and I feel as if I have left half of myself behind.

ANYA. [Looking into her room.] My room, my windows, all of it is still here. It is as if I never went away, and yet I have changed. I am home at last.

ANYA. To-morrow morning I shall wake up early and run into the garden. I want to see the cherry trees with my own eyes. But first I must sleep, because I did not sleep at all on the way.

DUNYASHA. Peter Sergeyevitch came two days ago. He is here on the estate now. He has not gone away.

ANYA. Peter? Truly Peter? Is he really here?

DUNYASHA. He is sleeping in the bath-house because he said he did not want to be in the way. Barbara Mihailovna told me not to wake him. She spoke very clearly about it.

VARYA. [Entering with keys at her belt.] Dunyasha, bring some coffee at once. Mother wants coffee immediately. She is tired from the road.

DUNYASHA. This very minute. [She goes out.]

VARYA. So you have come back, thank God. My darling is home again. My pretty one is really back.

ANYA. I had such a hard time. You cannot imagine all of it. I felt sorry for mother every minute.

VARYA. I can imagine enough. Tell me now. Tell me quietly.

ANYA. We went to Paris, and it was cold there too, with snow everywhere. I speak French horribly, and mother lives on the fifth floor. When I reached her, I found Frenchmen there, women too, and an old abbé with a book, and the whole place smelled of smoke and felt comfortless.

ANYA. I suddenly felt such pity for mother that I put my arms round her head and would not let her go. Then she began to cry and hug me. It was all so sad that I cannot think of it calmly.

VARYA. [Weeping.] Do not say any more for a moment. I understand enough. My heart is already full.

ANYA. She has sold her villa near Mentone. She has nothing left now, truly nothing. I had no money either, and we only just managed to get here.

ANYA. And mother still does not understand how bad things are. At a station she ordered the most expensive dishes and gave each waiter a whole rouble. Charlotta did the same, and Yasha wants money too.

VARYA. I have seen that wretch already. He has learned bad habits abroad. He thinks himself very important.

ANYA. How are things here? Has the interest been paid? Has anything been

saved?

VARYA. No. There was almost no chance of that. The estate is to be sold in August.

ANYA. O God. O God, how terrible that is. It feels like a blow.

LOPAKHIN. [Looking in at the door and teasing them.] Moo! Moo! [He goes away again.]

VARYA. I should like to strike him sometimes, truly I should. He laughs when I want to cry. [She shakes her fist toward the door.]

ANYA. Varya, has he proposed to you? Tell me honestly. Does he speak of marriage at all?

VARYA. No. I think it will all come to nothing. He is always busy, and I am not really his concern. Everyone talks about our marriage, everyone congratulates me, but it is all like a dream and not like real life.

ANYA. Poor Varya. Poor dear Varya. I wish something clear would happen for you.

VARYA. Your mother bought you a brooch shaped like a bee, did she not? It is pretty, but it hurts me to see such things now. We need money for other matters.

ANYA. Yes, mother bought it. [Sadly.] In Paris I even went up in a balloon. Imagine that. It all felt strange and empty.

VARYA. My dear one has come back. That is the main thing. If only you could marry a rich man, then I would feel at peace.

VARYA. Then I would go away on foot to holy places, first to Kiev, then to Moscow, then farther still. I would keep walking and praying. That would be a good life for me.

ANYA. The birds are already singing in the garden. What time can it be now? Morning is coming fast.

VARYA. It must be nearly three. You should sleep now, darling. You need rest more than anything. [She goes into Anya's room.]

[Yasha enters with a plaid shawl and a travelling bag.]

YASHA. May I pass through here? I hope I am not in anyone's way. I only want to get by.

DUNYASHA. I hardly knew you, Yasha. You have changed a great deal abroad. You look quite different now.

YASHA. Hm. And who are you? I do not know you at all. Why are you speaking to me like that?

DUNYASHA. When you went away, I was only this high. I am Dunyasha, Theodore Kozoyedov's daughter. Surely you remember me now.

YASHA. Ah, you little cucumber. So that is who you are. [He looks around and embraces her.]

[She screams and drops a saucer. Yasha goes out quickly. Varya appears in the doorway angrily.]

VARYA. What was that noise? What has happened now? Can no one keep order in this house?

DUNYASHA. [In tears.] I have broken a saucer. It slipped from my hand.

VARYA. That may mean good luck. At least let us hope so. Heaven knows we need some.

ANYA. [Coming out.] We must tell mother that Peter is here. She should know it. It may matter to her.

VARYA. I told them not to wake him. Better not, not yet. Mother has enough feelings already.

ANYA. Father died six years ago. A month later my little brother Grisha was drowned in the river, and he was only seven. Mother could not bear it and went abroad without looking back.

ANYA. Peter Trofimov was Grisha's tutor. If mother sees him, she will remember everything at once. That is why I am afraid.

[Fiers enters, moving quickly in his old livery.]

FIERS. The mistress is going to have coffee here. Is the coffee ready? Where is the cream? Why is everything wrong already?

VARYA. What are you muttering, Fiers? Speak more clearly. You are trembling with excitement.

FIERS. The mistress is home again. I have lived long enough to see it. Now I could die in peace.

Part 2

[Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAEV, LOPAKHIN, and SIMEONOV-PISCHIN. GAEV is moving his arms as if he is still at a billiard table.]

LUBOV. Let me think now. Red ball into the corner. Then twice into the middle. I still remember it all, Leon, just as if no time had passed at all.

GAEV. Right into the pocket. Once you and I slept in this very room, and now I am fifty-one years old. It is strange, very strange.

LOPAKHIN. Yes, time goes on whether we want it to or not. It does not stop for anybody.

GAEV. Who goes on? What are you talking about? I only smell patchouli in here, and old memories too.

ANYA. I am going to bed now. Good night, mother. Good night, uncle.

LUBOV. My lovely little girl. [Kisses her hand.] Are you glad to be home? I still cannot believe that we are really here.

GAEV. God be with you, my child. How much you look like your mother at that age. [To LUBOV.] Luba, she is almost your image.

[ANYA gives her hand to LOPAKHIN and PISCHIN and goes out, closing the door behind her.]

LUBOV. She is so tired, poor child. The journey has taken all her strength out of her.

PISCHIN. It was a very long road. Even a strong person would be tired after it. For a young girl it is much harder.

VARYA. [To LOPAKHIN and PISCHIN.] Well, gentlemen, it is nearly three o'clock. It is really time for you to go.

LUBOV. [Laughing.] You are just the same as ever, Varya. [Draws her close and kisses her.] I will have some coffee now, and then we shall all sleep. Thank you, dear Fiers.

[FIERS puts a cushion under her feet.]

LUBOV. I am used to coffee. I drink it day and night. Thank you, dear old man. I am so glad you are still with us.

VARYA. I will go and see whether all the luggage has been brought in. [Exit.]

LUBOV. Is it truly I who am sitting here? I feel like laughing and crying together. I want to jump up and wave my arms, and yet I can hardly breathe.

LUBOV. Suppose this is a dream. God knows I love my country. I love it deeply. I cried all the way in the train, and I could hardly look out of the window.

FIERS. The day before yesterday. The day before yesterday you were still away. Now you are here again.

GAEV. He does not hear well. One has to speak loudly to him now. He lives half in the past and half in the present.

LOPAKHIN. I must leave for Kharkov by the five o'clock train. It is a pity, because I should like to sit with you and talk. You look as fine as ever, Lubov Andreyevna.

PISCHIN. Even finer. Paris clothes do not hurt you at all. They suit you wonderfully, confound it all.

LOPAKHIN. Leonid Andreyevitch calls me a snob and a usurer, but that means nothing to me. Let him speak. What matters is that you trust me as you once did.

LOPAKHIN. Your eyes used to look at me so kindly. My father was a serf of your father and grandfather, but you once showed me such kindness that I have never forgotten it. I love you as if you were family, and perhaps even more than that.

LUBOV. I cannot sit still. I am too happy and too troubled at the same time. You may laugh at me if you like. I am a foolish woman.

LUBOV. My dear little cupboard. [Kisses the cupboard.] My little table. Everything here seems to know me still.

GAEV. Nurse died while you were away. We wrote to you about it.

LUBOV. Yes, bless her soul. I heard of it in a letter. It hurt me, though I was far away.

GAEV. And Anastasius died too. Peter Kosoy left me and now lives in town with the police commissioner. Everything changes while one is not looking.

PISCHIN. My daughter Dashenka sends her love. She told me not to forget it,

so I am saying it at once.

LOPAKHIN. I want to say something pleasant, something very useful. [Looks at his watch.] I have little time, so I will speak plainly and quickly. Please listen carefully.

LOPAKHIN. As you know, your cherry orchard will be sold to pay your debts. The auction is fixed for the twenty-second of August. But do not be afraid; there is still a way out.

LOPAKHIN. Your estate is only a short distance from the town, and the railway runs near it. If the orchard and the land by the river are divided into villa lots and leased for summer houses, you can make at least twenty-five thousand roubles a year.

GAEV. What nonsense. What complete nonsense. It is not even worth answering.

LUBOV. I do not understand you at all, Ermolai Alexeyevitch. You speak as if the thing were simple.

LOPAKHIN. It is simple. You can get good money for every piece of land, and if you start now, I am sure every lot will be taken before autumn. There is demand everywhere.

LOPAKHIN. In short, you can be saved. I congratulate you already. But first you must clear everything away, put the place in order, pull down the old buildings that nobody needs, and cut down the old cherry orchard.

LUBOV. Cut it down? My dear man, forgive me, but you understand nothing. If there is one thing in the whole province that is truly beautiful and worth remembering, it is this orchard.

LOPAKHIN. The only remarkable thing about the orchard is that it is large. It bears fruit only every other year, and even then no one knows what to do with the cherries. Nobody buys them.

GAEV. This orchard is mentioned in the Encyclopaedic Dictionary. That should tell you what it means.

LOPAKHIN. [Looks at his watch.] If we do nothing and decide nothing, then on the twenty-second of August both the orchard and the whole estate will be sold. Make up your minds. I swear there is no other way.

FIERS. In the old days, forty or fifty years ago, they dried the cherries, soaked them, pickled them, and made jam. They used to send the dried cherries to Moscow and Kharkov by cart, and there was money in it then.

GAEV. Be quiet, Fiers. Those times are gone.

FIERS. The cherries were soft, sweet, and full of scent. People knew the method then. They really knew what to do.

LUBOV. What method? What was it? Tell us, if you remember.

FIERS. They have forgotten it. Nobody remembers now. Everything has been forgotten, all of it.

PISCHIN. [To LUBOV.] And Paris? Eh? Did you eat frogs there? People always ask that.

LUBOV. No, I ate crocodiles. That is what I should say to such questions.

PISCHIN. Think of that now. Crocodiles. Abroad must be a strange place indeed.

LOPAKHIN. Until recently there were only landowners and peasants in the villages. Now villa people have come as well, and in twenty years they will be everywhere.

LOPAKHIN. At present they sit on their balconies and drink tea, but later they may grow things on their little plots, and then your orchard may become rich, happy, and full of life in a new way.

GAEV. Rubbish. Pure rubbish. You speak about this place as if it were a market.

[Enter VARYA and YASHA.]

VARYA. There are two telegrams for you, little mother. [Unlocks an old cupboard with one of her keys.] Here they are.

LUBOV. They are from Paris. [She tears them up without reading them.] I am finished with Paris. I want no more of it.

GAEV. Do you know how old this cupboard is, Luba? A week ago I opened the bottom drawer and found numbers burned into the wood. It is exactly a hundred years old.

PISCHIN. A hundred years. Just think of that. It has stood here through all that time.

GAEV. Yes, it is a real old thing. [Touching it solemnly.] My dear and honoured cupboard, I congratulate you on your long life and faithful service to the bright ideals of goodness and justice.

GAEV. For more than a hundred years you have silently called men toward useful work and a better future. You have helped keep alive faith, virtue, and hope in generations of our family.

[Pause.]

LOPAKHIN. Yes. Quite so. Very fine words.

LUBOV. You are exactly the same as ever, Leon. You cannot help making speeches.

GAEV. [A little embarrassed.] Off the white on the right, into the corner pocket. Red into the middle. That is enough.

YASHA. [Giving LUBOV her medicine.] Will you take your pills now? It is time for them.

PISCHIN. You should not take medicine, dear lady. It neither helps nor harms. Give it here. [He pours the pills into his hand, swallows them, and drinks some kvass.] There, now it is done.

LUBOV. Have you lost your mind? Those were my pills. What a man you are.

PISCHIN. I have taken them all. No harm done. Perhaps they will help me instead.

LOPAKHIN. Glutton. [All laugh.]

[CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA crosses the stage, dressed in white. She is thin, tightly laced, and has a lorgnette hanging from her waist.]

LOPAKHIN. Excuse me, Charlotta Ivanovna, I have not yet said good day to you. [He tries to kiss her hand.]

CHARLOTTA. If you let people kiss your hand, they soon want your elbow, then your shoulder, and then who knows what comes after that.

LOPAKHIN. Nothing goes right for me to-day. Show us a trick, Charlotta Ivanovna. Let us see something amusing before I leave.

LUBOV. Yes, Charlotta, do us one of your tricks. It would cheer us up.

CHARLOTTA. No, it is not necessary. I want to sleep. [Exit.]

LOPAKHIN. We shall see each other again in three weeks. [Kisses LUBOV'S hand.] Good-bye now. It is time for me to go.

LOPAKHIN. [To GAEV.] Until we meet again. [Kisses PISCHIN.] Farewell. [Shakes hands with VARYA, FIERS, and YASHA.] I do not want to go, but I must.

LOPAKHIN. [To LUBOV.] If you decide about the villas, let me know at once, and I will raise a loan of fifty thousand roubles for you immediately. Think seriously about it.

VARYA. [Angrily.] Do go now, please. Truly, it is time.

LOPAKHIN. I am going, I am going. [Exit.]

GAEV. Snob. Still, I beg pardon. Varya is going to marry him; he is her young man.

VARYA. Uncle, do not talk too much. You always speak as if things were already

settled.

LUBOV. Why not, Varya? I would be glad of it. He is a good man.

PISCHIN. To tell the truth, he is a worthy man. My Dashenka says so too, and she talks about many things. But now, dear lady, if only you could lend me two hundred and forty roubles for the interest on my mortgage to-morrow.

VARYA. [Frightened.] We do not have it. We truly do not have it at all.

LUBOV. It is true. I have nothing. Not a single thing I can call mine.

PISCHIN. I shall find it somehow. I always hope for something. Something always happens in the end.

FIERS. [Brushing GAEV'S trousers.] You have put on the wrong trousers again. What am I to do with you?

VARYA. [Quietly, opening the window.] Anya is asleep. The sun has risen already, and it is not cold now. Look, little mother. What lovely trees. And the air is so fresh.

GAEV. [Opening another window.] The whole garden is white. You have not forgotten it, Luba, have you? There is the long straight avenue, shining as if a strap had been pulled tight in the moonlight.

LUBOV. [Looking out into the garden.] Oh, my childhood, my innocent days. I used to sleep in this nursery and look out from here into the orchard. Every morning happiness woke with me.

LUBOV. Nothing has changed. It is all white again. Oh, my orchard. After the

dark autumn and the long winter, you are young again and full of joy.

LUBOV. If only I could lift this heavy burden from my heart and shoulders. If only I could forget what is behind me. Look there, by the turn near the summer-house. That little white tree bends like a woman.

Part 3

LUBOV. There is nobody there. I only thought I saw someone in the orchard. On the right, near the turn by the summer-house, that little white tree bends low and looks just like a woman.

[TROFIMOV enters in a worn student coat and spectacles. He stops for a moment and looks toward LUBOV.]

TROFIMOV. Lubov Andreyevna! [She turns and stares at him.] I only came in so that you could see me, and then I meant to go away again. They told me I should wait until morning, but I had no patience.

[He goes to her quickly and kisses her hand. LUBOV keeps looking at him in surprise, as if she cannot place him at first.]

VARYA. [Beginning to cry.] It is Peter Trofimov. Mother, it is Peter.

TROFIMOV. Peter Trofimov, who was once little Grisha's tutor. Have I really changed so much that you did not know me? Has time altered me that badly?

[LUBOV suddenly understands. She throws her arms round him and begins to weep softly.]

GAEV. That is enough, Luba, enough now. Do not go on like that. You must calm yourself.

VARYA. [Weeping too.] Peter, I told you to wait until to-morrow. I told you clearly, and still you came in now.

LUBOV. My Grisha... my little boy... Grisha... my son. [She cannot stop herself, and the old pain comes over her with full force.]

VARYA. What can we do, little mother? It is God's will. We have to bear it somehow.

TROFIMOV. [Softly, through his own tears.] It is all right. It is all right. Please do not torture yourself so much.

LUBOV. [Still crying.] My boy is dead, and he was drowned. Why was it so? Why did it happen? Tell me that, my friend, if you can. [She lowers her voice.] Anya is asleep in there, and I am speaking too loudly and making such noise.

LUBOV. But look at you now, Peter. What has happened to you? Why do you look so worn and so thin? Why have you grown old before your time?

TROFIMOV. On the train, an old woman looked at me and called me a worn-out gentleman. Perhaps that is what I seem now.

LUBOV. Then you were only a boy, a dear young student with a fresh face. And now your hair is already thin, and you wear spectacles. Are you truly still a student after all this time?

TROFIMOV. I think I shall always be a student. Life seems to keep me in that

place, as if it will not let me become anything else.

LUBOV. [Kissing GAEV, then VARYA.] Well then, let us go to bed. It is enough for one night. And you too, Leonid, have grown older.

PISCHIN. [Following after her.] Yes, yes, we really must all go to bed. Oh, this cursed gout of mine. I shall stay the night here, if you will allow it.

PISCHIN. And if only, Lubov Andreyevna, my dear and kind friend, you could let me have two hundred and forty roubles to-morrow morning. I need it for the interest on the mortgage.

GAEV. Still the same story. Always the same thing with you. You begin with one word and end with a loan.

PISCHIN. Two hundred and forty roubles only. Not a great mountain of money, only enough to save me for the moment.

LUBOV. I have no money, dear man. Truly none. I have come home with almost nothing at all.

PISCHIN. I will give it back. Of course I will give it back. It is only a very small sum, and God may help me from somewhere.

LUBOV. Then Leonid will give it to you. Let him have it, Leonid. Why not, if he needs it?

GAEV. Certainly, certainly. Hold out your hand and take it when the time comes. Yes, yes, we shall manage somehow.

LUBOV. Why should he not have it? He needs it now, and he will return it later.

That is all there is to it.

[LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, TROFIMOV, PISCHIN, and FIERS go out. GAEV, VARYA, and YASHA remain behind.]

GAEV. My sister has not lost the habit of throwing money about. It is still the same with her. [To YASHA.] Stand farther away, do. You smell of chicken and the yard.

YASHA. [Grinning.] You are just the same as ever, Leonid Andreyevitch. Not a bit changed.

GAEV. Really? What did he say just now? I did not quite catch it.

VARYA. [To YASHA.] Your mother came from the village. She has been sitting in the servants' room since yesterday, and she wants to see you before anything else.

YASHA. Bless the woman. That is all I can say about it.

VARYA. Shameless man. That is your own mother, and you speak as if she were a burden.

YASHA. There is no use in her coming now. She could just as well have come to-morrow. [He goes out.]

VARYA. Mother has not changed at all. She is just as she always was. If the thought entered her head for a moment, she would give away everything she had.

GAEV. Yes. [Pause.] If there is some illness for which people offer many cures, then that usually means the illness cannot truly be cured. I have thought and

thought, and I have many plans.

GAEV. That really means I have no plan at all. It would be wonderful if someone left us a fortune. It would be wonderful if Anya married a rich man. It would also be wonderful if I went to Yaroslav and won over my aunt the Countess.

GAEV. My aunt is very rich, very rich indeed. The sad part is that she does not love us, and that is a serious difficulty.

VARYA. [Weeping quietly.] If only God would help us. If only something would happen and save the house.

GAEV. Do not cry. My aunt is rich, but she has never forgiven us. My sister married an advocate, and he was not a nobleman, and that was the beginning of her anger.

[ANYA appears in the doorway and listens.]

GAEV. And not only did she marry a man who was not a nobleman, but she behaved in ways that cannot be called proper. She is good and charming and I love her deeply, yet still, if one speaks honestly, one must say she has been careless.

VARYA. [In a whisper.] Anya is standing in the doorway. She can hear every word you are saying.

GAEV. Really? [Pause.] How strange. Something has got into my right eye, and I cannot see properly out of it now.

[ANYA comes fully into the room.]

VARYA. Why are you not in bed, Anya? You should be sleeping already. You

are tired to death.

ANYA. I cannot sleep. It is no good. My body is tired, but sleep will not come.

GAEV. My darling child. [He kisses her face and hands.] My dear one, you are not my niece, you are my angel. You are everything to me, and you must believe me.

ANYA. I do believe you, uncle. Everyone loves you, and everyone respects you. But, dear uncle, you must say less. Nothing more than that. Why were you speaking about mother like that just now?

ANYA. She is your own sister. Why did you say such things when she has just come home and is already suffering enough?

GAEV. Yes, yes, you are right. It was terrible of me. Lord forgive me. And only a little while ago I was making a speech to a bookcase.

GAEV. It was foolish, very foolish. I understood it only after I had finished. I speak, and only then do I hear what I have said.

VARYA. Yes, uncle dear, you really should speak less. Truly, you would spare yourself shame and spare us trouble if you simply kept quiet.

ANYA. You would be happier too. I know you would. Silence would help you more than all those fine phrases.

GAEV. Very well, I will be quiet. I will say no more of that sort. [He kisses their hands.] I promise.

GAEV. But let us speak of business now. On Thursday I was at the District Court,

and there I met several people. We talked together, and now I think I may be able to arrange a loan so that we can pay the interest to the bank.

VARYA. If only God would help us. If only this hope were a real one.

GAEV. I shall go again on Tuesday and speak with them once more. [To VARYA.] Do not cry so. [To ANYA.] Your mother will speak with Lopakhin, and of course he will not refuse.

GAEV. Then, when you have rested, you will go to Yaroslav to your grandmother the Countess. So you see, we shall have three chances at once, and that means we are safe. We shall pay the interest.

GAEV. I am certain of it. [He puts a sugar sweet into his mouth.] I swear on my honour and on everything I have that the estate will not be sold.

GAEV. I swear on my happiness itself. Here is my hand. If I let the place go to auction, then you may call me a shameless and dishonourable man. I swear by all that I am.

ANYA. [Now calm and bright again.] How kind you are, uncle, and how clever too. [She embraces him.] I am happy now. I am happy. Everything is all right again.

[FIERS enters.]

FIERS. [Reproachfully.] Leonid Andreyevitch, do you not fear God at your age? When are you going to bed at last?

GAEV. Soon, soon. Go away now, Fiers. I shall undress myself without help. [To ANYA and VARYA.] Well then, good night, children.

GAEV. I am a man of the eighties. People say little good of those years now, but I can still say this much: I suffered for my beliefs. The peasants do not love me for nothing.

GAEV. We must learn to know the peasants better. We must understand them properly and not speak of them from far away.

ANYA. You are doing it again, uncle. You promised only a moment ago.

VARYA. Be quiet, uncle. Please, for once just be quiet.

FIERS. [Angrily.] Leonid Andreyevitch! Enough now. Come along at once.

GAEV. I am coming, I am coming. Off two cushions into the middle. I turn over a new leaf. [He goes out, and FIERS follows him.]

ANYA. I am calmer now. I do not want to go to Yaroslav, and I do not like grandmother, but I am calm now because of uncle. [She sits down.]

VARYA. It is time to sleep, and I shall go too. While you were away, there was an unpleasant matter here in the house.

VARYA. In the old servants' part, as you know, only the old people live now: little old Yefim, Polyta, Yevstigney, and Karp. They began to let strange tramps spend the night there, and at first I said nothing.

VARYA. Then I heard people saying that I had ordered those poor creatures to be fed only on peas, as if I were cruel and mean. It was all Yevstigney's doing, I am sure of it.

VARYA. So I thought, very well then, if that is the matter, just wait. I called Yevstigney to me. [She yawns and then looks toward ANYA.] Anya dear.

[Pause.]

VARYA. She has fallen asleep already. [She gently takes ANYA by the arm.] Come now, let us go to bed. Come along, my dear little one.

VARYA. My darling has gone to sleep where she sat. Come on, then. We must get you into bed properly. [She leads ANYA away.]

[They go. In the distance, on the far side of the orchard, a shepherd plays on his pipe. TROFIMOV crosses the stage and stops when he sees VARYA leading the sleepy ANYA.]

ANYA. [Quietly, half-asleep.] I am so tired. All the bells... dear uncle... mother and uncle...

VARYA. Come on, dear, come on. Just a little farther. [They go into ANYA'S room.]

TROFIMOV. [Deeply moved.] My sun. My spring.

Curtain.

Part 4

ACT TWO

[In an open field. There is an old, crooked roadside shrine, long abandoned. Near it are a well, several large stones that seem to be old grave markers, and an old garden bench. The road to Gaev's estate can be seen. On one side stand dark poplar trees, and behind them the cherry orchard begins. Far away there is a line of telegraph poles, and on the horizon, only on a very clear day, one may make out the faint signs of a distant town. The sun is going down. CHARLOTTA, YASHA, and DUNYASHA are sitting on the bench. EPIKHODOV stands nearby, playing a guitar. All seem thoughtful. CHARLOTTA wears an old man's peaked cap, and she is adjusting the strap of the rifle she has taken from her shoulder.]

CHARLOTTA. I have no real passport, and I do not even know how old I am. Still, I think I must be young. When I was a little girl, my father and mother travelled from fair to fair and gave very good performances, and I did a somersault and other small tricks too.

CHARLOTTA. Then papa and mamma died, and a German lady took me in and began to teach me. So I grew up and became a governess. But where I came from and who I really am, I do not know.

CHARLOTTA. I do not know who my parents were, and perhaps they were not even married. I do not know anything at all. [She takes a cucumber from her pocket and eats.] I want very much to talk, but I have nobody to talk to. I have no one at all.

EPIKHODOV. [Playing and singing.] "What is this noisy earth to me? What matter friends and foes?" I do love to play the mandoline.

DUNYASHA. It is not a mandoline. It is only a guitar. [She looks in a little mirror and powders her face.]

EPIKHODOV. For a man mad with love, it may very well be a mandoline.

[Sings.] “Oh that the heart were warmed by all the flames of love returned.”

YASHA. [Joining in lazily.] Yes, yes. Why not sing, if there is nothing better to do.

CHARLOTTA. They sing badly, all of them. It sounds like jackals crying in the dark.

DUNYASHA. [To YASHA.] Even so, it must be pleasant to live abroad. I always think it must be finer there than here.

YASHA. Yes, certainly. On that point I cannot disagree with you. [He yawns and lights a cigar.] Abroad, things are better arranged.

EPIKHODOV. Quite naturally. Abroad, everything exists in full complexity. One feels that immediately.

YASHA. That goes without saying. Anyone can understand that much.

EPIKHODOV. I am an educated man and have read many remarkable books, yet I still cannot understand which way I myself ought to go, whether I ought to live or shoot myself, so to speak. Therefore, merely as a precaution, I always carry a revolver with me. Here it is. [He shows it.]

CHARLOTTA. I have finished with this strap now, and I am going. You, Epikhodov, are a very clever man and a very terrible one, and women must surely be madly in love with you. Brrr.

CHARLOTTA. All these wise men are so very stupid. I have no one to talk with. I am always alone, always alone, and I do not know who I am or why I live. [She goes out slowly.]

EPIKHODOV. As a matter of fact, and apart from everything else, I must say that fate has treated me as cruelly as a storm treats a small ship. Suppose I am wrong, if you like, but then why did I wake this morning and find a huge spider on my chest?

EPIKHODOV. And why is it that when I drink kvass there is always something disgusting in it, some beetle or another? Have you read Buckle? [Pause.] Avdotya Fyodorovna, I should like to speak two words with you.

DUNYASHA. Speak then. I am listening to you.

EPIKHODOV. I should prefer to be alone with you. [He sighs.] Some things should not be said before everybody.

DUNYASHA. Very well, but first bring me my little cloak. It is by the cupboard, and it feels damp here. I do not like this evening air.

EPIKHODOV. Very well, I will bring it. And now, at least, I know what I should do with my revolver. [He takes up his guitar and goes out, strumming.]

YASHA. Two-and-twenty troubles. Between ourselves, he is an absurd man. A man cannot be serious and foolish in quite that way without being ridiculous.

DUNYASHA. I hope he will not really shoot himself. [Pause.] I am nervous all the time now, and I cannot rest.

DUNYASHA. I went into service when I was only a child, and now I am no longer used to common life. My hands are white now, white like a lady's hands, and I have become so delicate, so soft, so respectable, and so afraid of everything.

DUNYASHA. I am very frightened. And if you deceive me, Yasha, I do not know what will become of my nerves.

YASHA. [Kissing her.] Little cucumber. Every girl ought to respect herself, and there is nothing I dislike so much as a badly behaved girl.

DUNYASHA. I am terribly in love with you. You are educated, and you can speak about everything. [Pause.] When you are near me, I feel myself lifted up somehow.

YASHA. [Yawning.] Yes. My idea is this: if a girl loves somebody, that means she is immoral. [Pause.] It is pleasant to smoke a cigar in the open air.

YASHA. [Listening.] Someone is coming. It is the mistress and the others. Go to the house by that path and pretend you have come from the river after bathing, or they will think I was meeting you. I cannot bear that kind of thing.

DUNYASHA. [Coughing softly.] My head aches from your cigar smoke. [She goes out.]

[YASHA remains sitting by the shrine. Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAEV, and LOPAKHIN.]

LOPAKHIN. You must decide once and for all. There is no time left to waste, and the matter is completely clear. Will you lease the land for summer villas or will you not? Say one word only. Yes or no.

LUBOV. Who has been smoking these dreadful cigars here? [She sits down.] The smell is everywhere.

GAEV. Ever since they built the railway, this place has become much easier to

reach. [He sits.] I went into town and had lunch there. Red into the middle. I should like to go in now and play just one game.

LUBOV. You will have time enough for that. There is no need to begin dreaming of billiards already.

LOPAKHIN. Only one word. [Almost begging.] Give me your answer.

GAEV. Really. Must you always return to the same point? It is exhausting.

LUBOV. [Looking into her purse.] Yesterday I had a great deal of money, and to-day there is almost none left. My poor Varya gives everybody milk soup in order to save, and the old servants in the kitchen get nothing but peas.

LUBOV. Yet I spend money without thinking, without holding myself back at all. [She drops the purse, and gold coins scatter on the ground.] There now, they are everywhere.

YASHA. Permit me. [He gathers up the coins carefully.]

LUBOV. Yes, do. And why did I go to lunch there at all? It was a hateful place, with music and tablecloths that smelled of soap.

LUBOV. And why do you drink so much, Leon? Why do you eat so much? And why do you talk so much?

LUBOV. To-day in the restaurant you spoke again and again, and none of it was useful, about the seventies and about decadents. And to whom were you talking? To the waiters.

LOPAKHIN. Yes. Exactly so. That is what happened.

GAEV. [Waving his hand.] It is hopeless. I cannot be cured, that is clear enough. [To YASHA.] And what are you twisting about there for? Why do you keep moving in front of me?

YASHA. [Laughing.] I cannot hear your voice without laughing. That is the whole truth of it.

GAEV. [To LUBOV.] Either he goes, or I do. One of us must disappear.

LUBOV. Go away then, Yasha. Leave us for a while.

YASHA. [Handing her the purse.] I am going at once, this very minute. [He goes out, scarcely able to stop laughing.]

LOPAKHIN. That rich man Deriganov is preparing to buy your estate. They say he means to come to the sale himself.

LUBOV. Where did you hear that? Who is spreading it?

LOPAKHIN. That is what they are saying in town. Everyone talks of it there.

GAEV. Our aunt in Yaroslav has promised to send something, though I do not know when or how much. One cannot make plans on air.

LOPAKHIN. And how much will she send? A hundred thousand? Two hundred? Or perhaps only promises and blessings?

LUBOV. I would be glad of ten thousand, or fifteen. I ask for no miracles.

LOPAKHIN. Forgive me, but I have never met such careless people, such

strange, unbusinesslike people as you two. I tell you plainly that the estate is going to be sold, and still you speak as if you do not understand.

LUBOV. Then what are we to do? Tell us that. If you know so clearly, then tell us plainly what we are to do.

LOPAKHIN. I do tell you. Every day I tell you the same thing. The orchard and the land must be leased for villas at once, immediately, because the auction is almost upon you.

LOPAKHIN. Do you understand? Once you decide, once you truly decide, you will have as much money as you need, and then you will be saved.

LUBOV. Villas and villa people. Forgive me, but it all sounds so vulgar. I cannot bear even the thought of it.

GAEV. I quite agree with my sister. Entirely. It is vulgar and beneath the place.

LOPAKHIN. I could cry, or shout, or fall senseless. I cannot bear you. You are too much for me. [To GAEV.] You old woman.

GAEV. Really. That is beyond everything.

LOPAKHIN. Yes, old woman. [He turns to go.]

LUBOV. No, do not go. Please stay. Be kind and stay a little longer. Perhaps we may still think of something together.

LOPAKHIN. What is the good of thinking, when no one here wants to decide anything at all?

LUBOV. Please stay. It is easier somehow when you are here. Even now I keep waiting for something, as if the house itself were about to fall down over our heads.

GAEV. [Thinking.] Double into the corner, then across the middle. Yes, that would do it.

LUBOV. We have sinned too much. That must be the truth of it.

LOPAKHIN. What sins have you committed? I should like to know that.

GAEV. [Putting a sweet into his mouth.] They say I have eaten up my whole fortune in sugar candy. That may be my chief crime. [He laughs.]

LUBOV. Oh, my sins. I always spent money wildly, as if I had no reason at all. I married a man who made nothing but debts, and he died of champagne, because he drank terribly.

LUBOV. Then, to my misfortune, I loved another man and ran away with him. And at that same time, my first punishment came down on me like a blow on the head, here, by this river, where my little boy was drowned.

LUBOV. After that I ran away completely, far away, never to come back and never to see this river again. I shut my eyes and fled without thought, while he followed me without pity and without shame.

LUBOV. I bought a villa near Mentone because he was ill there, and for three years I knew no peace by day or by night. The sick man exhausted me, and my soul dried up. Then last year they sold the villa to pay my debts.

LUBOV. I went to Paris, and there he robbed me of everything I had, left me, and went off with another woman. I even tried to poison myself. It was foolish

and shameful, and then all at once I longed for Russia, for my own land, and for my little girl.

Part 5

TROFIMOV. Do not cry like that. You must not let him drag you back into that life. It is over now.

LOPAKHIN. [Seeing him.] Ah, here is our eternal student. He is always with the ladies, always appearing at the right moment.

LUBOV. Good evening, Peter. Come here and sit with us. You always appear when the talk turns sad.

TROFIMOV. Good evening. I am here. That is all. I do not know whether my coming helps anyone.

LOPAKHIN. He has been a student for twenty years, and he will still be one after another twenty, if the world lasts so long.

TROFIMOV. Stop your silly jokes. I am tired of hearing the same thing from you.

LOPAKHIN. Angry already? There now, he is offended. He has not even sat down yet.

TROFIMOV. Leave me alone. You have your money and your business, and you think that gives you the right to laugh at everything.

LOPAKHIN. [Laughing.] Then tell us what you think of me. Say it openly. I should like to hear it from your own mouth.

TROFIMOV. Very well. I think you are a rich man, and that soon you will be a millionaire. As a wild beast that eats everything in its path has its use in the order of things, so you too are useful.

[All laugh.]

VARYA. Better tell us something about the stars, Peter. It would be more pleasant than hearing you call people useful beasts.

LUBOV. No, let us go on with yesterday's talk. It was interesting then, though none of us finished it.

TROFIMOV. About what? I have forgotten which grand subject we were improving.

GAEV. About the proud man. That was it. You were speaking with great heat, and then you stopped.

TROFIMOV. We talked for a long time and reached nothing. There may be something noble in human pride if you choose to look at it that way, but what pride is possible in a being so unfinished?

TROFIMOV. Man is made badly, lives badly, and in most cases is coarse, weak, unhappy, and not even very wise. We should stop admiring one another. We should work. That is all.

GAEV. You will die all the same, Peter. So will I, so will all of us. That also is part of the matter.

TROFIMOV. Who knows what death means? Perhaps when a man dies only five senses end, and the rest, which we do not know, continue living.

LUBOV. How clever you are, Peter. You always say something that opens a window somewhere, even if a cold wind comes through it.

LOPAKHIN. [Ironically.] Yes, wonderfully clever indeed. One feels almost smaller just listening.

TROFIMOV. The human race moves forward. It perfects itself, slowly, badly, painfully, but it moves. What is beyond us now will one day be close and clear.

TROFIMOV. Yet for that to happen, we must work. We must help those who truly want to know and to go forward. But in Russia only a very few people work seriously at all.

TROFIMOV. The intellectuals I know mostly seek nothing, do nothing, and are not fit for hard work. They call themselves thinkers, but they still speak harshly to servants and treat peasants like animals.

TROFIMOV. They read little, understand little, speak grandly about art and science, and wear severe faces. Yet they live in dirt, quarrel over nothing, eat badly, sleep in foul air, and drag moral filth behind them wherever they go.

TROFIMOV. Our beautiful talk is mostly a way to deceive ourselves and others. Show me the nurseries and reading rooms they speak of. They are written in books and mentioned in speeches, but in life there is only vulgarity, laziness, and misery.

TROFIMOV. I am tired of serious faces and serious conversations that lead nowhere. Let us be quiet sooner than lie to ourselves once again.

LOPAKHIN. You know, I rise every day at five in the morning. I work from dawn to night, always with money, my own and other people's, always among buyers and sellers.

LOPAKHIN. And because of that, I see what people are like. You need only begin doing something real to discover how few honest and decent people there are.

LOPAKHIN. Sometimes, when I cannot sleep, I think this: God gave us huge forests, endless fields, and wide horizons. Living here, ought we not to become giants?

LUBOV. Giants? Perhaps. But giants are good only in fairy tales, and even there they frighten one in the end. [She looks off.] There is Epikhodov again.

ANYA. [Looking too.] Yes, it is Epikhodov. He is walking there with his guitar again.

GAEV. The sun has gone down, ladies and gentlemen. Evening has truly come now.

TROFIMOV. Yes. The day is over, and still we have said more than we have done.

GAEV. [Softly, as if reciting.] O nature, shining with eternal beauty, beautiful and indifferent mother, you carry both life and death within you, you live and you destroy.

VARYA. Uncle, dear, please do not begin that again. Not now. We are all too tired.

ANYA. Yes, uncle, you are doing it again. You always turn into a speech when the moment grows quiet.

TROFIMOV. Better play a shot in your head, Leonid Andreyevitch. Double the red into the middle and be done with it.

GAEV. Very well. I shall be quiet. I shall truly be quiet. [They sit silently.]

[There is a long pause. FIERS mumbles softly to himself. Suddenly a distant sound is heard, as if high in the air, like a string breaking. It fades away sadly.]

LUBOV. What was that? It sounded so strange. It made my whole body shake.

LOPAKHIN. I do not know. Perhaps a bucket fell down a well somewhere. It is far away, but the sound carried.

GAEV. Or some bird perhaps. A heron maybe. It might be that. The fields send odd sounds at evening.

TROFIMOV. Or an owl. One hears all kinds of things in country silence.

LUBOV. [Shuddering.] It is unpleasant somehow. It is like a sign of something, though I do not know of what.

FIERS. Before the trouble, the very same thing happened. The owl cried, and the samovar hummed and hummed without stopping.

GAEV. Before what trouble, Fiers? What are you talking about now?

FIERS. Before the freedom. Before the Emancipation. That was the time.

[Pause.]

LUBOV. My friends, let us go in. It is evening already. [To ANYA.] Why are there tears in your eyes, my little girl? Come here. [She embraces her.]

ANYA. It is nothing, mother. I do not know why. Sometimes I suddenly want to cry, that is all.

TROFIMOV. Someone is coming this way. He is crossing the field toward us now.

[A TRAMP comes in, wearing an old white peaked cap and a worn overcoat. He is a little drunk.]

TRAMP. Excuse me, good people. Can I go straight through here to the station, or am I on the wrong path?

GAEV. Yes, you may go straight on. Follow this path, and you will reach it in time.

TRAMP. I thank you most deeply. Fine weather, fine weather indeed. [He hiccups.] My brother, my suffering brother, come out on the Volga, where your groans—

TRAMP. [Turning to VARYA.] Mademoiselle, please, for pity's sake, give a hungry Russian thirty copecks.

VARYA. [Crying out.] Oh! Do not come so close. You frightened me badly.

LOPAKHIN. [Angrily.] There are manners for everyone to keep. One cannot jump at people like that.

LUBOV. [Starting and feeling in her purse.] Here, take something. I have no silver. It does not matter. Here is gold.

TRAMP. I am deeply grateful. May God reward you kindly. [He goes out.]

[Some laugh. VARYA is still shaken.]

VARYA. I am going. I am truly going. My heart is beating so hard. And at home the servants have nothing to eat, yet you gave him gold, little mother.

LUBOV. What can be done with a fool like me? At home I will give you everything I have left. Ermolai Alexeyevitch, lend me some more money.

LOPAKHIN. Very well. I will. There is no use refusing you in such a moment.

LUBOV. Let us go in then. It will soon be supper time. And Varya, we have settled your affair. I congratulate you.

VARYA. [Crying.] Mother, you should not joke about that. Not about that. It hurts me too much.

LOPAKHIN. Oh, feel me, get thee to a nunnery. There, I have said it for you all.

GAEV. My hands are trembling. I have not played billiards for such a long time that even my fingers have forgotten.

LOPAKHIN. Oh, feel me, nymph; remember me in thy prayers. [He laughs at himself.]

LUBOV. Come along now. It will soon be supper time. We have been sitting here

too long.

VARYA. He frightened me badly. My heart is still beating and beating.

LOPAKHIN. Let me remind you all once more: on the twenty-second of August the cherry orchard will be sold. Think of that. Truly think of it.

[All go out except TROFIMOV and ANYA.]

ANYA. [Laughing a little.] Thanks to that tramp who frightened Varya, we are alone now. She ran off like a bird.

TROFIMOV. Varya is afraid that we may fall in love with each other, and for that reason she watches us day and night. Her narrow mind cannot understand that we are above love.

TROFIMOV. To escape all the petty, lying things that keep people from being free and happy, that is the purpose of life. Forward. We move toward that bright star burning there in the distance. Do not lag behind, my friends.

ANYA. [Clapping softly.] How beautifully you speak. It is glorious here to-day. Everything feels open and clean.

TROFIMOV. Yes, the weather is beautiful. One breathes more freely here than in the house.

ANYA. What have you done to me, Peter? I no longer love the cherry orchard as I once did. I used to love it so tenderly. I thought there was no better place in all the world.

TROFIMOV. All Russia is our orchard. The land is wide and beautiful, and there

are many wonderful places in it. Think, Anya. Your grandfather and great-grandfather owned living souls.

TROFIMOV. Does it not seem to you that from every cherry tree, every leaf, every stalk, human beings are looking at you? Do you not hear voices? Your orchard is terrible, Anya. It is full of the weight of the past.

TROFIMOV. When you walk there in the evening, the old bark on the trees seems to shine faintly, and the ancient cherry trees seem to dream of all that has been done under them for two hundred years. They are burdened by those dreams.

TROFIMOV. We have left those two hundred years behind us, yet we have gained almost nothing. We still do not know what to do with the past. We only talk, complain that life is dull, or drink vodka.

TROFIMOV. To begin to live in the present, we must first pay for the past. We can only do that through suffering and through hard, uninterrupted work. Understand that, Anya.

ANYA. The house where we live has long ceased to be our house. I shall go away. I give you my word. I feel that now.

TROFIMOV. If you have the housekeeping keys, throw them down the well and go. Be as free as the wind.

ANYA. [With feeling.] How beautifully you said that. How easily the words entered my heart.

TROFIMOV. Believe me, Anya. I am not yet thirty. I am still young. I am still a student, yes, but I have suffered a great deal.

TROFIMOV. I have been hungry like winter itself. I have been ill, shaken, poor as a beggar, and fate has thrown me from place to place. Yet my soul is always my own.

TROFIMOV. Every minute of day and night it is full of a strange, great feeling that I cannot even name. I know happiness is coming, Anya. I see it already.

ANYA. [Looking up.] The moon is rising.

[EPIKHODOV is heard playing the same sad song on his guitar. The moon rises. Somewhere by the poplars VARYA is calling, “Anya, where are you?”]

TROFIMOV. Yes, the moon has risen. [Pause.] Happiness is there. It is coming closer and closer. I can already hear its steps.

TROFIMOV. And if we ourselves do not see it, if we do not know it, what does that matter? Others will see it.

THE VOICE OF VARYA. Anya! Where are you?

TROFIMOV. There is Varya again. It is shameful. It is always the same.

ANYA. Never mind. Let us go to the river. It is beautiful there now.

TROFIMOV. Let us go. [They go out.]

THE VOICE OF VARYA. Anya! Anya!

Curtain.

Part 6

ACT THREE

[A reception room, with an arch opening into the drawing room. The chandelier is lit. Evening has come. In another room a Jewish band is playing, and in the drawing room the guests are dancing the grand round. Pischin's voice can be heard calling out the figures. The dancers pass through the reception room in pairs. First come Pischin and Charlotta Ivanovna, then Trofimov and Lubov Andreyevna, then Anya with the post-office clerk, then Varya with the station-master, and then the others. Varya is crying quietly as she dances and keeps wiping her eyes. Dunyasha comes in the last pair. The dancers go back into the drawing room. Fiers, in a dress-coat, crosses with a tray of seltzer water. Pischin and Trofimov come in from the drawing room.]

PISCHIN. I am a full-blooded man, and I have already had two strokes, so dancing is not easy for me. Still, when people dance, I dance too. My poor dead father used to joke that our family came from the very horse that Caligula made a senator.

PISCHIN. There is something horse-like in us, perhaps, and I do not deny it. A horse is a fine animal, after all. One can always sell a horse if times are hard.

TROFIMOV. Yes, there is certainly something horse-like in your figure. That is plain enough to the eye. You stand on the earth like a strong beast and speak of money with great feeling.

PISCHIN. A hungry dog believes only in meat, and I believe only in money. [He sits, snores for a second, and wakes at once.] That is how things are with me now. I cannot dream on an empty purse.

[The sound of billiards is heard in the next room. Varya appears under the arch, tense and restless.]

TROFIMOV. Madame Lopakhin. Madame Lopakhin. There now, I have said it again.

VARYA. Decayed gentleman. You always mock at others because you can do nothing yourself.

TROFIMOV. Yes, I am a decayed gentleman, and I am proud of it. Better that than being a housekeeper with keys at her belt and worry in every breath.

VARYA. We have hired musicians, but with what are they to be paid? That is the thing. No one dances on air, and no one plays for free. [She goes out.]

TROFIMOV. [To Pischin.] If all the energy you have spent in your life on finding money for interest had been used for something greater, you might have turned the whole world upside down.

PISCHIN. Nietzsche, the philosopher, a very famous man with a mighty brain, says in his books that one may forge bank-notes. Dashenka told me so, and she reads all sorts of things.

TROFIMOV. And have you read Nietzsche yourself? Have you truly sat down with his book?

PISCHIN. No, not I. But in my present state I would not object to forging a few notes. I must pay three hundred and ten roubles the day after to-morrow, and I have only a hundred and thirty so far.

PISCHIN. [Searching his pockets in sudden fear.] I have lost the money. The money is gone. My God, where is it? [Then joyfully.] Here it is, behind the lining. I have even broken into a sweat from fright.

[Enter Lubov Andreyevna and Charlotta Ivanovna.]

LUBOV. [Humming the tune of a Caucasian dance.] Why is Leonid away so long? What is he doing in town? [To Dunyasha.] Give the musicians some tea. They must not sit there thirsty.

TROFIMOV. Business must be going badly, I suppose. If all were settled, he would be back by now.

LUBOV. The musicians need not have come at all, and we need not have given this ball. Still, no matter. It is done now, and the music is playing.

[She sits and sings softly under her breath, but the strain in her face remains.]

CHARLOTTA. [Giving Pischin a pack of cards.] Here is a pack. Think of one card, any one at all, and keep it in your mind.

PISCHIN. I have thought of one. It is there in my head as clear as a horse standing in a field.

CHARLOTTA. Now shuffle them. That is right. Now give them back to me, dear Mr. Pischin. One, two, three. Now look in your coat-tail pocket.

PISCHIN. [Takes out a card.] The eight of spades. Exactly right. Think of that now. That is a wonder.

CHARLOTTA. [Holding the pack on her palm, to Trofimov.] Now tell me

quickly, what is the top card? Do not think too long.

TROFIMOV. The queen of spades. I say that at random.

CHARLOTTA. Right. [To Pischin.] And you, what card is on top now? Answer boldly.

PISCHIN. The ace of hearts. I feel sure of it.

CHARLOTTA. Right again. [She claps her hands, and the cards vanish.] What lovely weather we are having to-day.

A WOMAN'S VOICE. Oh yes, lovely weather, madam.

CHARLOTTA. You are so beautiful. You are my ideal.

THE VOICE. You too, madam, please me very much indeed.

STATION-MASTER. Bravo. Madame ventriloquist, bravo. That is a remarkable gift.

PISCHIN. Think of that now. Delightful, Charlotta Ivanovna. I am simply in love.

CHARLOTTA. In love? Can you love at all? You are a good man, but a poor musician. [She takes up a shawl from a chair.] Attention, now. Here is another trick. Here is a fine plaid shawl. I am going to sell it. Who will buy?

PISCHIN. Think of that now. She will sell the very air next.

CHARLOTTA. One, two, three. [She lifts the hanging shawl quickly. Anya is standing behind it. Anya bows, runs to her mother, embraces her, and runs back

to the drawing room. Applause is heard.]

LUBOV. Bravo, bravo. Again, Charlotta. Again, once more.

CHARLOTTA. Once again. One, two, three. [She lifts the shawl again. Varya stands behind it and bows.]

PISCHIN. Think of that. How does she do it? The girl was nowhere, and then there she is.

CHARLOTTA. The end. [She throws the shawl at Pischin, curtseys, and runs into the drawing room.]

PISCHIN. Little wretch. What? Would you? [He runs after her.]

LUBOV. Leonid still has not come. I do not understand it. Everything must be finished by now. Either the estate has been sold, or the sale did not happen. Then why is he still away?

VARYA. [Trying to calm her.] Uncle has bought it, I am certain of that. Grandmother sent him her authority. It will all be in her name for Anya, and God will help us. I feel that uncle has bought it.

TROFIMOV. Oh yes, certainly. It must all be as easy as that. One only has to wish, and the world obeys.

LUBOV. Grandmother sent fifteen thousand roubles from Yaroslav to buy the estate in her own name because she does not trust us. But even that was not enough to pay the interest.

LUBOV. [Covering her face with her hands.] My fate will be decided to-day. My

whole fate. I feel it in every sound and every step.

TROFIMOV. Madame Lopakhin. Madame Lopakhin. There, I say it again because it annoys you.

VARYA. Eternal student. You have already been thrown out of the university twice, and still you speak as if you were the wisest man in Russia.

LUBOV. Why are you angry, Varya? He teases you about Lopakhin, but what of that? You may marry Lopakhin if you want to. He is a good man, and an interesting one.

LUBOV. If you do not want him, then do not marry him. No one is forcing you, my darling. It should be decided from your own heart.

VARYA. I do take the matter seriously, little mother. To speak honestly, he is a good man, and I like him. I would not laugh at such a question.

LUBOV. Then marry him. I do not understand what you are waiting for. Why go on suffering in silence?

VARYA. I cannot propose to him myself. People have talked to me about him for two years now, but he says nothing, or else he makes a joke and turns away.

VARYA. I understand it well enough. He is getting rich, he is always busy, and he has no time for me. If I had even a little money, even only a hundred roubles, I would leave everything and go away. I would go into a convent.

TROFIMOV. How beautiful. That would suit you wonderfully, with the keys still at your belt.

VARYA. A student ought to have some sense. [Her voice softens, and tears come again.] How ugly you are now, Peter. How old you have grown.

VARYA. But I cannot live without work, little mother. I must always be doing something. If I stop, my thoughts begin to crush me. [Enter Yasha.]

YASHA. [Almost laughing.] Epikhodov has broken a billiard cue. He has done it in the grand style too. [He goes out.]

VARYA. Why is Epikhodov here at all? Who allowed him to play billiards? I do not understand these people. I truly do not understand them. [She goes out.]

LUBOV. Do not tease her, Peter. You can see she is unhappy enough without that. There is pain in her every moment.

TROFIMOV. She takes too much on herself. All summer she has given no peace to me or to Anya, because she is afraid we shall fall in love. What has it to do with her?

TROFIMOV. As if I had ever given her any reason to think I would sink to such vulgarity. We are above love.

LUBOV. Then I suppose I must be below love. [Agitated.] Why is Leonid not here? If only I knew whether the estate is sold or not.

LUBOV. The disaster feels so unlikely that I do not know what to think. I am lost. I may scream, or do something foolish. Save me, Peter. Say something. Say anything.

TROFIMOV. What difference does it make now whether it is sold to-day or not? That question was settled long ago in truth. There is no road back, and the path

behind you is already overgrown.

TROFIMOV. Be calm, dear friend. Do not deceive yourself. At least once in your life you must look the truth straight in the face.

LUBOV. What truth? You see truth and untruth, but I seem to have lost my sight. I see nothing clearly any more.

LUBOV. You settle great questions boldly, Peter, but is it not because you are young and have not yet had to suffer through them? You look forward bravely because your young eyes have not yet had to expect the worst.

LUBOV. You are braver than we are, more honest and deeper perhaps. But think a little. Be generous. Have pity on me. I was born here. My father and mother lived here, and my grandfather too.

LUBOV. I love this house. I cannot understand my life without the cherry orchard, and if it really must be sold, then sell me with it. My son was drowned here. Have pity on me, good and kind man.

TROFIMOV. I do pity you. You know that. I feel it with all my soul.

Curtain.

Part 7

LUBOV. Yes, but it should be said differently, differently. [She takes another handkerchief, and a telegram falls from it.] My heart is so full of pain to-day that you cannot imagine it.

LUBOV. There is noise everywhere in this house, and every sound makes my soul shake. I tremble all over, and I am afraid to go anywhere alone because silence frightens me even more.

LUBOV. Do not judge me harshly, Peter. I loved you once as if you were one of my own family. I would gladly let Anya marry you, I swear it, but you ought to work, dear friend, and finish your studies.

LUBOV. You do nothing. Fate only throws you from one place to another, and it is all so strange. Yes, is it not true? And you ought to do something to your beard too, to make it grow better. [She laughs.] You are funny.

TROFIMOV. [Picking up the telegram.] I do not want to be a dandy.

LUBOV. It is from Paris. I get one every day, yesterday and to-day both. That wild man is ill again, worse again, and he begs me to forgive him and come to him.

LUBOV. I truly ought to go to Paris and be near him. You look severe, Peter, but what can I do? He is ill, he is alone, he is unhappy. Who is to care for him, keep him from his foolish errors, and give him his medicine on time?

LUBOV. Why should I hide it? I love him. It is plain. I love him, I love him. That love is like a stone tied round my neck. I am going to the bottom with it, but I love that stone and cannot live without it.

LUBOV. [Squeezing TROFIMOV'S hand.] Do not think badly of me, Peter. Do not say anything to me now. Please do not say anything.

TROFIMOV. [Weeping.] For God's sake, forgive me for speaking plainly, but

that man robbed you. He has done nothing else all this time.

LUBOV. No, no, no. You must not say that. [She covers her ears.] I will not hear it from you.

TROFIMOV. But he is a wretch, and only you refuse to see it. He is a petty thief and a nobody.

LUBOV. [Angry, though trying to restrain herself.] You are twenty-six or twenty-seven, and still you behave like a schoolboy in the second class.

TROFIMOV. Why not? I can bear that if you wish to call me so.

LUBOV. At your age, you ought to be a man. You ought to understand those who love, and you ought to love yourself. Yes, you ought to fall in love.

LUBOV. [Growing angrier.] No, you are not pure at all. You are only a crank, an odd fellow, a funny growth that never became a man.

TROFIMOV. [In horror.] What are you saying? What are you saying to me?

LUBOV. "Above love!" You are not above love. You are only what our Fiers would call a bungler. A man of your age, and still no mistress.

TROFIMOV. [Clutching his head.] This is awful. I cannot bear it. I must go away at once. [He rushes into the drawing room, then returns at once.] Everything between us is over. [He exits.]

LUBOV. [Calling after him.] Peter, wait. Silly man, I was joking. Peter. [There is the sound of someone hurrying out and falling noisily down the stairs. ANYA and VARYA cry out, and laughter follows at once.] What was that?

ANYA. [Running in, laughing.] Peter has fallen downstairs. [She runs out again.]

LUBOV. This Peter is a marvel. Even in pain he manages to turn into a joke.

[The STATION-MASTER stands in the middle of the drawing room and begins to recite a poem. People listen, but he has spoken only a few lines when a waltz begins again from the front room, and the recitation breaks off. Everyone moves back into the dance. TROFIMOV, ANYA, VARYA, and LUBOV ANDREYEVNA come in from the front room.]

LUBOV. Well, Peter, pure soul, I beg your pardon. Come, let us dance.

[She dances with TROFIMOV. ANYA and VARYA dance too. FIERS enters and puts his stick by a side door. YASHA has also come in and watches the dancers.]

YASHA. Well, grandfather, what do you say to all this? Does it please you?

FIERS. I am not well. At our balls long ago generals, barons, and admirals used to dance, but now we invite post-office clerks and station-masters, and even they come as if they are doing us a favour.

FIERS. I am very weak now. The old master, the grandfather, used to give everyone sealing-wax when anything was wrong. I have taken sealing-wax every day for twenty years or more. Perhaps that is why I still live.

YASHA. I am tired of you, grandfather. You might at least hurry up and die.

FIERS. Oh, you bungler. [He mutters to himself.] That is what you are.

[TROFIMOV and LUBOV ANDREYEVNA dance through the reception room

into the sitting room.]

LUBOV. Merci. I will sit down now. I am tired at last.

ANYA. [Entering quickly.] Someone in the kitchen was just saying that the cherry orchard was sold to-day. I heard it with my own ears.

LUBOV. Sold? To whom? Tell me quickly.

ANYA. He did not say to whom. He has gone already. [She dances out again with TROFIMOV.]

YASHA. Some old man was talking about it a long time ago too. A stranger, I think. No one paid much attention to him.

FIERS. And Leonid Andreyevitch is still not here. He has not come back yet. He is wearing that light coat, and he will catch cold in it. Oh, these young people.

LUBOV. I shall die of this. Go and find out, Yasha, to whom it has been sold.

YASHA. Oh, the old man has gone a long time ago. [He laughs.]

LUBOV. [Slightly vexed.] Why do you laugh? What can possibly make you glad now?

YASHA. Epikhodov is too funny. He is such a fool. Two-and-twenty troubles, and every one of them lives in his head.

LUBOV. Fiers, if the estate is sold, where will you go? Have you thought of that?

FIERS. I shall go wherever you tell me to go. That is all. It has always been so.

LUBOV. Why do you look like that? Are you ill? I think you ought to go to bed.

FIERS. Yes. I shall go to bed, and then who will carry things and give orders? The whole house rests on my shoulders.

YASHA. [To LUBOV ANDREYEVNA.] Lubov Andreyevna, may I ask a favour? If you go to Paris again, please take me with you. It is absolutely impossible for me to remain here.

YASHA. There is no use pretending. You can see for yourself that this is an uneducated country, with a vulgar population, and it is terribly dull. The food in the kitchen is disgusting, and here is Fiers always walking about and muttering.

YASHA. Take me with you, if you would be so kind. I should be grateful, and I would serve you better there than here.

[PISCHIN enters.]

PISCHIN. I have come for the pleasure of one little waltz, dear lady. [LUBOV ANDREYEVNA rises and goes with him.] But all the same, wonderful woman, I must have one hundred and eighty little roubles from you. I simply must.

PISCHIN. [As they dance.] One hundred and eighty little roubles. No more than that. [They go into the drawing room.]

YASHA. [Singing softly.] “Oh, will you understand my soul’s deep restlessness?”

[In the drawing room a figure in a grey top-hat and huge checked trousers is waving its arms and leaping about. Cries of “Bravo, Charlotta Ivanovna!” are heard.]

DUNYASHA. [Stopping to powder her face.] The young mistress told me to dance. There are many gentlemen and not enough ladies, so my head goes round when I dance, and my heart beats so hard.

DUNYASHA. The post-office clerk said something to me just now that made me lose my breath. It was such a tender thing that I can still hear it.

FIERS. What did he say to you? Tell me that, and let me judge it.

DUNYASHA. He said, "You are like a little flower." That is what he said.

YASHA. [Yawning.] Impolite. [He exits.]

DUNYASHA. Like a little flower. I am such a delicate girl, and I love tender words so much.

FIERS. You will lose your head. That is what will happen to you.

[EPIKHODOV enters.]

EPIKHODOV. You, Avdotya Fyodorovna, would rather not see me than see an insect. Oh, life. [He sighs heavily.]

DUNYASHA. What do you want now? Speak plainly if you can.

EPIKHODOV. Perhaps you are right, but from another point of view, if I may say so, you have reduced me to a state of mind. I know my fate. Every day some misfortune happens to me.

EPIKHODOV. I have long been used to it, and now I even smile at my fate. But

you gave me your word, and though I—

DUNYASHA. Later. We shall speak later. Leave me alone now. I am thinking about things. [She plays with her fan.]

[VARYA enters from the drawing room.]

VARYA. Have you still not gone, Simeon? You truly respect nobody. [To DUNYASHA.] You go away, Dunyasha. [To EPIKHODOV.] You play billiards, break a cue, and walk through the drawing room as if you were a guest.

EPIKHODOV. You really cannot call me to order in that way. I do not accept it.

VARYA. I am not calling you to order. I am only telling you the truth. You walk about and never do your work. Heaven knows why we keep a clerk at all.

EPIKHODOV. Whether I work, walk about, eat, or play billiards can only be decided by people of understanding and by my elders.

VARYA. Get out this minute. Get out. I do not want any answer from you.

[EPIKHODOV goes toward the door. VARYA follows him. LOPAKHIN enters at that moment, and she swings FIERS'S stick.]

VARYA. Two-and-twenty troubles. I do not want any sign of you here. Go, go, go. [She accidentally strikes LOPAKHIN.] Oh.

LOPAKHIN. Much obliged. That is a fine way to welcome a man home.

VARYA. I am sorry. I truly am. I did not mean to strike you.

LOPAKHIN. No harm done. Only there will be a great lump on my arm, that is all.

VOICES FROM THE DRAWING ROOM. Lopakhin has come back. Ermolai Alexeyevitch.

LUBOV. [Entering quickly.] Is that you, Ermolai Alexeyevitch? Why were you so long? And where is Leonid? Tell me at once.

LOPAKHIN. Leonid Andreyevitch came back with me. He is just behind. He will be here this moment.

LUBOV. [In tears and trembling.] Well? What happened? Is it sold? Tell me. Tell me quickly, for the love of God.

GAEV. [Entering with parcels in one hand, wiping his eyes with the other.] Here, take these, Fiers. Anchovies. Herrings from Kertch. I have eaten nothing all day. I have had such a time.

[The sound of billiard balls is heard from another room.]

GAEV. I am terribly tired. Help me change my clothes, Fiers. [He goes out through the drawing room, and FIERS follows him.]

PISCHIN. What happened? Come now, tell us. We are all waiting.

LUBOV. Is the cherry orchard sold? Say it plainly.

LOPAKHIN. It is sold.

LUBOV. Who bought it? Who?

LOPAKHIN. I bought it.

Part 8

[LUBOV ANDREYEVNA grips the back of a chair and the edge of a table so that she does not fall. For a moment she seems unable even to breathe. VARYA stands still as if she has been struck, then slowly takes the keys from her belt, throws them into the middle of the room, and goes out without a word.]

LOPAKHIN. I bought it. Wait, ladies and gentlemen, wait a little. My head is going round, and I can hardly speak. I feel as if I am standing outside myself and hearing another man's voice.

LOPAKHIN. When we reached the auction, Deriganov was already there. Leonid Andreyevitch had only fifteen thousand, but Deriganov began at once with thirty thousand above the mortgage. Then I saw exactly what kind of fight it would be.

LOPAKHIN. So I seized him at once and offered forty. He answered with forty-five, and I said fifty-five. He went up in fives, and I went up in tens.

LOPAKHIN. It rose higher and higher, and still I would not stop. At last I offered ninety more than the mortgage, and the estate stayed with me. The cherry orchard is mine now. Mine.

LOPAKHIN. [Laughing loudly, almost wildly.] My God, my God, the cherry orchard is mine. Tell me I am drunk, or mad, or dreaming, because this cannot be real.

LOPAKHIN. If my father and grandfather rose from their graves and looked at all this, if they saw their Ermolai, beaten, barefoot, ignorant Ermolai, the same boy who used to run through winter without shoes, buying the finest estate in the world, what would they say?

LOPAKHIN. I have bought the very place where my father and grandfather were serfs, where they were not even allowed into the kitchen. It feels like a dream wrapped in mist, like some strange tale told to a child in the dark.

[He notices the keys on the floor, picks them up, and smiles strangely as they jingle in his hand.]

LOPAKHIN. She threw down the keys. She wanted to show that she is no longer mistress here. Well, let it be so. It makes no difference now.

[The band in the next room begins tuning up again.]

LOPAKHIN. Hey, musicians, play. I want to hear you. Come and look at Ermolai Lopakhin as he brings his axe down on the cherry orchard. Come and hear the trees falling.

LOPAKHIN. We shall build summer villas here, and our grandsons and great-grandsons will see a new life on this land. A different life. Play, music, play.

[The band begins. LUBOV ANDREYEVNA sinks into a chair and begins to weep bitterly, her shoulders shaking. LOPAKHIN turns toward her, and his triumph breaks for a moment into pain.]

LOPAKHIN. Why, why did you not listen to me? My poor dear woman, if only you had taken my advice. You cannot go back now. There is no road back.

LOPAKHIN. [His own voice thickening.] Oh, if only this whole business were over at last. If only our rough, uneven, unhappy life could be changed somehow. If only something better could begin.

PISCHIN. [Taking his arm quietly.] She is crying. Let us go into the drawing room and leave her alone. Come, come now. There is nothing more to do here at this moment.

LOPAKHIN. What is that? Bandsmen, play properly. Do as I want you to do. [Ironically.] The new owner, the owner of the cherry orchard, is coming through.

[He strikes a little table and almost knocks over the candelabra.]

LOPAKHIN. I can pay for everything. [He goes out with PISCHIN.]

[The reception room and the drawing room are almost empty now. Only LUBOV ANDREYEVNA remains, bent forward in the chair, weeping into her hands. The band plays more softly now, as if from farther away.]

[ANYA and TROFIMOV enter quickly. ANYA runs to her mother and falls on her knees before her. TROFIMOV remains by the entrance to the drawing room, deeply moved and silent.]

ANYA. Mother. Mother, are you crying? My dear, kind, good mother, my beautiful mother, I love you. Bless me.

ANYA. The cherry orchard is sold, and we have it no longer. It is true, true, but do not cry, mother. Please do not cry like that. Your life is still before you.

ANYA. You still have your beautiful soul, your pure soul. Nothing can take that

from you. No sale, no debt, no sorrow can take that away.

ANYA. Come with me, dear. Come away from here with me. Let us go together. We shall leave this house and begin something new.

ANYA. We shall plant a new garden, mother, one finer than this. You will see it one day. You will understand then, and a quiet, deep joy will come down into your soul like the evening sun.

ANYA. And then you will smile again. You will smile, and I shall see it, and all this pain will not rule you any more. Come, dear mother. Let us go.

[LUBOV ANDREYEVNA lowers her hands slowly and looks at ANYA through tears. She says nothing for a moment, but her face softens under the girl's voice.]

TROFIMOV. [Very gently.] Yes. Let us go from here. One must begin to live forward now, not backward. What has been lost has been lost, but life itself has not ended.

TROFIMOV. The orchard is gone, but you are alive, and she is alive, and that is greater than any orchard. Sorrow feels endless while one sits inside it, but even sorrow changes when one begins to walk.

ANYA. Mother, my darling, stand up. Give me your hand. I will lead you. I am not afraid now, and you must not be afraid either.

[LUBOV ANDREYEVNA rises slowly with ANYA'S help. She leans against her daughter for a moment, exhausted, but no longer collapsed into herself.]

LUBOV. My child. My little child. You speak to me as if you were older than I am, and perhaps to-night you truly are.

LUBOV. Everything is broken, and yet when you speak, something in me still answers. I do not know whether I can believe in a new garden, but I can believe in you.

ANYA. Then that is enough for now. Believe only that, and come. We do not have to carry the whole future in one moment. We only have to take the first step.

TROFIMOV. That is rightly said. The first step is everything. The rest comes later.

[The music continues softly in the next room. ANYA puts her arm round her mother and leads her slowly toward the door. TROFIMOV follows them at a little distance.]

Curtain.

Part 9

ACT FOUR

[The stage is set as in Act One, but the room is almost empty now. There are no curtains on the windows and no pictures on the walls. Only a few pieces of furniture remain, and they are piled in one corner as if they are to be sold. Near the door leading out of the house and at the back of the stage, trunks, bags, and travelling things are stacked together. The door on the left stands open, and the voices of Varya and Anya can be heard through it. Lopakhin is waiting. Yasha holds a tray with small glasses of champagne. Outside, Epikhodov is tying up a box. Peasants have come to say good-bye, and Gaev's voice can be heard thanking

them.]

YASHA. The common people have come to say good-bye. In my opinion they are good people in their way, but they understand very little. They mean well, perhaps, but they remain very simple.

[The voices die away. LUBOV ANDREYEVNA and GAEV enter. She is not crying, but she is pale, and her face trembles so much that she can hardly speak.]

GAEV. You gave them your purse, Luba. You simply handed it over. You cannot go on like that. Truly, you cannot.

LUBOV. I could not help it. I truly could not help it. They stood there so humbly, and it all came over me at once. [They go out.]

LOPAKHIN. [Calling after them.] Please, I beg you, have one little glass to say good-bye. I forgot to bring wine from town, and I found only one bottle at the station. Please, at least one glass.

LOPAKHIN. [After a pause.] You will not have any? Very well then. If I had known, I would not have bought it at all. In that case I shall not drink any either. [To Yasha.] You may have some, Yasha, at least.

YASHA. To those who are leaving, then. And good luck to those who stay behind. [He drinks.] Still, I can tell you at once that this is not real champagne.

LOPAKHIN. Eight roubles a bottle. That is what false champagne costs now. One pays dearly even for pretence.

[Pause.]

LOPAKHIN. It is devilishly cold in here. The room already feels like an empty shell. Once a place loses its life, the cold enters it very quickly.

YASHA. There is no fire to-day because we are all going away. [He laughs.] The house already knows it has been given up.

LOPAKHIN. What is the matter with you? Why are you so pleased with yourself? You grin as if all this were a holiday.

YASHA. I am simply glad. That is all. I shall soon be out of here, and that thought makes me lighter.

LOPAKHIN. Outside it is October, yet it is sunny and quiet as if it were summer. Good weather for building. [Looking at his watch and speaking through the door.] Ladies and gentlemen, remember that only forty-seven minutes remain before the train leaves.

LOPAKHIN. You must start for the station in twenty minutes. Please hurry. There is no time left for wandering thoughts now.

[TROFIMOV enters from the garden in an overcoat.]

TROFIMOV. It is time to go, I think. The carriages are waiting already, and everything is ready. Where the devil are my goloshes? I cannot find them anywhere. [Calling through the door.] Anya, I cannot find my goloshes.

LOPAKHIN. I am going to Kharkov too. I shall travel on the same train as you. I will spend the whole winter there because I have grown rusty here among all of you, without real work.

LOPAKHIN. I cannot live without work. My hands become useless hanging at

my sides. When I have no business to do, it feels as if they do not belong to me at all.

TROFIMOV. We shall go away, and then you will begin your useful labours again. That should make you happy enough. You will have business, figures, plans, and all the rest.

LOPAKHIN. Have a glass before we go. It is at least proper to part with a drink. Even if the champagne is false, the farewell is real enough.

TROFIMOV. No, I will not. I do not want it. I would rather keep my head clear.

LOPAKHIN. So you are off to Moscow now? Straight there from here? You will return to your student world again.

TROFIMOV. Yes. I am seeing them into town, and to-morrow I go on to Moscow. That is the plan.

LOPAKHIN. I expect the professors have stopped lecturing by now. They must be waiting for you to arrive before they begin again. They have had twenty years of practice in waiting.

TROFIMOV. That is none of your business. Think of something fresher if you wish to tease me. That old joke is flat now.

LOPAKHIN. How many years have you actually been at the university? Have you ever counted them honestly? Or have the years become one long season to you?

TROFIMOV. [Looking for his goloshes.] Let me give you a word of advice before we part, since we may never meet again. Stop waving your arms about so

much. Get rid of that habit.

TROFIMOV. And as for your villas and your dream that their renters will slowly turn into free landowners, that too is only another way of waving your arms. It is movement without true greatness.

TROFIMOV. Whether I want to or not, I like you. You have thin, delicate fingers, like an artist, and your soul too is thin and delicate, whatever else may be said of you.

LOPAKHIN. [Embracing him.] Good-bye, my dear fellow. Thank you for what you have said. If you need money for the journey, take some from me. Do not refuse out of pride.

TROFIMOV. Why should I take it? I do not want it. I have enough to reach where I am going.

LOPAKHIN. But you have nothing. Everyone knows that. You are always poor and always pretending not to notice.

TROFIMOV. I do have something, thank you. I was paid for a translation, and the money is in my pocket. [Nervously.] But still I cannot find my goloshes.

VARYA. [From the next room.] Take your rubbish away. [She throws a pair of rubber goloshes onto the stage.]

TROFIMOV. Why are you angry, Varya? Hm. These are not even mine. You are throwing the wrong man's misery at me.

LOPAKHIN. In spring I sowed three thousand acres of poppies, and now I have made forty thousand roubles clear profit. When the poppies were in flower, what

a picture they made.

LOPAKHIN. So now, as I was saying, I can afford to lend you money. Why then do you turn up your nose like that? I am only a simple peasant, after all.

TROFIMOV. Your father was a peasant, mine was a chemist, and that proves absolutely nothing. [LOPAKHIN takes out his pocketbook.] No, no.

TROFIMOV. Even if you offered me twenty thousand, I would refuse. I am a free man, and everything that rich and poor alike value so highly has no power over me.

TROFIMOV. All of it is like a little flock of down blown in the wind. I can do without you, pass by you, and remain myself. I am strong and proud.

TROFIMOV. Mankind goes forward toward the highest truth and the highest happiness possible on earth, and I go in the front ranks. That is enough for me.

LOPAKHIN. Will you get there, though? It is easy to speak of front ranks when there is no battle in sight. Will you truly arrive?

TROFIMOV. I will. [Pause.] I will get there and show others the way. [The sound of axes cutting trees is heard far away.]

LOPAKHIN. Well then, good-bye, old man. It is time to go. Here we stand tugging at one another, but life itself goes on all the while.

LOPAKHIN. When I work long and hard without getting tired, I think more clearly, and then I seem to understand why I exist. And yet in Russia there are so many people who live for nothing at all.

LOPAKHIN. Still, work goes on in spite of them. They say Leonid Andreyevitch has accepted a place in a bank and will get six thousand a year. But he will never hold it. He is too lazy.

ANYA. [At the door.] Mother asks whether you will stop them cutting down the orchard until she has gone away. She cannot bear the sound now.

TROFIMOV. Yes, you really ought to have enough feeling for that. [Exit.]

LOPAKHIN. All right, all right. He is right. [Exit.]

ANYA. Has Fiers been sent to the hospital? Has anyone truly seen to it? I keep worrying about him.

YASHA. I gave the order this morning. I suppose they have sent him. There was nothing more for me to do.

ANYA. [To EPIKHODOV, who crosses the room.] Simeon Panteleyevitch, please make inquiries and see whether Fiers has really been sent to the hospital.

YASHA. [Offended.] I told Egor this morning. What is the use of asking ten times? When I say a thing, it has been said.

EPIKHODOV. The aged Fiers, in my final opinion, is not worth mending. His forefathers would be glad enough to receive him. I almost envy him. [He sets a trunk on a hat-box and crushes it.] There now. I thought so. [Exit.]

YASHA. Two-and-twenty troubles. He cannot cross a room without injuring something. Even the luggage suffers under him.

VARYA. [Behind the door.] Has Fiers been taken away to the hospital? Tell me

properly.

ANYA. Yes. So they say. It has been arranged.

VARYA. Why did they not send the letter to the doctor? That should have gone with him. Everything is always left half done.

ANYA. It will have to be sent after him. [Exit.]

VARYA. [In the next room.] Where is Yasha? Tell him his mother has come and wants to say good-bye to him. She has been waiting there.

YASHA. [Waving his hand.] She will make me lose all patience. At the last moment too.

[DUNYASHA has been bustling around the luggage. Now that YASHA is alone, she goes quickly up to him.]

DUNYASHA. If only you would look at me once, Yasha. Just once properly. You are going away and leaving me here behind.

[She weeps and throws her arms round his neck.]

YASHA. What is the use of crying? [He drinks champagne.] In six days I shall be in Paris again. To-morrow we get into the express and go.

YASHA. I can hardly believe it myself. Vive la France. I do not belong here, I cannot live here, and that is the plain truth.

YASHA. I have seen the uncivilized world long enough. I have had enough of it. Behave properly, and then you will not cry like this.

DUNYASHA. [Looking in a little mirror and powdering her face.] Send me a letter from Paris. You know that I loved you, Yasha. I am a sensitive creature. You ought not to laugh at that.

YASHA. Somebody is coming. Enough now. Go away from me.

[He moves among the luggage and sings softly to himself. Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAEV, ANYA, and CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA.]

GAEV. We had better go now. There is no time left. [He sniffs the air.] Somebody smells of herring again.

LUBOV. We need not get into the carriages for ten minutes yet. [She looks around the room.] Good-bye, dear house. Good-bye, old grandfather.

LUBOV. Winter will pass, spring will come, and then you will exist no longer. You too will be pulled down. How much these walls have seen.

LUBOV. [Kissing Anya passionately.] My treasure, you shine. Your eyes flash like jewels. Are you happy? Tell me truly, are you happy?

ANYA. Very happy. A new life is beginning, mother. I feel it already.

GAEV. Yes, truly everything is all right now. Before the orchard was sold, we suffered and were excited, but once the question was settled, we all grew calmer, even cheerful.

GAEV. I am a bank official now and a financier. Red into the middle. And you, Luba, for some reason, look better than before. That is certain.

LUBOV. Yes. My nerves are better. That much is true. I sleep well now. [She puts on her coat and hat.]

LUBOV. Take my luggage out, Yasha. It is time. [To Anya.] My little girl, we shall soon see one another again. I am going to Paris.

LUBOV. I shall live there on the money your grandmother from Yaroslav sent to buy the estate, bless her, though it will not last long.

ANYA. You will come back soon, mother. Very soon, will you not? I shall study, pass the examination, and then I shall work and help you.

ANYA. We shall read books together in the autumn evenings. Many books. And then a beautiful new world will open before us. You will come back, mother.

LUBOV. I will come, my darling. [She embraces her.]

[Enter LOPAKHIN.]

GAEV. Charlotta is happy. Listen, she is singing to herself. She alone seems able to float over all this.

CHARLOTTA. [Taking a bundle as if it were a wrapped baby.] My little baby, bye-bye. Hush now, my pretty little boy. I am very sorry for you. I have nowhere to put you, just as I have nowhere to put myself.

CHARLOTTA. [Throwing the bundle back.] So please find me a new place. I cannot go on hanging in the air like this. A person ought to know where she belongs.

LOPAKHIN. We shall find you one, Charlotta Ivanovna. Do not be afraid.

Something will turn up.

GAEV. Everyone is leaving us. Varya is going away too. We have suddenly become unnecessary people.

CHARLOTTA. I have nowhere to live in town. So I too must go. Never mind.
[She hums softly.]

[Enter PISCHIN.]

Part 10

PISCHIN. [Puffing.] Oh, let me get my breath back. I am worn out. My dear friends, give me some water. I have hurried here as fast as I could.

GAEV. Come for money again, have you? I am your humble servant, but I had better get out of the way of temptation. [He goes out.]

PISCHIN. I have not been here for such a long time, dear madam. [To Lopakhin.] You are here too? I am glad to see you, man of immense brain. Here, take this. [He gives Lopakhin money.] Four hundred roubles. That leaves eight hundred and forty still to be paid.

LOPAKHIN. [Staring in surprise.] I feel as if I am dreaming. Where did you get this money? What has happened to you now?

PISCHIN. Stop, stop, it is hot. A most unexpected thing has happened. Some Englishmen came and found white clay on my land. [To Lubov.] And here are four hundred for you too, beautiful lady. [He gives her money.] I will give you the

rest later.

PISCHIN. [Drinking water.] A young man on the train was saying just now that some great philosopher advises everybody to jump off roofs. "Jump," he says, and that is all. Think of that now. More water.

LOPAKHIN. And these Englishmen, who exactly are they? What did they want with your land? How did it all happen?

PISCHIN. I leased them the land with the clay on it for twenty-four years. Now, excuse me, I have no time at all. I must run to Znoikov and to Kardamonov, because I owe money everywhere. Good-bye now. I will come again on Thursday.

LUBOV. We are just leaving for town, and to-morrow I go abroad. There is nothing more for us here now.

PISCHIN. [Deeply upset.] What? To town? And then abroad? I see trunks, furniture, everything packed. Well, never mind. The Englishmen are men of immense intellect. Never mind. Be happy. God will help you.

PISCHIN. Everything in this world comes to an end. [He kisses Lubov's hand.] And if ever you hear that my end has come too, just remember this old horse and say, "There was once such a Simeonov-Pischin. God bless his soul." Wonderful weather. Yes, wonderful weather. [He goes out, then returns at once.] Dashenka sends her love. [Exit.]

LUBOV. Now we really can go. Only two anxieties still remain with me. The first is poor Fiers. [She looks at her watch.] We still have five minutes.

ANYA. Mother, Fiers has already been sent to the hospital. Yasha sent him off this morning. So you need not worry about him any more.

LUBOV. My second anxiety is Varya. She has always risen early and worked, and now, with no work left, she is like a fish out of water. She has grown thin and pale, and she cries, poor girl.

LUBOV. You know very well, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, that I once hoped to marry her to you, and I suppose you are going to marry someone one day. [She whispers to Anya, who nods to Charlotta, and both girls go out.] She loves you. She is your kind of person, and I really do not understand why you two keep standing apart from one another. I do not understand it at all.

LOPAKHIN. To tell the truth, I do not understand it either. Everything about it feels strange. If there is still time, I am ready now, at once. Let us get it over with once and for all, because I do not think I could ever propose to her without you here.

LUBOV. Excellent. It will take only one minute. I shall call her at once.

LOPAKHIN. The champagne is very suitable for such a moment. [He looks at the glasses.] They are empty. Somebody has already drunk them. [Yasha coughs.] I call that licking it up.

LUBOV. Excellent then. We shall all go out. Yasha, allez. I will call her in. [At the door.] Varya, leave that and come here. Come. [She goes out with Yasha.]

LOPAKHIN. [Looking at his watch.] Yes. [He stands alone and waits in silence.]

[A quiet laugh is heard behind the door, then whispering. Varya comes in.]

VARYA. [Looking through the luggage.] I cannot seem to find it. I packed it with my own hands, and now I do not remember where I put it.

LOPAKHIN. What are you looking for? Tell me, and perhaps I can help.

VARYA. Something small. I do not even know now. Perhaps it is in the trunk. Perhaps I only imagined that I had lost it. [Pause.]

LOPAKHIN. Where are you going now, Barbara Mihailovna? What is to become of you after to-day?

VARYA. I? To the Ragulins. I have made an arrangement to go and look after their house, as housekeeper, or something like that. There was nothing else to do.

LOPAKHIN. Is that at Yashnevo? It is about fifty miles from here. [Pause.] So life in this house is finished now.

VARYA. [Still looking among the luggage.] Where is it? Perhaps I put it into the trunk after all. Yes, there will be no more life in this house. Not as it was before.

LOPAKHIN. And I am going to Kharkov at once, by this very train. I have a great deal of business waiting for me there. I am leaving Epikhodov here. I have taken him on.

VARYA. Well, well. So that too is settled. Everything is being settled, one thing after another.

LOPAKHIN. Last year at this time the snow was already falling, if you remember, and now it is clear and sunny. Only it is cold. There are three degrees of frost.

VARYA. I did not look. [Pause.] And our thermometer is broken. [Pause.]

A VOICE AT THE DOOR. Ermolai Alexeyevitch.

LOPAKHIN. [As if he has long been waiting for that call.] This minute. [He goes out quickly.]

[Varya sinks to the floor, lays her face on a bundle of clothes, and weeps quietly. The door opens. Lubov comes in carefully.]

LUBOV. Well? [Pause.] We must go now.

VARYA. [Wiping her eyes.] Yes, it is time, little mother. I shall get to the Ragulins' place to-day, if I do not miss the train.

LUBOV. [At the door.] Anya, put on your things. [Enter Anya, then Gaev, then Charlotta. Gaev wears a warm overcoat with a cape. A servant and drivers come in too. Epikhodov rushes about among the luggage.] Now we can leave.

ANYA. [Joyfully.] Away at last. Away.

GAEV. My friends, my dear friends. Can I really stay silent as I leave this house for ever? Can I keep from speaking of those feelings which fill my whole being at this moment?

ANYA. Uncle. Please.

VARYA. Uncle, you must not now.

GAEV. [Foolishly, at once defeated by his habit.] Double the red into the middle. I shall be quiet.

[Enter Trofimov, then Lopakhin.]

TROFIMOV. Well, it is time to be off. The train will not wait for our feelings.

LOPAKHIN. Epikhodov, my coat.

LUBOV. I will sit here one more minute. It is as if I had never really looked at these walls and ceilings before, and now I look at them greedily, with such tenderness.

GAEV. I remember that when I was six years old, on Trinity Sunday, I sat at this window and saw my father walking to church. I can still see him now.

LUBOV. Have all the things been taken away? Has anything been forgotten?

LOPAKHIN. Yes, all of them, I think. [To Epikhodov, while putting on his coat.] See that everything is quite straight, Epikhodov.

EPIKHODOV. [Hoarsely.] You may depend upon me, Ermolai Alexeyevitch.

LOPAKHIN. What is the matter with your voice? Why do you sound like that?

EPIKHODOV. I swallowed something just now when I was drinking water.

YASHA. What manners. Truly.

LUBOV. We are going away, and not a single soul remains behind in the house.

LOPAKHIN. Until the spring. That is all. Until the spring.

VARYA. [Dragging an umbrella from a bundle and waving it without thinking. Lopakhin starts in fear.] What are you doing? I never thought you would jump

like that.

TROFIMOV. Come along. Let us take our seats. It is time. The train will be in directly.

VARYA. Peter, here are your goloshes, by that trunk. [In tears.] And how old and dirty they are.

TROFIMOV. [Putting them on.] Come along then.

GAEV. [Nearly crying.] The train. The station. Cross in the middle. A white double in the corner.

LUBOV. Let us go.

LOPAKHIN. Are you all here? There is no one else? [He locks the side door.] There are many things in there. I must lock them up. Come.

ANYA. Good-bye, home. Good-bye, old life.

TROFIMOV. Welcome, new life. [He goes out with Anya.]

[Varya looks round the room and then goes out slowly. Yasha and Charlotta, with her little dog, go out too.]

LOPAKHIN. Until the spring then. Until we meet again. [Exit.]

[Lubov and Gaev are left alone. It is as if they had been waiting for the others to go. They fall into each other's arms and sob quietly, holding themselves in because they are afraid someone may hear.]

GAEV. My sister. My sister.

LUBOV. My dear, gentle, beautiful orchard. My life, my youth, my happiness.
Good-bye. Good-bye.

ANYA'S VOICE. [Gaily.] Mother.

TROFIMOV'S VOICE. [Gaily and excited.] Coo-ee.

LUBOV. To look once more at the walls and windows. My dead mother used to love walking in this room.

GAEV. My sister. My sister.

ANYA'S VOICE. Mother.

TROFIMOV'S VOICE. Coo-ee.

LUBOV. We are coming. [They go out.]

[The stage is empty. The sound of keys turning in locks is heard, then the noise of the carriages going away. Silence follows. Then, sadly and by itself, the sound of an axe striking trees is heard. Steps sound nearby. Fiers comes in from the door on the right.]

[He is dressed as usual, in a short jacket and white waistcoat, with slippers on his feet. He is ill. He goes to the door and tries the handle.]

FIERS. It is locked. They have gone away. [He sits on a sofa.] They have forgotten about me. Never mind, I will sit here.

FIERS. And Leonid Andreyevitch will have gone in a light overcoat instead of putting on his fur coat. [He sighs anxiously.] I did not see. Oh, these young people.

FIERS. [Mumbling something that cannot be understood.] Life has gone on as if I had never lived. [He lies down.] I will lie down now.

FIERS. There is no strength left in you. Nothing left at all. Oh, you bungler.

[He lies still. Far away, as if from the sky, the sound of a breaking string is heard again. It dies away sadly. Silence follows. Then, somewhere in the orchard, the axe falls on the trees.]