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BENGALURU  
CITY UNIVERSITY

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BACHELOR OF COMPUTER APPLICATIONS (BCA)

# ALCHEMY-III

SEMESTER-III  
GENERAL ENGLISH TEXTBOOK  
(As per the State Education Policy 2024)

Chief Editor  
Dr. T.N. Thandava Gowda

Editor  
Dr. Padmavathy. K



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**ALCHEMY – III** General English Textbook for III Semester BCA has been prepared by the members of BCA Textbook Committee, Bengaluru City University (BCU).

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**First Edition: 2025**

## **FOREWORD**

**Alchemy III** -the General English textbook for the III Semester B.C.A. and other undergraduate programmes under the Faculty of Computer Applications has been carefully designed to cater to the linguistic and communicative needs of students pursuing technical and professional courses. In today's rapidly evolving digital world, the ability to communicate effectively — both in writing and speech — is as crucial as technical expertise.

This course aims to enhance students' literary appreciation and communicative proficiency through a balanced integration of literary texts and language skill-building activities. The curriculum combines classic and contemporary literature — plays, poems, stories, and speeches — with practical components such as resume writing, business correspondence, and presentation skills. These components are aligned with real-world applications and professional expectations.

The Literary Skills (Unit I) section introduces students to diverse genres and voices from global and Indian literature, fostering critical thinking, empathy, and cultural awareness. The Communicative Skills (Unit II) segment emphasizes the development of the four foundational language skills — Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW) — equipping students with essential tools for academic success and professional growth.

I am confident that this book will serve not only as a foundation for effective communication but also as a platform for personal and intellectual growth. I extend my sincere thanks to the BCA text book committee who contributed immensely to the development of this syllabus.

**Prof. K. R. Jalaja**  
**Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor (Acting)**  
**Bengaluru City University**

## **PREFACE**

The General English syllabus for the Third Semester of the Bachelor of Computer Applications (B.C.A.) program at Bengaluru City University has been designed with the objective of fostering both literary appreciation and effective communication skills. Developed in accordance with the State Education Policy 2024, the syllabus aims to balance creativity with functionality, aligning language learning with the academic and professional needs of students.

The literary component introduces students to a diverse range of texts—poems, short stories, speeches, and a play—that encourage critical thinking and cultural awareness. These selections not only cultivate a deeper understanding of language and expression but also offer valuable insights into human experience and society.

In parallel, the language and skill-building component focuses on strengthening students' LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) skills. With practical tasks such as comprehension, resume writing, formal and business correspondence, and commercial writing, students are equipped to navigate both academic contexts and real-world communication scenarios with confidence and clarity.

This syllabus has been meticulously curated by the Textbook Committee to ensure a comprehensive, student-centric learning experience. It is my hope that this resource not only meets the academic objectives of the course but also makes the study of English engaging, meaningful, and rewarding.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Chairperson, the esteemed members of the Textbook Committee, and the publishing team for their commitment and collaboration in bringing this textbook to fruition.

**Dr. T. N. Thandava Gowda**  
**Chairperson**  
**UG Board of Studies**  
**Bengaluru City University**  
**Bengaluru.**

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### NOTE TO THE TEACHER

This General English syllabus for the **Third Semester B.C.A. programme** has been designed to develop students' **language proficiency** alongside their **appreciation of literature**. As a teacher, your role is central in shaping the classroom experience into one that is both engaging and transformative.

<b>Literary Component</b>	<b>40 marks</b>
<b>Communication Skills component</b>	<b>40 marks</b>
	-----
<b>Summative-Total</b>	<b>80 marks - written exam</b>
	-----
<b>Internal Assessment</b>	
<b>Internal Test</b>	<b>10marks</b>
<b>Assignment</b>	<b>05 marks</b>
<b>Classroom activity/</b>	<b>05 marks</b>
<b>Presentation/project</b>	-----
<b>Formative-Total</b>	<b>20 marks</b>
	-----



## **Suggestions for Teaching:**

- **Encourage participation:** Create opportunities for group discussions, role plays, and presentations to help students gain confidence in spoken English.
- **Connect literature to real life:** Relate themes in the texts to current events or students' personal experiences to deepen engagement.
- **Integrate skills:** Combine reading and writing tasks with speaking and listening activities for a more holistic learning experience.
- **Use formative assessments:** Regular feedback and in-class exercises can help students track their progress and improve continuously.
- **Foster creativity:** Encourage students to write their own stories, speeches, and letters as extensions of textbook activities.

The textbook has been carefully prepared to serve as both a learning resource and a teaching aid. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the materials to suit the needs of their learners, while also maintaining alignment with the academic goals of the program.

We hope this course not only improves students' language skills but also nurtures their confidence, creativity, and critical thinking.

**Happy Teaching!**

**Dr Padmavathy. K**

**Chairperson**

**Text book Committee**

## **GENERAL ENGLISH**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

English Language course focuses to equip students with English language skills and introduce them to different literary genres. English language course focus on enhancing communication skills through the learning of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The III BA syllabus is offered to equip students with English Language Skills and introduce them different literary genres. The course will be covered with lectures and practical components such as seminars, assignments and presentations

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- To improve LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) competencies.
- To develop interpersonal communication abilities.
- To familiarize students with drama and dramatists by examining the selected text.
- To improve presentation and analytical skills.
- To be able to critically analyse, interpret and appreciate literary texts.
- To raise awareness of social, cultural, religious, and ethnic diversities.
- To facilitate employability in emerging fields such as content writing and interpretation.
- To facilitate preparation for competitive examinations.

### **COURSE OUTCOMES**

At the end of the course the students will have:

- Acquired LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) skills.
- Equipped themselves with interpersonal communication skills.
- Acquainted with significant movements in drama and notable dramatists.
- Augmented presentation and analytical skills.
- Ability to critically analyse, interpret and appreciate literary texts.
- An awareness of social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversities.
- Facilitated employability in emerging sectors such as – content writers and interpreters.
- Acquired language skills for competitive examinations

## **DELIVERY OF CURRICULUM – STRUCTURE**

The textbook has two components to equip students with -

- Literary Skills
- Communication Skills

### **Literary Skills**

This focuses on a thorough and critical comprehension of skills, vocabulary enhancement, and reading proficiency. Students are exposed to various literary genres. Engaging with plays novels, essays, articles and similar texts will enhance their reading proficiency, critical thinking and creative abilities. The teacher will focus on promoting both loud reading and silent reading, elaborating on their advantages. Students are educated about Intensive Reading and Extensive Reading. Intensive reading requires learners to read meticulously with defined learning objectives and tasks. Activities such as reading paragraphs, stories will train the students to acquire the needed skills. In the extensive reading segment, the teacher guides the students with reading materials to explore independently. Short stories, novellas, brief plays, and fables will be made available for students, aiding them in vocabulary development, structural understanding, and acquiring a general comprehension of the content.

### **COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

The textbook has exercises designed to enhance the linguistic abilities of students, allowing the students to use language confidently as a means of communication for personal, social, official, professional, and business purposes, with clear and articulatory expression. The four fundamental skills in any language include Listening Skills, Speaking Skills, Reading Skills, and Writing Skills. During the process of language acquisition, learners initially engage with the language through a receptive understanding of its subtleties. Reading and Listening are classified as receptive skills. Following the development of receptive skills, learners advance to productive skills, which involve the active use of language.

### **Pedagogy**

Listening skill can be taught by using ICT tools, web-based learning in Language Lab. Students can be given listening practice by making them listen to pre-recorded audios, songs, interviews, conversations, narratives, news and other listening activities. Along with the use of print media ICT tools should be used to make the students learn pronunciation, modulation of voice and better conversation. Students will learn the language and literature through role plays, presentations and assignments.

**CURRICULUM STRUCTURE FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMME  
B.C.A. AND OTHER PROGRAMMES UNDER FACULTY OF COMPUTER APPLICATIONS  
III SEMESTER - GENERAL ENGLISH**

<b>Starting year of implementation: 2025-26</b>	<b>Total Credits for the Programme: 04</b>
<b>Subject: GENERAL ENGLISH</b>	<b>Teaching hour per week: 04</b>
<b>Name of the Degree Programme – B.C.A.</b>	<b>Total number of lecture hours/semester 60/64</b>

III SEMESTER - GENERAL ENGLISH B.C.A. AND OTHER PROGRAMMES UNDER FACULTY OF COMPUTER APPLICATIONS		60/64 hrs	80 marks	Page no.
UNIT - 1				
LITERARY SKILLS		30.hrs	40 marks	
PLAY	<b>The Cherry Orchard</b> – Anton Chekhov	14 hrs	20 marks	1
SHORT STORY	<b>Appointment with Love</b> Sulamith Ish Kishore	4hrs	5 marks	60
SPEECH	<b>You will Prevail</b> – Sunder Picchai	4hrs	5 marks	66
POEM	<b>I Still Matter</b> - Patricia Fleming	4hrs	5 marks	71
POEM	<b>A River</b> – AK Ramanujan	4hrs	5 marks	75
Question Paper Pattern				79
Model Question Paper				80

# 1. The Cherry Orchard

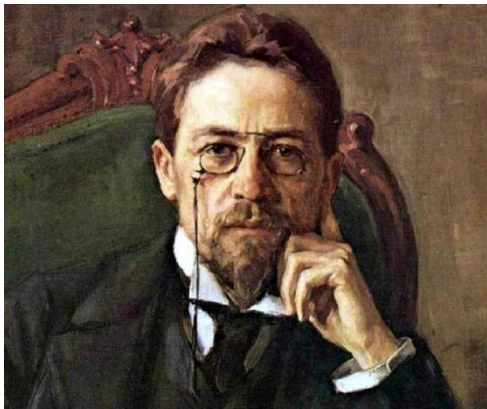
**Anton Chekhov**

## **Pre-Reading:**

- Social and economic transition of Russia in 1861 – Discuss.
- The past beholds moments that can warm our hearts or bring tears to our eyes - Discuss.
- Do you think the old world and the new world shape societies and individuals?

## **About the author:**

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was born on January 29, 1860, in Taganrog, a small port town in



southern Russia. His father, Pavel Chekhov, was a grocer known for being strict and deeply religious. Chekhov's mother, Yevgeniya, was a storyteller who inspired his love for literature. The family faced financial difficulties, and Chekhov's early years were marked by hardship. Despite the struggles, his home environment cultivated his creative instincts.

Chekhov attended a local grammar school, where he developed a love for books and the theatre. His father's bankruptcy forced the family to move to Moscow in 1876, but Chekhov stayed behind to complete his education. During this period, he supported himself by tutoring and writing comic sketches. The hardships of his childhood later influenced his writing, shaping his compassionate and humanistic outlook.

Anton Chekhov, a master of short stories and drama, made significant contributions to world literature. His works are characterized by their realism, psychological depth, and exploration of human nature.

Chekhov revolutionized the short story form by focusing on mood, character, and atmosphere rather than plot-driven narratives. His stories often end with a sense of ambiguity, reflecting life's complexities. Chekhov is renowned for his plays, which blend realism with subtle humour and tragedy. His major plays include *The Seagull*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Three Sisters*, and *The Cherry Orchard*. These plays are significant for their innovative use of subtext and ensemble casts.

His works emphasize characters' internal struggles and moral dilemmas, influencing later writers in the genre of psychological fiction. Chekhov's use of everyday language and situations marked a shift from melodramatic styles, contributing to the development of modern drama. His storytelling techniques and character-focused approach have influenced numerous writers and playwrights, including James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, and Tennessee Williams.

Chekhov did not receive major literary awards during his lifetime but was highly regarded by contemporaries and later generations. In 1888, he received the Pushkin Prize for his collection of short stories.

### **Historical Background of the Play:**

Tsar Alexander II abolished serfdom in 1861. Having been an economic institution for centuries, the newly freed serfs took some time to carve out a place for themselves in Russian society. Though they received some land, it generally was not enough to live on; unrest was common as was freed serfs' "renting" land from their previous owners. Landowners, too, felt some negative consequences they were unable to maintain their previous lifestyle after being forced to sell their lands to former serfs. Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* takes place in this period of uncertainty, where freed serfs and aristocrats are attempting to figure out their new dynamic.

### **About the Play:**

*The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov is a poignant drama about a once-wealthy Russian family facing the loss of their estate and beloved cherry orchard due to mounting debts. As Madame Ranevsky returns from Paris, she is emotionally overwhelmed but refuses to accept practical solutions like Lopakhin's plan to lease the land. Lopakhin, a former peasant turned wealthy businessman, ultimately buys the estate at auction, symbolizing the rise of the middle class and the fall of the aristocracy. The play explores themes of social change, memory, and loss. In the end, the family departs, the orchard is cut down, and Firs, the old servant, dies alone—forgotten, like the era he represents.

## **Characters:**

- MADAME RANEVSKY (Lubov Andreyevna Ranevsky) – the owner of the Cherry Orchard.
- ANYA, her daughter, aged seventeen
- VARYA (BARBARA), her adopted daughter, aged twenty-seven
- LEONID ANDREYEVITCH GAEV, Madame Ranevsky's brother
- YERMOLAI ALEXEYEVITCH LOPAKHIN, a merchant
- PYOTR SERGEYEVITCH TROFIMOV, a student
- SEMYONOV-PISHTCHIK, a landowner
- CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA, a governess
- SEMYON PANTALEYEVITCH EPHIHODOV, a clerk
- DUNYASHA (AVDOTYA FEDOROVNA), a maidservant
- FIRS, an old footman, aged eighty-seven
- YASHA, a young valet
- A WAYFARER
- A STATION-MASTER
- POST-OFFICE CLERK
- GUESTS
- A SERVANT

**PLAY**

# **THE CHERRY ORCHARD**

**by**

**ANTON CHEKHOV**



## ACT ONE

*A room which is still called the nursery. One of the doors leads into ANYA'S room. It is close on sunrise. It is May. The cherry-trees are in flower but it is chilly in the garden. There is an early frost. The windows of the room are shut. DUNYASHA comes in with a candle, and LOPAKHIN with a book in his hand.*

**LOPAKHIN:** The train's arrived, thank God. What's the time?

**DUNYASHA:** It will soon be two. [Blows out candle] It is light already.

**LOPAKHIN:** How much was the train late? Two hours at least. [Yawns and stretches himself] I have made a rotten mess of it! I came here on purpose to meet them at the station, and then overslept myself . . . in my chair. It's a pity. I wish you'd wakened me.

**DUNYASHA:** I thought you'd gone away. [Listening] I think I hear them coming.

**LOPAKHIN:** [*Listens*] No. . . . They've got to collect their luggage and so on... [*Pause*] Lubov Andreyevna has been living abroad for five years; I don't know what she'll be like now .... She's a good sort—an easy, simple person. I remember when I was a boy of fifteen, my father, who is dead—he used to keep a shop in the village here—hit me on the face with his fist, and my nose bled. . . We had gone into the yard together for something or other, and he was a little drunk. Lubov Andreyevna, as I remember her now, was still young, and very thin, and she took me to the washstand here in this very room, the nursery. She said, "Don't cry, little man, it'll be all right in time for your wedding." [*Pause*] "Little man" .... My father was a peasant, it's true, but here I am in a white waistcoat and yellow shoes . . . a pearl out of an oyster. I'm rich now, with lots of money, but just think about it and examine me, and you'll find I'm still a peasant down to the marrow of my bones. [*Turns over the pages of his book*] Here I've been reading this book, but I understood nothing. I read and fell asleep. [*Pause*]

**DUNYASHA:** The dogs didn't sleep all night; they know that they're coming.

**LOPAKHIN:** What's up with you, Dunyasha ....?

**DUNYASHA:** My hands are shaking. I shall faint.

**LOPAKHIN:** You're too sensitive, Dunyasha. You dress just like a lady, and you do your hair like one too. You oughtn't. You should know your place.

**EPIKHODOV:** [*Enters with a bouquet. He wears a short jacket and brilliantly polished boots which squeak audibly. He drops the bouquet as he enters, then picks it up*] The gardener sent these; says they're to go into the dining-room. [*Gives the bouquet to DUNYASHA.*]

**LOPAKHIN:** And you'll bring me some kvass.

**DUNYASHA.** Very well. [*Exit.*]

**EPIKHODOV.** There's a frost this morning—three degrees, and the cherry-trees are all in flower. I can't approve of our climate. [*Sighs*] I can't. Our climate is indisposed to favour us even this once. And, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, allow me to say to you, in addition, that I bought myself some boots two days ago, and I beg to assure you that they squeak in a perfectly unbearable manner. What shall I put on them?

**LOPAKHIN.** Go away. You bore me.

**EPIKHODOV.** Some misfortune happens to me every day. But I don't complain; I'm used to it, and I can smile. [*DUNYASHA comes in and brings LOPAKHIN some kvass*] I shall go. [*Knocks over a chair*] There....[*Triumphantly*] There, you see, if I may use the word, what circumstances I am in, so to speak. It is even simply marvellous. [*Exit.*]

**DUNYASHA:** I may confess to you, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, that Epikhodov has proposed to me.

**LOPAKHIN:** Ah!

**DUNYASHA:** I don't know what to do about it. He's a nice young man, but every now and again, when he begins talking, you can't understand a word he's saying. I think I like him. He's madly in love with me. He's an unlucky man; every day something happens. We tease him about it. They call him "Two-and-twenty troubles."

**LOPAKHIN:** [*Listens*] There they come, I think.

**DUNYASHA:** They're coming! What's the matter with me? I'm cold all over.

**LOPAKHIN:** There they are, right enough. Let's go and meet them. Will she know me? We haven't seen each other for five years.

**DUNYASHA:** [*Excited*] I shall faint in a minute ..... Oh, I'm fainting!

*Two carriages are heard driving up to the house. LOPAKHIN and DUNYASHA quickly go out. The stage is empty. A noise begins in the next room. FIERS, leaning on a stick, walks quickly across the stage; he has just been to meet LUBOV ANDREYEVNA. He wears an old-fashioned livery and a tall hat. He is saying something to himself, but not a word of it can be made out. The noise behind the stage gets louder and louder. A voice is heard: "Let's go in there." Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, ANYA, and CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA with a little dog on a chain, and all dressed in travelling clothes, VARYA in a long coat and with a kerchief on her head. GAEV, SIMEONOV-PISCHIN, LOPAKHIN, DUNYASHA with a parcel and an umbrella, and a servant with luggage—all cross the room.*

**ANYA:** Let's come through here. Do you remember what this room is, mother?

**LUBOV:** [*Joyfully, through her tears*] The nursery!

**VARYA:** How cold it is! My hands are quite numb. [*To LUBOV ANDREYEVNA*] Your rooms, the white one and the violet one, are just as they used to be, mother.

**LUBOV:** My dear nursery, oh, your beautiful room ... I used to sleep here when I was a baby. [*Weeps*] And here I am like a little girl again. [*Kisses her brother, VARYA, then her brother again*] And Varya is just as she used to be, just like a nun. And I knew Dunyasha. [*Kisses her.*]

**GAEV:** The train was two hours late. There now; how's that for punctuality?

**CHARLOTTA:** [*To PISCHIN*] My dog eats nuts too.

**PISCHIN:** [*Astonished*] To think of that, now!

*All go out except ANYA and DUNYASHA.*

**DUNYASHA:** We did have to wait for you!

*Takes off ANYA'S cloak and hat.*

**ANYA:** I didn't get any sleep for four nights on the journey ... I'm awfully cold.

**DUNYASHA:** You went away during Lent, when it was snowing and frosty, but now? Darling! [*Laughs and kisses her*] We did have to wait for you, my joy, my pet ... I must tell you at once, I can't bear to wait a minute.

**ANYA:** [*Tired*] Something else now ...?

**DUNYASHA:** The clerk, Epikhodov, proposed to me after Easter.

**ANYA:** Always the same ... [*Puts her hair straight*] I've lost all my hairpins...

*She is very tired, and even staggers as she walks.*

**DUNYASHA:** I don't know what to think about it. He loves me, he loves me so much!

**ANYA.** [*Looks into her room; in a gentle voice*] My room, my windows, as if I'd never gone away. I'm at home! To-morrow morning I'll get up and have a run in the garden. ... Oh, if I could only get to sleep! I didn't sleep the whole journey; I was so bothered.

**DUNYASHA:** Peter Sergeyevitch came two days ago.

**ANYA:** [*Joyfully*] Peter!

**DUNYASHA.** He sleeps in the bath-house, he lives there. He said he was afraid he'd be in the way. [*Looks at her pocket-watch*] I ought to wake him, but Barbara Mihailovna told me not to. "Don't wake him," she said.

*Enter VARYA, a bunch of keys on her belt.*

**VARYA:** Dunyasha, some coffee, quick. Mother wants some.

**DUNYASHA:** This minute. [*Exit.*]

**VARYA:** Well, you've come, glory be to God. Home again. [*Caressing her*] My darling is back again! My pretty one is back again!

**ANYA:** I did have an awful time, I tell you.

**VARYA:** I can just imagine it!

**ANYA:** I went away in Holy Week; it was very cold then. Charlotta talked the whole way and would go on performing her tricks. Why did you tie Charlotta on to me?

**VARYA:** You couldn't go alone, darling, at seventeen!

**ANYA:** We went to Paris; it's cold there and snowing. I talk French perfectly horribly. My mother lives on the fifth floor. I go to her, and find her there with various Frenchmen, women, an old abbé with a book, and everything in tobacco smoke and with no comfort at all. I suddenly became very sorry for mother—so sorry that I took her head in my arms and hugged her and wouldn't let her go. Then mother started hugging me and crying ...

**VARYA:** [Weeping] Don't say any more, don't say any more ...

**ANYA:** She's already sold her villa near Mentone; she's nothing left, nothing. And I haven't a copeck left either; we only just managed to get here. And mother won't understand! We had dinner at a station; she asked for all the expensive things, and tipped the waiters one rouble each. And Charlotta too. Yasha wants his share too—it's too bad. Mothers got a footman now, Yasha; we've brought him here.

**VARYA:** I saw the wretch.

**ANYA:** How's business? Has the interest been paid?

**VARYA:** Not much chance of that.

**ANYA:** Oh God, oh God....

**VARYA.** The place will be sold in August.

**ANYA:** O God. ...

**LOPAKHIN:** [Looks in at the door and moos] Moo! ... [Exit.]

**VARYA:** [Through her tears] I'd like to ... [Shakes her fist.]

**ANYA:** [Embraces VARYA, softly] Varya, has he proposed to you? [VARYA shakes head] But he loves you ... Why don't you make up your minds? Why do you keep on waiting?

**VARYA:** I think that it will all come to nothing. He's a busy man. I'm not his affair ... he pays no attention to me. Bless the man, I don't want to see him., . . But everybody talks about our marriage, everybody congratulates me, and there's nothing in it at all, it's all like a dream. [*In another tone*] You've got a brooch like a bee.

**ANYA:** [*Sadly*] Mother bought it. [Goes into her room, and talks lightly, like a child] In Paris I went up in a balloon!

**VARYA:** My darling's come back, my pretty one's come back! [*DUNYASHA has already returned with the coffee-pot and is making the coffee, VARYA stands near the door*] I go about all day, looking after the house, and I think all the time, if only you could marry a rich man, then I'd be happy and would go away somewhere by myself, then to Kiev ... to Moscow, and so on, from one holy place to another. I'd tramp and tramp. That would be splendid!

**ANYA.** The birds are singing in the garden. What time is it now?

**VARYA.** It must be getting on for three. Time you went to sleep, darling. [*Goes into ANYA'S room*] Splendid!

*Enter YASHA with a plaid shawl and a travelling bag.*

**YASHA:**[*Crossing the stage: Politely*] May I go this way?

**DUNYASHA:** I hardly knew you, Yasha. You have changed abroad.

**YASHA:** Hm . . . and who are you?

**DUNYASHA:** When you went away I was only so high. [*Showing with her hand*] I'm Dunyasha, the daughter of Theodore Kozoyedov. You don't remember!

**YASHA:** Oh, you little cucumber!

*Looks round and embraces her. She screams and drops a saucer. YASHA goes out quickly.*

**VARYA:** [*In the doorway: In an angry voice*] What's that?

**DUNYASHA:** [*Through her tears*] I've broken a saucer.

**VARYA:** It may bring luck.

**ANYA:** [*Coming out of her room*] We must tell mother that Peter's here.

**VARYA:** I told them not to wake him.

**ANYA:** [*Thoughtfully*] Father died six years ago, and a month later my brother Grisha was drowned in the river— such a dear little boy of seven! Mother couldn't bear it; she went away, away, without looking round ... [*Shudders*] How I understand her; if only she knew! [*Pause*] and Peter Trofimov was Grisha's tutor, he might tell her ...

*Enter FIERS in a short jacket and white waistcoat.*

**FIERS:** [*Goes to the coffee-pot, nervously*] The mistress is going to have some food here ... [*Puts on white gloves*] Is the coffee ready? [*To DUNYASHA, severely*] You! Where's the cream?

**DUNYASHA:** Oh, dear me . . .! [*Rapid exit.*]

**FIERS:** [*Fussing round the coffee-pot*] Oh, your bungler ... [*Murmurs to himself*] Back from Paris . . . the master went to Paris once . . . in a carriage. . . [*Laughs.*]

**VARYA:** What are you talking about, Fiers?

**FIERS:** I beg your pardon? [*Joyfully*] the mistress is home again. I've lived to see her! Don't care if I die now ... [*Weeps with joy.*]

*Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAEV, LOPAKHIN, and SIMEONOV-PISCHIN, the latter in a long jacket of thin cloth and loose trousers. GAEV, coming in, moves his arms and body about as if he is playing billiards.*

**LUBOV:** Let me remember now. Red into the corner! Twice into the centre!

**GAEV:** Right into the pocket! Once upon a time you and I used both to sleep in this room, and now I'm fifty-one; it does seem strange.

**LOPAKHIN:** Yes, time does go.

**GAEV:** Who does?

**LOPAKHIN:** I said that time does go.

**GAEV:** It smells of patchouli here.

**ANYA:** I'm going to bed. Good-night, mother. [*Kisses her.*]

**LUBOV:** My lovely little one. [*Kisses her hand*] Glad to be at home? I can't get over it.

**ANYA:** Good-night, uncle.

**GAEV:** [*Kisses her face and hands*] God be with you. How you do resemble your mother! [*To his sister*] You were just like her at her age, Luba.

*ANYA gives her hand to LOPAKHIN and PISCHIN and goes out, shutting the door behind her.*

**LUBOV:** She's awfully tired.

**PISCHIN:** It's a very long journey.

**VARYA:** [*To LOPAKHIN and PISCHIN*] Well, sirs, it's getting on for three, quite time you went.

**LUBOV:** [*Laughs*] You're just the same as ever, Varya. [*Draws her close and kisses her*] I'll have some coffee now, then we'll all go. [*FIERS lays a cushion under her feet*] Thank you, dear. I'm used to coffee. I drink it day and night. Thank you, dear old man. [*Kisses FIERS. VARYA. I'll go and see if they've brought in all the luggage. [Exit.]*]

**LUBOV:** Is it really, I who am sitting here? [*Laughs*] I want to jump about and wave my arms. [*Covers her face with her hands*] But suppose I'm dreaming! God knows I love my own country; I love it deeply; I couldn't look out of the railway carriage; I cried so much. [*Through her tears*] Still, I must have my coffee. Thank you, Fiers. Thank you, dear old man. I'm so glad you're still with us.

**FIERS:** The day before yesterday.

**GAEV:** He doesn't hear well.

**LOPAKHIN:** I've got to go off to Kharkov by the five o'clock train. I'm awfully sorry! I should like to have a look at you, to gossip a little. You're as fine-looking as ever.

**PISCHIN:** [*Breathes heavily*] Even finer-looking . . . dressed in Paris fashions . . . confound it all.

**LOPAKHIN:** Your brother, Leonid Andreyevitch, says I'm a snob, a usurer, but that is absolutely nothing to me. Let him talk. Only I do wish you would believe in me as you once did, that your wonderful, touching eyes would look at me as they did before. Merciful God! My father was the serf of your grandfather and your own father, but you—you more than anybody else—did so much for me once upon a time that I've forgotten everything and love you as if you belonged to my family . . . and even more.

**LUBOV:** I can't sit still; I'm not in a state to do it. [*Jumps up and walks about in great excitement*] I'll never survive this happiness ... You can laugh at me; I'm a silly woman ... My dear little cupboard. [*Kisses cupboard*] My little table.

**GAEV:** Nurse has died in your absence.

**LUBOV:** [*Sits and drinks coffee*] Yes, bless her soul. I heard by letter.

**GAEV:** And Anastasius has died too. Peter Kosoy has left me and now lives in town with the Commissioner of Police. [*Takes a box of sugar-candy out of his pocket and sucks a piece.*]

**PISCHIN:** My daughter, Dashenka, sends her love.

**LOPAKHIN:** I want to say something very pleasant, very delightful, to you. [*Looks at his watch*] I'm going away at once, I haven't much time . . . but I'll tell you all about it in two or three words. As you already know, your cherry orchard is to be sold to pay your debts, and the sale is fixed for August 22; but you needn't be alarmed, dear madam, you may sleep in peace; there's a way out. Here's my plan. Please attend carefully! Your estate is only thirteen miles from the town, the railway runs by, and if the cherry orchard and the land by the river are broken up into building lots and are then leased off for villas you'll get at least twenty-five thousand roubles a year profit out of it.

**GAEV:** How utterly absurd!

**LUBOV:** I don't understand you at all, Ermolai Alexeyevitch.

**LOPAKHIN:** You will get twenty-five roubles a year for each dessiatin from the leaseholders at the very least, and if you advertise now, I'm willing to bet that you won't have a vacant plot left by the autumn; they'll all go. In a word, you're saved. I congratulate you. Only, of course, you'll have to put things straight, and clean up. .

.For instance, you'll have to pull down all the old buildings, this house, which isn't any use to anybody now, and cut down the old cherry orchard. . .

**LUBOV:** Cut it down? My dear man, you must excuse me, but you don't understand anything at all. If there's anything interesting or remarkable in the whole province, it's this cherry orchard of ours.

**LOPAKHIN:** The only remarkable thing about the orchard is that it's very large. It only bears fruit every other year, and even then, you don't know what to do with them; nobody buys any.

**GAEV:** This orchard is mentioned in the "Encyclopaedic Dictionary."

**LOPAKHIN;** [Looks at his watch] If we can't think of anything and don't make up our minds to anything, then on August 22, both the cherry orchard and the whole estate will be up for auction. Make up your mind! I swear there's no other way out, I'll swear it again.

**FIERS:** In the old days, forty or fifty years back, they dried the cherries, soaked them and pickled them, and made jam of them, and it used to happen that . . .

**GAEV:** Be quiet, Fiers.

**FIERS:** And then we'd send the dried cherries off in carts to Moscow and Kharkov. And money! And the dried cherries were soft, juicy, sweet, and nicely scented ... They knew the way ...

**LUBOV:** What was the way?

**FIERS:** They've forgotten. Nobody remembers.

**PISCHIN:** [To LUBOV ANDREYEVNA] What about Paris? Eh? Did you eat frogs?

**LUBOV:** I ate crocodiles.

**PISCHIN:** To think of that, now.

**LOPAKHIN:** Up to now in the villages there were only the gentry and the labourers, and now the people who live in villas have arrived. All towns now, even small ones, are surrounded by villas. And it's safe to say that in twenty years' time the villa resident will be all over the place. At present he sits on his balcony and drinks tea, but it may well come to pass that he'll begin to cultivate his patch of land, and then your cherry orchard will be happy, rich, splendid ...

**GAEV:** [Angry] What rot!

*Enter VARYA and YASHA.*

**VARYA:** There are two telegrams for you, little mother. [Picks out a key and noisily unlocks an antique cupboard] Here they are.



**LUBOV:** They're from Paris ... [*Tears them up without reading them*] I've done with Paris.

**GAEV:** And do you know, Luba, how old this case is? A week ago, I took out the bottom drawer; I looked and saw figures burnt out in it. That case was made exactly a hundred years ago. What do you think of that? What? We could celebrate its jubilee. It hasn't a soul of its own, but still, say what you will, it's a fine bookcase.

**PISCHIN:** [*Astonished*] A hundred years. . . Think of that!

**GAEV:** Yes . . . it's a real thing. [*Handling it*] My dear and honoured case! I congratulate you on your existence, which has already for more than a hundred years been directed towards the bright ideals of good and justice; your silent call to productive labour has not grown less in the hundred years [*Weeping*] during which you have upheld virtue and faith in a better future to the generations of our race, educating us up to ideals of goodness and to the knowledge of a common consciousness. [*Pause.*]

**LOPAKHIN:** Yes ...

**LUBOV:** You're just the same as ever, Leon.

**GAEV:** [*A little confused*] Off the white on the right, into the corner pocket. Red ball goes into the middle pocket!

**LOPAKHIN:** [*Looks at his watch*] It's time I went.

**YASHA:** [*Giving LUBOV ANDREYEVNA her medicine*] Will you take your pills now?

**PISCHIN:** You oughtn't to take medicines, dear madam; they do you neither harm nor good ... Give them here, dear madam. [*Takes the pills, turns them out into the palm of his hand, blows on them, puts them into his mouth, and drinks some kvass*] There!

**LUBOV:** [*Frightened*] You're off your head!

**PISCHIN:** I've taken all the pills.

**LOPAKHIN:** Gormandizer! [*All laugh.*]

**FIERS:** They were here in Easter week and ate half a pailful of cucumbers ... [*Mumbles.*]

**LUBOV:** What's he driving at?

**VARYA:** He's been mumbling away for three years. We're used to that.

**YASHA:** Senile decay.

*CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA crosses the stage, dressed in white: she is very thin and tightly laced; has a lorgnette at her waist.*

**LOPAKHIN:** Excuse me, Charlotta Ivanovna, I haven't said "How do you do" to you yet. [*Tries to kiss her hand.*]

**CHARLOTTA:** [*Takes her hand away*] If you let people kiss your hand, then they'll want your elbow, then your shoulder, and then . . .

**LOPAKHIN:** My luck's out to-day! [*All laugh*] Show us a trick, Charlotta Ivanovna!

**LUBOV ANDREYEVNA;** Charlotta, do us a trick.

**CHARLOTTA:** It's not necessary. I want to go to bed. [*Exit.*]

**LOPAKHIN:** We shall see each other in three weeks. [*Kisses LUBOV ANDREYEVNA'S hand*] Now, good-bye. It's time to go. [*To GAEV*] See you again. [*Kisses PISCHIN*] Au revoir. [*Gives his hand to VARYA, then to FIERS and to YASHA*] I don't want to go away. [*To LUBOV ANDREYEVNA*]. If you think about the villas and make up your mind, then just let me know, and I'll raise a loan of 50,000 roubles at once. Think about it seriously.

**VARYA:** [*Angrily*] Do go, now!

**LOPAKHIN:** I'm going, I'm going ... [*Exit.*]

**GAEV:** Snob. Still, I beg pardon ... Varya's going to marry him, he's Varya's young man.

**VARYA:** Don't talk too much, uncle.

**LUBOV:** Why not, Varya? I should be very glad. He's a good man.

**PISCHIN:** To speak the honest truth . . . he's a worthy man. ... And my Dashenka . . . also says that . . . she says lots of things. [*Snores, but wakes up again at once*] But still, dear madam, if you could lend me . . . 240 roubles . . . to pay the interest on my mortgage to-morrow . . .

**VARYA:** [*Frightened*] We haven't got it, we haven't got it!

**LUBOV:** It's quite true. I've nothing at all.

**PISCHIN:** I'll find it all right [*Laughs*] I never lose hope. I used to think, "Everything's lost now. I'm a dead man," when, lo and behold, a railway was built over my land . . . and they paid me for it. And something else will happen to-day or to-morrow. Dashenka may win 20,000 roubles . . . she's got a lottery ticket.

**LUBOV:** The coffee's all gone, we can go to bed.

**FIERS:** [*Brushing GAEV'S trousers; in an insistent tone*] You've put on the wrong trousers again. What am I to do with you?

**VARYA:** [*Quietly*] Anya's asleep. [*Opens window quietly*] The sun has risen already; it isn't cold. Look, little mother: what lovely trees! And the air! The starlings are singing!

**GAEV:** *[Opens the other window]* The whole garden's white. You haven't forgotten, Luba? There's that long avenue going straight, straight, like a stretched strap; it shines on moonlight nights. Do you remember? You haven't forgotten?

**LUBOV:** *[Looks out into the garden]* Oh, my childhood, days of my innocence! In this nursery I used to sleep; I used to look out from here into the orchard. Happiness used to wake with me every morning, and then it was just as it is now; nothing has changed. *[Laughs from joy]* It's all, all white! Oh, my orchard! After the dark autumns and the cold winters, you're young again, full of happiness, the angels of heaven haven't left you. ... If only I could take my heavy burden off my breast and shoulders, if I could forget my past!

**GAEV:** Yes, and they'll sell this orchard to pay off debts. How strange it seems!

**LUBOV:** Look, there's my dead mother going in the orchard . . . dressed in white! *[Laughs from joy]* That's she.

**GAEV:** Where?

**VARYA:** God bless you, little mother.

**LUBOV:** There's nobody there; I thought I saw somebody. On the right, at the turning by the summer-house, a white little tree bent down, looking just like a woman. *[Enter TROFIMOV in a worn student uniform and spectacles]* What a marvellous garden! White masses of flowers, the blue sky. . .

**TROFIMOV:** Lubov Andreyevna! *[She looks round at him]* I only want to show myself, and I'll go away. *[Kisses her hand warmly]* I was told to wait till the morning, but I didn't have the patience.

*[LUBOV ANDREYEVNA looks surprised.]*

**VARYA:** *[Crying]* It's Peter Trofimov.

**TROFIMOV:** Peter Trofimov, once the tutor of your Grisha. ... Have I changed so much?

*LUBOV ANDREYEVNA embraces him and cries softly.*

**GAEV:** *[Confused]* That's enough, that's enough, Luba.

**VARYA:** *[Weeps]* but I told you, Peter, to wait till to-morrow.

**LUBOV:** My Grisha . . . my boy . . . Grisha . . . my son.

**VARYA:** What are we to do, little mother? It's the will of God.

**TROFIMOV:** *[Softly, through his tears]* It's all right, it's all right.

**LUBOV:** *[Still weeping]* My boy's dead; he was drowned. Why? Why, my friend? *[Softly]* Anya's asleep in there. I am speaking so loudly, making such a noise. ... Well, Peter? What's made you look so bad? Why have you grown so old?

**TROFIMOV:** In the train an old woman called me a decayed gentleman.

**LUBOV:** You were quite a boy then, a nice little student, and now your hair is not at all thick and you wear spectacles. Are you really still a student? [*Goes to the door*]

**TROFIMOV:** I suppose I shall always be a student.

**LUBOV:** [*Kisses her brother, then VARYA*] Well, let's go to bed. ... And you've grown older, Leonid.

**PISCHIN.** [*Follows her*] Yes, we've got to go to bed. ... Oh, my gout! I'll stay the night here. If only, Lubov Andreyevna, my dear, you could get me 240 roubles to-morrow morning—

**GAEV:** Still the same story.

**PISCHIN:** Two hundred and forty roubles . . . to pay the interest on the mortgage.

**LUBOV:** I haven't any money, dear man.

**PISCHIN:** I'll give it back . . . it's a small sum. . .

**LUBOV:** Well, then, Leonid will give it to you. . . Let him have it, Leonid.

**GAEV:** By all means; hold out your hand.

**LUBOV:** Why not? He wants it; he'll give it back.

*LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, TROFIMOV, PISCHIN, and FIERS go out. GAEV, VARYA, and YASHA remain.*

**GAEV:** My sister hasn't lost the habit of throwing money about. [*To YASHA*] Standoff, do; you smell of poultry.

**YASHA:** [*Grins*] You are just the same as ever, Leonid Andreyevitch.

**GAEV:** Really? [*To VARYA*] What's he saying?

**VARYA:** [*To YASHA*] Your mother's come from the village; she's been sitting in the servants' room since yesterday, and wants to see you. ...

**YASHA:** Bless the woman!

**VARYA:** Shameless man.

**YASHA:** A lot of use there is in her coming. She might have come tomorrow just as well. [*Exit*]

**VARYA:** Mother hasn't altered a scrap, she's just as she always was. She'd give away everything, if the idea only entered her head.

**GAEV:** Yes ... [*Pause*] If there's any illness for which people offer many remedies, you may be sure that particular illness is incurable, I think. I work my brains to their hardest. I've several remedies, very many, and that really means I've none at all. It

would be nice to inherit a fortune from somebody, it would be nice to marry our Anya to a rich man, it would be nice to go to Yaroslav and try my luck with my aunt the countess. My aunt is very, very rich.

**VARYA:** [*Weeps*] If only God helped us.

**GAEV:** Don't cry. My aunt's very rich, but she doesn't like us. My sister, in the first place, married an advocate, not a noble ... [*ANYA appears in the doorway*] She not only married a man who was not a noble, but she behaved herself in a way which cannot be described as proper. She's nice and kind and charming, and I'm very fond of her, but say what you will in her favour and you still have to admit that she's wicked; you can feel it in her slightest movements.

**VARYA:** [*Whispers*] Anya's in the doorway.

**GAEV:** Really? [*Pause*] It's curious, something's got into my right eye . . . I can't see properly out of it. And on Thursday, when I was at the District Court. .

*Enter ANYA.*

**VARYA:** Why aren't you in bed, Anya?

**ANYA:** Can't sleep. It's no good.

**GAEV:** My darling! [*Kisses ANYA'S face and hands*] My child ... [*Crying*] You're not my niece, you're my angel, you're my all. . . Believe in me, believe. . .

**ANYA:** I do believe in you, uncle. Everybody loves you and respects you . . . but, uncle dear, you ought to say nothing, no more than that. What were you saying just now about my mother, your own sister? Why did you say those things?

**GAEV:** Yes, yes. [*Covers his face with her hand*] Yes, really, it was awful. Save me, my God! And only just now I made a speech before a bookcase . . . it's so silly! And only when I'd finished, I knew how silly it was.

**VARYA:** Yes, uncle dear, you really ought to say less. Keep quiet, that's all.

**ANYA:** You'd be so much happier in yourself if you only kept quiet.

**GAEV:** All right, I'll be quiet. [*Kisses their hands*] I'll be quiet. But let's talk business. On Thursday I was in the District Court, and a lot of us met there together, and we began to talk of this, that, and the other, and now I think I can arrange a loan to pay the interest into the bank.

**VARYA:** If only God would help us!

**GAEV:** I'll go on Tuesday. I'll talk with them about it again. [*To VARYA*] Don't howl. [*To ANYA*] Your mother will have a talk to Lopakhin; he, of course, won't refuse . . . And when you've rested, you'll go to Yaroslav to the Countess, your grandmother. So, you see, we'll have three irons in the fire, and we'll be safe. We'll pay up the interest. I'm certain. [*Puts some sugar-candy into his mouth*] I swear on my honour, on

anything you will, that the estate will not be sold! [*Excitedly*] I swear on my happiness! Here's my hand. You may call me a dishonourable wretch if I let it go to auction! I swear by all I am!

**ANYA:** [*She is calm again and happy*] How good and clever you are, uncle. [*Embraces him*] I'm happy now! I'm happy! All's well!

*Enter FIERS.*

**FIERS:** [*Reproachfully*] Leonid Andreyevitch, don't you fear God? When are you going to bed?

**GAEV:** Soon, soon. You go away, Fiers. I'll undress myself. Well, children, bye-bye . . .! I'll give you the details to-morrow, but let's go to bed now. [*Kisses ANYA and VARYA*] I'm a man of the eighties ... People don't praise those years much, but I can still say that I've suffered for my beliefs. The peasants don't love me for nothing, I assure you. We've got to learn to know the peasants! We ought to learn how ...

**ANYA:** You're doing it again, uncle!

**VARYA:** Be quiet, uncle!

**FIERS:** [*Angrily*] Leonid Andreyevitch!

**GAEV:** I'm coming, I'm coming ... Go to bed now. Off two cushions into the middle! I turn over a new leaf.

*Exit. FIERS goes out after him.*

**ANYA:** I'm quieter now. I don't want to go to Yaroslav; I don't like grandmother; but I'm calm now; thanks to uncle. [*Sits down.*]

**VARYA:** It's time to go to sleep. I'll go. There's been an unpleasantness here while you were away. In the old servants' part of the house, as you know, only the old people live—little old Efim and Polya and Evstigney, and Karp as well. They started letting some tramps or other spend the night there—I said nothing. Then I heard that they were saying that I had ordered them to be fed on peas and nothing else; from meanness, you see ...And it was all Evstigney's doing ...Very well, I thought, if that's what the matter is, just you wait. So, I call Evstigney ... [*Yawns*] He comes. "What's this," I say, "Evstigney, your old fool ... [*Looks at ANYA*] Anya dear! [*Pause*] She's dropped off ... [*Takes ANYA'S arm*] Let's go to bye-bye .... Come along! ... [*Leads her*] My darling's gone to sleep! Come on ... [*They go. In the distance, the other side of the orchard, a shepherd plays his pipe. TROFIMOV crosses the stage and stops on seeing VARYA and ANYA*] Sh! She's asleep, asleep. Come on, dear.

**ANYA:** [*Quietly, half-asleep*] I'm so tired . . . all the bells . . . uncle, dear! Mother and uncle!

**VARYA:** Come on, dear, come on! [*They go into ANYA'S room.*]

**TROFIMOV:** [*Moved*] My sun! My spring!

*Curtain*

.....

## ACT TWO

*In a field. An old, crooked shrine, which has been long abandoned; near it a well and large stones, which apparently are old tombstones, and an old garden seat. The road is seen to GAEV'S estate. On one side rise dark poplars, behind them begins the cherry orchard. In the distance is a row of telegraph poles, and far, far away on the horizon are the indistinct signs of a large town, which can only be seen on the finest and clearest days. It is close on sunset. CHARLOTTA, YASHA, and DUNYASHA are sitting on the seat; EPIKHODOV stands by and\ plays on a guitar; all seem thoughtful. CHARLOTTA wears a man's old peaked cap; she has unslung a rifle from her shoulders and is putting to rights the buckle on the strap.*

**CHARLOTTA:** *[Thoughtfully]* I haven't a real passport. I don't know how old I am, and I think I'm young. When I was a little girl my father and mother used to go round fairs and give very good performances and I used to do the salto mortale and various little things. And when papa and mamma died a German lady took me to her and began to teach me. I liked it. I grew up and became a governess. And where I came from and who I am, I don't know ... Who my parents were—perhaps they weren't married—I don't know. *[Takes a cucumber out of her pocket and eats]* I don't know anything. *[Pause]* I do want to talk, but I haven't anybody to talk to . . . I haven't anybody at all.

**EPIKHODOV:** *[Plays on the guitar and sings]* "What is this noisy earth to me, what matter friends and foes?" I do like playing on the mandolin!

**DUNYASHA:** That's a guitar, not a mandolin.

*[Looks at herself in a little mirror and powders herself.]*

**EPIKHODOV:** For the enamoured madman, this is a mandolin. *[Sings]*

"Oh that the heart was warmed, By all the flames of love returned!"

*YASHA sings too.*

**CHARLOTTA:** These people sing terribly ... Foo! Like jackals.

**DUNYASHA;** *[To YASHA]* Still, it must be nice to live abroad.

**YASHA.** Yes, certainly. I cannot differ from you there. *[Yawns and lights a cigar.]*

**EPIKHODOV:** That is perfectly natural. Abroad everything is in full complexity.

**YASHA:** That goes without saying.

**EPIKHODOV:** I'm an educated man, I read various remarkable books, but I cannot understand the direction I myself want to go—whether to live or to shoot myself, as it were. So, in case, I always carry a revolver about with me. Here it is. *[Shows a revolver.]*



**CHARLOTTA:** I've done. Now I'll go. *[Slings the rifle]* You, Epikhodov, are a very clever man and very terrible; women must be madly in love with you. Brrr!! *[Going]* These wise ones are all so stupid. I've nobody to talk to. I'm always alone, alone; I've nobody at all . . . and I don't know who I am or why I live. *[Exit slowly.]*

**EPIKHODOV:** As a matter of fact, independently of everything else, I must express my feeling, among other things, that fate has been as pitiless in her dealings with me as a storm is to a small ship. Suppose, let us grant, I am wrong; then why did I wake up this morning, to give an example, and behold an enormous spider on my chest, like that. *[Shows with both hands]* And if I do drink some kvass, why is it that there is bound to be something of the most indelicate nature in it, such as a beetle? *[Pause]* Have you read Buckle? *[Pause]* I should like to trouble you, Avdotya Fedorovna, for two words.

**DUNYASHA:** Say on.

**EPIKHODOV:** I should prefer to be alone with you. *[Sighs]*

**DUNYASHA:** *[Shy]* Very well, only first bring me my little cloak ... It's by the cupboard. It's a little damp here.

**EPIKHODOV:** Very well ... I'll bring it ... Now I know what to do with my revolver. *[Takes guitar and exits, strumming.]*

**YASHA:** Two-and-twenty troubles! A silly man, between you and me and the gatepost. *[Yawns.]*

**DUNYASHA:** I hope to goodness he won't shoot himself. *[Pause]* I'm so nervous, I'm worried. I went into service when I was quite a little girl, and now I'm not used to common life, and my hands are white, white as a lady's. I'm so tender and so delicate now; respectable and afraid of everything ... I'm so frightened. And I don't know what will happen to my nerves if you deceive me, Yasha.

**YASHA:** *[Kisses her]* Little cucumber! Of course, every girl must respect herself; there's nothing I dislike more than a badly behaved girl.

**DUNYASHA:** I'm awfully in love with you; you're educated, you can talk about everything. *[Pause.]*

**YASHA:** *[Yawns]* Yes. I think this: if a girl loves anybody, then that means she's immoral. *[Pause]* It's nice to smoke a cigar out in the open air ... *[Listens]* Somebody's coming. It's the mistress, and people with her. *[DUNYASHA embraces him suddenly]* Go to the house, as if you'd been bathing in the river; go by this path, or they'll meet you and will think I've been meeting you. I can't stand that sort of thing.

**DUNYASHA:** *[Coughs quietly]* My head's aching because of your cigar.

*Exit. YASHA remains, sitting by the shrine. Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAEV, and LOPAKHIN.*

**LOPAKHIN:** You must make up your mind definitely—there's no time to waste. The question is perfectly plain. Are you willing to let the land for villas, or no? Just one word, yes, or no? Just one word!

**LUBOV:** Who's smoking horrible cigars here? *[Sits.]*

**GAEV:** They built that railway; that's made this place very handy. *[Sits]* Went to town and had lunch . . . red in the middle! I'd like to go in now and have just one game.

**LUBOV:** You'll have time.

**LOPAKHIN:** Just one word! *[Imploringly]* Give me an answer!

**GAEV:** *[Yawns]* Really!

**LUBOV:** *[Looks in her purse]* I had a lot of money yesterday, but there's very little to-day. My poor Varya feeds everybody on milk soup to save money, in the kitchen the old people only get peas, and I spend recklessly. *[Drops the purse, scattering gold coins]* There, they are all over the place.

**YASHA:** Permit me to pick them up. *[Collects the coins.]*

**LUBOV:** Please do, Yasha. And why did I go and have lunch there? . . . A horrid restaurant with band and tablecloths smelling of soap ... Why do you drink so much, Leon? Why do you eat so much? Why do you talk so much? You talked again too much to-day in the restaurant, and it wasn't at all to the point—about the seventies and about decadents. And to whom? Talking to the waiters about decadents!

**LOPAKHIN:** Yes.

**GAEV:** *[Waves his hand]* I can't be cured, that's obvious ... *[Irritably to YASHA]* What's the matter? Why do you keep twisting about in front of me?

**YASHA:** *[Laughs]* I can't listen to your voice without laughing.

**GAEV:** *[To his sister]* Either he or I . . .

**LUBOV:** Go away, Yasha; get out of this. ...

**YASHA:** *[Gives purse to LUBOV ANDREYEVNA]* I'll go at once. *[Hardly able to keep from laughing]* This minute ... *[Exit.]*

**LOPAKHIN:** That rich man Deriganov is preparing to buy your estate. They say he'll come to the sale himself.

**LUBOV:** Where did you hear that?

**LOPAKHIN:** They say so in town.

**GAEV:** Our Yaroslav aunt has promised to send something, but I don't know when or how much.

**LOPAKHIN:** How much will she send? A hundred thousand roubles? Or two, perhaps?

**LUBOV:** I'd be glad of ten or fifteen thousand.

**LOPAKHIN:** You must excuse my saying so, but I've never met such frivolous people as you before, or anybody so unbusinesslike and peculiar. Here I am telling you in plain language that your estate will be sold, and you don't seem to understand.

**LUBOV:** What are we to do? Tell us, what?

**LOPAKHIN:** I tell you every day. I say the same thing every day. Both the cherry orchard and the land must be leased off for villas and at once, immediately—the auction is staring you in the face: Understand! Once you do definitely make up your minds to the villas, then you'll have as much money as you want and you'll be saved.

**LUBOV:** Villas and villa residents—it's so vulgar, excuse me.

**GAEV:** I entirely agree with you.

**LOPAKHIN:** I must cry or yell or faint. I can't stand it! You're too much for me! *[To GAEV]* You old woman!

**GAEV.** Really!

**LOPAKHIN.** Old woman! *[Going out.]*

**LUBOV:** *[Frightened]* No, don't go away, do stop; be a dear. Please. Perhaps we'll find some way out!

**LOPAKHIN:** What's the good of trying to think!

**LUBOV:** Please don't go away. It's nicer when you're here ... *[Pause]* I keep on waiting for something to happen, as if the house is going to collapse over our heads.

**GAEV:** *[Thinking deeply]* Double in the corner ... across the middle ...

**LUBOV:** We have been too sinful ...

**LOPAKHIN:** What sins have you committed?

**GAEV:** *[Puts candy into his mouth]* They say that I've eaten all my substance in sugar-candies. *[Laughs]*

**LUBOV:** Oh, my sins ... I've always scattered money about without holding myself in, like a madwoman, and I married a man who made nothing but debts. My husband died of champagne—he drank terribly—and to my misfortune, I fell in love with another man and went off with him, and just at that time—it was my first punishment, a blow that hit me right on the head—here, in the river . . . my boy was drowned, and I went away, quite away, never to return, never to see this river again. . . I shut my eyes and ran without thinking, but he ran after me . . . without pity, without respect. I bought a villa near Mentone because he fell ill there, and for three

years I knew no rest either by day or night; the sick man wore me out, and my soul dried up. And last year, when they had sold the villa to pay my debts, I went away to Paris, and there he robbed me of all I had and threw me over and went off with another woman. I tried to poison myself ... It was so silly, so shameful ... And suddenly I longed to be back in Russia, my own land, with my little girl ... *[Wipes her tears]* Lord, Lord be merciful to me, forgive me my sins! Punish me no more! *[Takes a telegram out of her pocket]* I had this to-day from Paris ... He begs my forgiveness; he implores me to return ... *[Tears it up]* Don't I hear music? *[Listens.]*

**GAEV:** That is our celebrated Jewish band. You remember—four violins, a flute, and a double-bass.

**LUBOV:** So it still exists? It would be nice if they came along some evening.

**LOPAKHIN:** *[Listens]* I can't hear ... *[Sings quietly]* "For money will the Germans make a Frenchman of a Russian." *[Laughs]* I saw such an awfully funny thing at the theatre last night.

**LUBOV:** I'm quite sure there wasn't anything at all funny. You oughtn't to go and see plays, you ought to go and look at yourself. What a grey life you lead, what a lot you talk unnecessarily.

**LOPAKHIN:** It's true. To speak the straight truth, we live a silly life. *[Pause]* My father was a peasant, an idiot, he understood nothing, he didn't teach me, he was always drunk, and always used a stick on me. In point of fact, I'm a fool and an idiot too. I've never learned anything, my handwriting is bad, I write so that I'm quite ashamed before people, like a pig!

**LUBOV:** You ought to get married, my friend.

**LOPAKHIN:** Yes ... that's true.

**LUBOV:** Why not to our Varya? She's a nice girl.

**LOPAKHIN:** Yes.

**LUBOV:** She's quite homely in her ways, works all day, and, what matters most, she's in love with you. And you've liked her for a long time.

**LOPAKHIN:** Well? I don't mind ... she's a nice girl. *[Pause.]*

**GAEV:** I'm offered a place in a bank. Six thousand roubles a year. . . Did you hear?

**LUBOV:** What's the matter with you! Stay where you are ...

*Enter FIERS with an overcoat.*

**FIERS:** *[To GAEV]* Please, sir, put this on, it's damp.

**GAEV:** *[Putting it on]* You're a nuisance, old man.

**FIERS:** It's all very well .... You went away this morning without telling me.  
[Examining GAEV.]

**LUBOV:** How old you've grown, Fiers!

**FIERS:** I beg your pardon?

**LOPAKHIN:** She says you've grown very old!

**FIERS:** I've been alive a long time. They were already getting ready to marry me before your father was born ... [Laughs] And when the Emancipation came, I was already first valet. Only I didn't agree with the Emancipation and remained with my people ... [Pause] I remember everybody was happy, but they didn't know why.

**LOPAKHIN:** It was very good for them in the old days. At any rate, they used to beat them.

**FIERS:** [Not hearing] Rather. The peasants kept their distance from the masters and the masters kept their distance from the peasants, but now everything's all anyhow and you can't understand anything.

**GAEV:** Be quiet, Fiers. I've got to go to town tomorrow. I've been promised an introduction to a General who may lend me money on a bill.

**LOPAKHIN:** Nothing will come of it. And you won't pay your interest, don't you worry.

**LUBOV:** He's talking rubbish. There's no General at all.

*Enter TROFIMOV, ANYA, and VARYA.*

**GAEV:** Here they are.

**ANYA:** Mother's sitting down here.

**LUBOV:** [Tenderly] Come, come, my dears. . . . [Embracing ANYA and VARYA] If you two only knew how much I love you. Sit down next to me, like that. [All sit down.]

**LOPAKHIN:** Our eternal student is always with the ladies.

**TROFIMOV:** That's not your business.

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

**TROFIMOV:** Leave off your silly jokes!

**LOPAKHIN:** Getting angry, eh, silly?

**TROFIMOV:** Shut up, can't you.

**LOPAKHIN:** [Laughs] I wonder what you think of me?

**TROFIMOV:** I think, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, that you're a rich man, and you'll soon be a millionaire. Just as the wild beast which eats everything it finds is needed for changes to take place in matter, so you are needed too.

*[All laugh.]*

**VARYA:** Better tell us something about the planets, Peter.

**LUBOV ANDREYEVNA:** No, let's go on with yesterday's talk!

**TROFIMOV:** About what?

**GAEV:** About the proud man.

**TROFIMOV:** Yesterday we talked for a long time but we didn't come to anything in the end. There's something mystical about the proud man, in your sense. Perhaps you are right from your point of view, but if you take the matter simply, without complicating it, then what pride can there be, what sense can there be in it, if a man is imperfectly made, physiologically speaking, if in the vast majority of cases he is coarse and stupid and deeply unhappy? We must stop admiring one another. We must work, nothing more.

**GAEV:** You'll die, all the same.

**TROFIMOV:** Who knows? And what does it mean—you'll die? Perhaps a man has a hundred senses, and when he dies only the five known to us are destroyed and the remaining ninety-five are left alive.

**LUBOV:** How clever of you, Peter!

**LOPAKHIN:** *[Ironically]* Oh, awfully!

**TROFIMOV:** The human race progresses, perfecting its powers. Everything that is unattainable now will someday be near at hand and comprehensible, but we must work, we must help with all our strength those who seek to know what fate will bring. Meanwhile in Russia only a very few of us work. The vast majority of those intellectuals whom I know seek for nothing, do nothing, and are at present incapable of hard work. They call themselves intellectuals, but they use "thou" and "thee" to their servants, they treat the peasants like animals, they learn badly, they read nothing seriously, they do absolutely nothing, about science they only talk, about art they understand little. They are all serious, they all have severe faces, they all talk about important things. They philosophize, and at the same time, the vast majority of us, ninety-nine out of a hundred, live like savages, fighting and cursing at the slightest opportunity, eating filthily, sleeping in the dirt, in stuffiness, with fleas, stinks, smells, moral filth, and so on. . . And it's obvious that all our nice talk is only carried on to distract ourselves and others. Tell me, where are those crèches we hear so much of? and where are those reading-rooms? People only write novels about them; they don't really exist. Only dirt, vulgarity, and Asiatic plagues really exist ...

I'm afraid, and I don't at all like serious faces; I don't like serious conversations. Let's be quiet sooner.

**LOPAKHIN:** You know, I get up at five every morning, I work from morning till evening, I am always dealing with money—my own and other people's—and I see what people are like. You've only got to begin to do anything to find out how few honest, honourable people there are. Sometimes, when I can't sleep, I think: "Oh Lord, you've given us huge forests, infinite fields, and endless horizons, and we, living here, ought really to be giants."

**LUBOV:** You want giants, do you? . . . They're only good in stories, and even there they frighten one.

**EPIKHODOV:** enters at the back of the stage playing his guitar. Thoughtfully: Epikhodov's there.

**ANYA:** [*Thoughtfully*] Epikhodov's there.

**GAEV:** The sun's set, ladies and gentlemen.

**TROFIMOV:** Yes.

**GAEV:** [*Not loudly, as if declaiming*] O Nature, thou art wonderful, thou shinest with eternal radiance! Oh, beautiful and indifferent one, thou whom we call mother, thou containest in thyself existence and death, thou livest and destroyest.

**VARYA:** [*Entreatingly*] Uncle, dear!

**ANYA:** Uncle, you're doing it again!

**TROFIMOV.** You'd better double the red into the middle.

**GAEV:** I'll be quiet, I'll be quiet. They all sit thoughtfully. It is quiet. Only the mumbling of FIERS is heard. Suddenly a distant sound is heard as if from the sky, the sound of a breaking string, which dies away sadly.

**LUBOV:** What's that?

**LOPAKHIN:** I don't know. It may be a bucket fallen down a well somewhere. But it's some way off.

**GAEV:** Or perhaps it's some bird . . . like a heron.

**TROFIMOV:** Or an owl.

**LUBOV:** [Shudders] It's unpleasant, somehow. [*A pause.*]

**FIERS:** Before the misfortune the same thing happened. An owl screamed and the samovar hummed without stopping.

**GAEV:** Before what misfortune?

**FIERS:** Before the Emancipation. [*A pause.*]

**LUBOV:** You know, my friends, let's go in; it's evening now. *[To ANYA]* You've tears in your eyes ... What is it, little girl? *[Embraces her.]*

**ANYA:** It's nothing, mother.

**TROFIMOV:** Some one's coming.

*Enter a TRAMP in an old white peaked cap and overcoat. He is a little drunk.*

**TRAMP:** Excuse me, may I go this way straight through to the station?

**GAEV:** You may. Go along this path.

**TRAMP:** I thank you from the bottom of my heart. *[Hiccups]* Lovely weather. *[Declaims]* My brother, my suffering brother . . . Come out on the Volga, you whose groans . . . *[To VARYA]* Mademoiselle, please give a hungry Russian thirty copecks. . .

*VARYA screams, frightened.*

**LOPAKHIN:** *[Angrily]* There's manners everybody's got to keep!

**LUBOV:** *[With a start]* Take this ... here you are ... *[Feels in her purse]* There's no silver ... It doesn't matter, here's gold.

**TRAMP:** I am deeply grateful to you! *[Exit. Laughter.]*

**VARYA:** *[Frightened]* I'm going, I'm going ... Oh, little mother, at home there's nothing for the servants to eat, and you gave him gold.

**LUBOV:** What is to be done with such a fool as I am! At home I'll give you everything I've got. Ermolai Alexeyevitch, lend me some more! . . .

**LOPAKHIN:** Very well.

**LUBOV:** Let's go, it's time. And Varya, we've settled your affair; I congratulate you.

**VARYA:** *[Crying]* You shouldn't joke about this, mother.

**LOPAKHIN:** Oh, feel me, get thee to a nunnery.

**GAEV:** My hands are all trembling; I haven't played billiards for a long time.

**LOPAKHIN:** Oh, feel me, nymph, remember me in thine orisons.

**LUBOV:** Come along; it'll soon be supper-time.

**VARYA:** He did frighten me. My heart is beating hard.

**LOPAKHIN:** Let me remind you, ladies and gentlemen, on August 22 the cherry orchard will be sold. Think of that! . . . Think of that! . . .

*All go out except TROFIMOV and ANYA.*

**ANYA:** *[Laughs]* Thanks to the tramp who frightened Barbara, we're alone now.



**TROFIMOV.** Varya's afraid we may fall in love with each other and won't get away from us for days on end. Her narrow mind won't allow her to understand that we are above love. To escape all the petty and deceptive things which prevent our being happy and free, that is the aim and meaning of our lives. Forward! We go irresistibly on to that bright star which burns there, in the distance! Don't lag behind, friends!

**ANYA:** [*Clapping her hands*] How beautifully you talk! [*Pause*] It is glorious here to-day!

**TROFIMOV:** Yes, the weather is wonderful.

**ANYA:** What have you done to me, Peter? I don't love the cherry orchard as I used to. I loved it so tenderly, I thought there was no better place in the world than our orchard.

**TROFIMOV:** All Russia is our orchard. The land is great and beautiful, there are many marvellous places in it. [*Pause*] Think, Anya, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, and all your ancestors were serf-owners, they owned living souls; and now, doesn't something human look at you from every cherry in the orchard, every leaf and every stalk? Don't you hear voices . . .? Oh, it's awful, your orchard is terrible; and when in the evening or at night you walk through the orchard, then the old bark on the trees sheds a dim light and the old cherry-trees seem to be dreaming of all that was a hundred, two hundred years ago, and are oppressed by their heavy visions. Still, at any rate, we've left those two hundred years behind us. So far, we've gained nothing at all—we don't yet know what the past is to be to us—we only philosophize, we complain that we are dull, or we drink vodka. For it's so clear that in order to begin to live in the present we must first redeem the past, and that can only be done by suffering, by strenuous, uninterrupted labour. Understand that, Anya.

**ANYA:** The house in which we live has long ceased to be our house; I shall go away. I give you, my word.

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

**ANYA:** [*Enthusiastically*] How nicely you said that!

**TROFIMOV:** Believe me, Anya, believe me! I'm not thirty yet, I'm young, I'm still a student, but I have undergone a great deal! I'm as hungry as the winter, I'm ill, I'm shaken. I'm as poor as a beggar, and where haven't I been—fate has tossed me everywhere! But my soul is always my own; every minute of the day and the night it is filled with unspeakable presentiments. I know that happiness is coming, Anya, I see it already. . .

**ANYA:** [*Thoughtful*] The moon is rising.

*EPIKHODOV is heard playing the same sad song on his guitar. The moon rises. Somewhere by the poplars*

*VARYA is looking for ANYA and calling, "Anya, where are you?"*

**TROFIMOV:** Yes, the moon has risen. *[Pause]* There is happiness, there it comes; it comes nearer and nearer; I hear its steps already. And if we do not see it we shall not know it, but what does that matter? Others will see it!

**THE VOICE OF VARYA:** Anya! Where are you?

**TROFIMOV:** That's Varya again! *[Angry]* Disgraceful!

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

**TROFIMOV:** Let's go. *[They go out.]*

**THE VOICE OF VARYA:** Anya! Anya!

**Curtain.**

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### ACT THREE

*A reception-room cut off from a drawing-room by an arch. Chandelier lighted. A Jewish band, the one mentioned in Act II, is heard playing in another room. Evening. In the drawing-room the grand rond is being danced. Voice of SIMEONOV PISCHIN "Promenade a une paire!" Dancers come into the reception-room; the first pair are PISCHIN and CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA; the second, TROFIMOV and LUBOV ANDREYEVNA; the third, ANYA and the POST OFFICE CLERK; the fourth, VARYA and the STATION-MASTER, and so on. VARYA is crying gently and wipes away her tears as she dances.*

*DUNYASHA is in the last pair. They go off into the drawing-room, PISCHIN shouting, "Grand rond, balancez:" and "Les cavaliers à genou et remerciez vos dames!" FIERS, in a dress-coat, carries a tray with seltzer-water across. Enter PISCHIN and TROFIMOV from the drawing-room.*

**PISCHIN:** I'm full-blooded and have already had two strokes; it's hard for me to dance, but, as they say, if you're in Rome, you must do as Rome does. I've got the strength of a horse. My dead father, who liked a joke, peace to his bones, used to say, talking of our ancestors, that the ancient stock of the Simeonov-Pischins was descended from that identical horse that Caligula made a senator ... *[Sits]* But the trouble is, I've no money! A hungry dog only believes in meat. *[Snores and wakes up again immediately]* So I ... only believe in money ...

**TROFIMOV:** Yes. There is something equine about your figure.

**PISCHIN:** Well ... a horse is a fine animal ... you can sell a horse.

*Billiard playing can be heard in the next room. VARYA appears under the arch.*

**TROFIMOV:** *[Teasing]* Madame Lopakhin! Madame Lopakhin!

**VARYA:** *[Angry]* Decayed gentleman!

**TROFIMOV:** Yes, I am a decayed gentleman, and I'm proud of it!

**VARYA:** *[Bitterly]* We've hired the musicians, but how are they to be paid? *[Exit.]*

**TROFIMOV:** *[To PISCHIN]* If the energy which you, in the course of your life, have spent in looking for money to pay interest had been used for something else, then, I believe, after all, you'd be able to turn everything upside down.

**PISCHIN:** Nietzsche ... a philosopher ... a very great, a most celebrated man ... a man of enormous brain, says in his books that you can forge bank-notes.

**TROFIMOV:** And have you read Nietzsche?

**PISCHIN:** Well ... Dashenka told me. Now I'm in such a position, I wouldn't mind forging them ... I've got to pay 310 roubles the day after to-morrow ... I've got 130

already ... *[Feels his pockets, nervously]* I've lost the money! The money's gone! *[Crying]* Where's the money? *[Joyfully]* Here it is behind the lining . . . I even began to perspire.

*Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA and CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA.*

**LUBOV:** *[Humming a Caucasian dance]* Why is Leonid away so long? What's he doing in town? *[To DUNYASHA]* Dunyasha, give the musicians some tea.

**TROFIMOV:** Business is off, I suppose.

**LUBOV:** And the musicians needn't have come, and we needn't have got up this ball ... Well, never mind. . . *[Sits and sings softly.]*

**CHARLOTTA:** *[Gives a pack of cards to PISCHIN]* Here's a pack of cards, think of any one card you like.

**PISCHIN:** I've thought of one.

**CHARLOTTA:** Now shuffle. All right, now. Give them here, oh my dear Mr. Pischin. Ein, zwei, drei! Now look and you'll find it in your coat-tail pocket.

**PISCHIN:** *[Takes a card out of his coat-tail pocket]* Eight of spades, quite right! *[Surprised]* Think of that now!

**CHARLOTTA:** *[Holds the pack of cards on the palm of her hand. To TROFIMOV]* Now tell me quickly. What's the top card?

**TROFIMOV:** Well, the queen of spades.

**CHARLOTTA:** Right! *[To PISCHIN]* Well now? What cards on top?

**PISCHIN:** Ace of hearts.

**CHARLOTTA:** Right! *[Claps her hands, the pack of cards vanishes]* How lovely the weather is to-day. *[A mysterious woman's voice answers her, as if from under the floor, "Oh yes, it's lovely weather, madam."]* You are so beautiful, you are my ideal. *[Voice, "You, madam, please me very much too."]*

**STATION-MASTER:** *[Applauds]* Madame ventriloquist, bravo!

**PISCHI:** *[Surprised]* Think of that, now! Delightful, Charlotte Ivanovna . . . I'm simply in love ...

**CHARLOTTA:** In love? *[Shrugging her shoulders]* Can you love? Guter Mensch aber schlechter Musikant.

**TROFIMOV:** *[Slaps PISCHIN on the shoulder]* Oh, you horse!

**CHARLOTTA:** Attention please, here's another trick. *[Takes a shawl from a chair]* Here's a very nice plaid shawl, I'm going to sell it ... *[Shakes it]* Won't anybody buy it?

**PISCHIN:** *[Astonished]* Think of that now!

**CHARLOTTA:** Ein, zwei, drei. She quickly lifts up the shawl, which is hanging down. ANYA is standing behind it; she bows and runs to her mother, hugs her and runs back to the drawing-room amid general applause.

**LUBOV:** *[Applauds]* Bravo, bravo!

**CHARLOTTA.** Once again! Ein, zwei, drei!

*[Lifts the shawl]. VARYA stands behind it and bows.*

**PISCHIN:** *[Astonished]* Think of that, now.

**CHARLOTTA:** The end! Throws the shawl at PISCHIN, curtseys and runs into the drawing-room.

**PISCHIN:** *[Runs after her]* Little wretch ... What? Would you? *[Exit.]*

**LUBOV:** Leonid hasn't come yet. I don't understand what he's doing so long in town! Everything must be over by now. The estate must be sold; or, if the sale never came off, then why does he stay so long?

**VARYA:** *[Tries to soothe her]* Uncle has bought it. I'm certain of it.

**TROFIMOV.** *[Sarcastically]* Oh, yes!

**VARYA:** Grandmother sent him her authority for him to buy it in her name and transfer the debt to her. She's doing it for Anya. And I'm certain that God will help us and uncle will buy it.

**LUBOV:** Grandmother sent fifteen thousand roubles from Yaroslav to buy the property in her name—she won't trust us—and that wasn't even enough to pay the interest. *[Covers her face with her hands]* My fate will be settled to-day, my fate.

**TROFIMOV:** *[Teasing VARYA]* Madame Lopakhin!

**VARYA:** *[Angry]* Eternal student! He's already been expelled twice from the university.

**LUBOV:** Why are you getting angry, Varya? He's teasing you about Lopakhin, well what of it? You can marry Lopakhin if you want to, he's a good, interesting man ... You needn't if you don't want to; nobody wants to force you against your will, my darling.

**VARYA:** I do look at the matter seriously, little mother, to be quite frank. He's a good man, and I like him.

**LUBOV:** Then marry him. I don't understand what you're waiting for.

**VARYA:** I can't propose to him myself, little mother. People have been talking about him to me for two years now, but he either says nothing, or jokes about it. I understand. He's getting rich, he's busy, he can't bother about me. If I had some

money, even a little, even only a hundred roubles, I'd throw up everything and go away. I'd go into a convent.

**TROFIMOV:** How nice!

**VARYA;** *[To TROFIMOV]* A student ought to have sense! *[Gently, in tears]* How ugly you are now, Peter, how old you've grown! *[To LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, no longer crying]* But I can't go on without working, little mother. I want to be doing something every minute.

*Enter YASHA.*

**YASHA:** *[Nearly laughing]* Epikhodov's broken a billiard cue! *[Exit.]*

**VARYA:** Why is Epikhodov here? Who said he could play billiards? I don't understand these people. *[Exit.]*

**LUBOV:** Don't tease her, Peter, you see that she's quite unhappy without that.

**TROFIMOV:** She takes too much on herself; she keeps on interfering in other people's business. The whole summer she's given no peace to me or to Anya, she's afraid we'll have a romance all to ourselves. What has it to do with her? As if I'd ever given her grounds to believe I'd stoop to such vulgarity! We are above love.

**LUBOV:** Then I suppose I must be beneath love. *[In agitation]* Why isn't Leonid here? If I only knew whether the estate is sold or not! The disaster seems to me so improbable that I don't know what to think, I'm all at sea . . . I may scream . . . or do something silly. Save me, Peter. Say something, say something.

**TROFIMOV:** Isn't it all the same whether the estate is sold to-day or isn't? It's been all up with it for a long time; there's no turning back, the path's grown over. Be calm, dear, you shouldn't deceive yourself, for once in your life at any rate you must look the truth straight in the face.

**LUBOV:** What truth? You see where truth is, and where untruth is, but I seem to have lost my sight and see nothing. You boldly settle all important questions, but tell me, dear, isn't it because you're young, because you haven't had time to suffer till you settled a single one of your questions? You boldly look forward, isn't it because you cannot foresee or expect anything terrible, because so far life has been hidden from your young eyes? You are bolder, more honest, deeper than we are, but think only, be just a little magnanimous, and have mercy on me. I was born here, my father and mother lived here, my grandfather too, I love this house. I couldn't understand my life without that cherry orchard, and if it really must be sold, sell me with it! *[Embraces TROFIMOV, kisses his forehead].* My son was drowned here ... *[Weeps]* Have pity on me, good, kind man.

**TROFIMOV:** You know I sympathize with all my soul.

**LUBOV:** Yes, but it ought to be said differently, differently ... [*Takes another handkerchief, a telegram falls on the floor*] I'm so sick at heart to-day, you can't imagine. Here it's so noisy, my soul shakes at every sound. I shake all over, and I can't go away by myself, I'm afraid of the silence. Don't judge me harshly, Peter . . . I loved you, as if you belonged to my family. I'd gladly let Anya marry you, I swear it, only dear, you ought to work, finish your studies. You don't do anything, only fate throws you about from place to place, it's so odd ... Isn't it true? Yes? And you ought to do something to your beard to make it grow better [*Laughs*] You are funny!

**TROFIMOV:** [*Picking up telegram*] I don't want to be a Beau Brummel.

**LUBOV:** This telegram's from Paris. I get one every day. Yesterday and to-day. That wild man is ill again, he's bad again ... He begs for forgiveness, and implores me to come, and I really ought to go to Paris to be near him. You look severe, Peter, but what can I do, my dear, what can I do; he's ill, he's alone, unhappy, and who's to look after him, who's to keep him away from his errors, to give him his medicine punctually? And why should I conceal it and say nothing about it; I love him, that's plain, I love him, I love him ... That love is a stone round my neck; I'm going with it to the bottom, but I love that stone and can't live without it.

[*Squeezes TROFIMOV'S hand*] Don't think badly of me, Peter, don't say anything to me, don't say . . .

**TROFIMOV:** [*Weeping*] For God's sake forgive my speaking candidly, but that man has robbed you!

**LUBOV:** No, no, no, you oughtn't to say that! [*Stops her ears.*]

**TROFIMOV:** But he's a wretch, you alone don't know it! He's a petty thief, a nobody.

**LUBOV:** [*Angry, but restrained*] You're twenty-six or twenty-seven, and still a schoolboy of the second class!

**TROFIMOV.** Why not!

**LUBOV.** You ought to be a man, at your age you ought to be able to understand those who love. And you ought to be in love yourself, you must fall in love! [*Angry*] Yes, yes! You aren't pure, you're just a freak, a queer fellow, a funny growth ...

**TROFIMOV:** [*In horror*] What is she saying!

**LUBOV:** "I'm above love!" You're not above love, you're just what our Fiers calls a bungler. Not to have a mistress at your age!

**TROFIMOV:** [*In horror*] This is awful! What is she saying? [*Goes quickly up into the drawing-room, clutching his head*] It's awful . . . I can't stand it, I'll go away. [*Exit, but returns at once*] All is over between us!

[*Exit.*]

**LUBOV:** *[Shouts after him]* Peter, wait! Silly man, I was joking! Peter! *[Somebody is heard going out and falling downstairs noisily. ANYA and VARYA scream; laughter is heard immediately]* What's that?

*ANYA comes running in, laughing.*

**ANYA:** Peter's fallen downstairs! *[Runs out again.]*

**LUBOV:** This Peter's a marvel.

*The STATION-MASTER stands in the middle of the drawing-room and recites "The Magdalen" by Tolstoy. He is listened to, but he has only delivered a few lines when a waltz is heard from the front room, and the recitation is stopped. Everybody dances. TROFIMOV, ANYA, VARYA, and LUBOV ANDREYEVNA come in from the front room.*

**LUBOV:** Well, Peter . . . you pure soul . . . I beg your pardon . . . let's dance.

*She dances with PETER. ANYA and VARYA dance. FIERS enters and stands his stick by a side door.*

*YASHA has also come in and looks on at the dance.*

**YASHA:** Well, grandfather?

**FIERS:** I'm not well. At our balls some time back, generals and barons and admirals used to dance, and now we send for post-office clerks and the Station-master, and even they come as a favour. I'm very weak. The dead master, the grandfather, used to give everybody sealing-wax when anything was wrong. I've taken sealing-wax every day for twenty years, and more; perhaps that's why I still live.

**YASHA:** I'm tired of you, grandfather. *[Yawns]* If you'd only hurry up and kick the bucket.

**FIERS:** Oh you . . . bungler! *[Mutters.]*

*TROFIMOV and LUBOV ANDREYEVNA dance in the reception-room, then into the sitting-room.*

**LUBOV:** Merci. I'll sit down. *[Sits]* I'm tired.

*Enter ANYA.*

**ANYA:** *[Excited]* Somebody in the kitchen was saying just now that the cherry orchard was sold to-day.

**LUBOV:** Sold to whom?

**ANYA:** He didn't say to whom. He's gone now. *[Dances out into the reception-room with TROFIMOV.]*

**YASHA:** Some old man was chattering about it a long time ago. A stranger!



**FIERS:** And Leonid Andreyevitch isn't here yet, he hasn't come. He's wearing a light, demi-saison overcoat. He'll catch cold. Oh, these young fellows.

**LUBOV:** I'll die of this. Go and find out, Yasha, to whom it's sold.

**YASHA:** Oh, but he's been gone a long time, the old man. *[Laughs]*

**LUBOV:** *[Slightly vexed]* Why do you laugh? What are you glad about?

**YASHA:** Epikhodov's too funny. He's a silly man. Two-and-twenty troubles.

**LUBOV:** Fiers, if the estate is sold, where will you go?

**FIERS:** I'll go wherever you order me to go.

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

**FIERS:** Yes . . . *[With a smile]* I'll go to bed, and who'll hand things round and give orders without me? I've the whole house on my shoulders.

**YASHA:** *[To LUBOV ANDREYEVNA]* Lubov Andreyevna! I want to ask a favour of you, if you'll be so kind! If you go to Paris again, then please take me with you. It's absolutely impossible for me to stop here. *[Looking round; in an undertone]* What's the good of talking about it, you see for yourself that this is an uneducated country, with an immoral population, and it's so dull. The food in the kitchen is beastly, and here's this Fiers walking about mumbling various inappropriate things. Take me with you, be so kind!

*Enter PISCHIN.*

**PISCHIN:** I come to ask for the pleasure of a little waltz, dear lady ... *[LUBOV ANDREYEVNA goes to him]* But all the same, you wonderful woman, I must have 180 little roubles from you ... I must ... *[They dance]* 180 little roubles. . . *[They go through into the drawing-room.]*

**YASHA:** *[Sings softly]*

"Oh, will you understand

My soul's deep restlessness?"

In the drawing-room a figure in a grey top-hat and in baggy check trousers is waving its hands and jumping about; there are cries of "Bravo, Charlotta Ivanovna!"

**DUNYASHA:** *[Stops to powder her face]* The young mistress tells me to dance—there are a lot of gentlemen, but few ladies—and my head goes round when I dance, and my heart beats, Fiers Nicolaevitch; the Post-office clerk told me something just now which made me catch my breath. *[The music grows faint.]*

**FIERS:** What did he say to you?

**DUNYASHA:** He says, "You're like a little flower."

**YASHA:** *[Yawns]* Impolite ... *[Exit.]*

**DUNYASHA:** Like a little flower. I'm such a delicate girl; I simply love words of tenderness.

**FIERS:** You'll lose your head.

*Enter EPIKHODOV.*

**EPIKHODOV:** You, Avdotya Fedorovna, want to see me no more than if I was some insect. *[Sighs]* Oh, life!

**DUNYASHA:** What do you want?

**EPIKHODOV:** Undoubtedly, perhaps, you may be right. *[Sighs]* But, certainly, if you regard the matter from the aspect, then you, if I may say so, and you must excuse my candidness, have absolutely reduced me to a state of mind. I know my fate, every day something unfortunate happens to me, and I've grown used to it a long time ago, I even look at my fate with a smile. You gave me your word, and though I. **DUNYASHA.** Please, we'll talk later on, but leave me alone now. I'm meditating now. *[Plays with her fan.]*

**EPIKHODOV:** Every day something unfortunate happens to me, and I, if I may so express myself, only smile, and even laugh.

*VARYA enters from the drawing-room.*

**VARYA:** Haven't you gone yet, Simeon? You really have no respect for anybody. *[To DUNYASHA]* You go away, Dunyasha. *[To EPIKHODOV]* You play billiards and break a cue, and walk about the drawing-room as if you were a visitor!

**EPIKHODOV.** You cannot, if I may say so, call me to order.

**VARYA:** I'm not calling you to order, I'm only telling you. You just walk about from place to place and never do your work. Goodness only knows why we keep a clerk.

**EPIKHODOV:** *[Offended]* Whether I work, or walk about, or eat, or play billiards, is only a matter to be settled by people of understanding and my elders.

**VARYA:** You dare to talk to me like that! *[Furious]* You dare? You mean that I know nothing? Get out of here! This minute!

**EPIKHODOV:** *[Nervous]* I must ask you to express yourself more delicately.

**VARYA:** *[Beside herself]* Get out this minute. Get out! *[He goes to the door, she follows]* Two-and-twenty troubles! I don't want any sign of you here! I don't want to see anything of you! *[EPIKHODOV has gone out; his voice can be heard outside: "I'll make a complaint against you."]* What, coming back? *[Snatches up the stick left by FIERS by the door]* Go ... go ... go, I'll show you ... Are you going? Are you going? Well, then take that.

*[She hits out as LOPAKHIN enters.]*

**LOPAKHIN:** Much obliged.

**VARYA:** *[Angry but amused]* I'm sorry.

**LOPAKHIN:** Never mind. I thank you for my pleasant reception.

**VARYA:** It isn't worth any thanks. *[Walks away, then looks back and asks gently]* I didn't hurt you, did I?

**LOPAKHIN.** No, not at all. There'll be an enormous bump, that's all.

*VOICES FROM THE DRAWING-ROOM. Lopakhin's returned! Ermolai Alexeyevitch!*

**PISCHIN:** Now we'll see what there is to see and hear what there is to hear. ... *[Kisses LOPAKHIN]* You smell of cognac, my dear, my soul. And we're all having a good time.

*Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA.*

**LUBOV:** Is that you, Ermolai Alexeyevitch ? Why were you so long? Where's Leonid?

**LOPAKHIN:** Leonid Andreyevitch came back with me, he's coming. . . .

**LUBOV:** *[Excited]* Well, what? Is it sold? Tell me?

**LOPAKHIN:** *[Confused, afraid to show his pleasure]* The sale ended up at four o'clock ... We missed the train, and had to wait till half-past nine. *[Sighs heavily]* Ooh! My head's going round a little.

*Enter GAEV; in his right hand he carries things he has bought, with his left he wipes away his tears.*

**LUBOV:** Leon, what's happened? Leon, well? *[Impatiently, in tears]* Quick, for the love of God ...

**GAEV:** *[Says nothing to her, only waves his hand; to FIERS, weeping]* Here, take this ... Here are anchovies, herrings from Kertch ... I've had no food to-day ... I have had a time! *[The door from the billiard-room is open; the clicking of the balls is heard, and YASHA'S voice, "Seven, eighteen!" GAEV'S expression changes, he cries no more]* I'm awfully tired. Help me change my clothes, Fiers.

*Goes out through the drawing-room; FIERS after him.*

**PISCHIN:** What happened? Come on, tell us!

**LUBOV:** Is the cherry orchard sold?

**LOPAKHIN:** It is sold.

**LUBOV:** Who bought it?

**LOPAKHIN:** I bought it.

*LUBOV ANDREYEVNA is overwhelmed; she would fall if she were not standing by an armchair and a table.*

*VARYA takes her keys off her belt, throws them on the floor, into the middle of the room and goes out.*

**LOPAKHIN:** I bought it! Wait, ladies and gentlemen, please, my head's going round, I can't talk ... *[Laughs]* When we got to the sale, Deriganov was there already. Leonid Andreyevitch had only fifteen thousand roubles, and Deriganov offered thirty thousand on top of the mortgage to begin with. I saw how matters were, so I grabbed hold of him and bid forty. He went up to forty-five, I offered fifty-five. That means he went up by fives and I went up by tens ... Well, it came to an end. I bid ninety more than the mortgage; and it stayed with me. The cherry orchard is mine now, mine! *[Roars with laughter]* My God, my God, the cherry orchard's mine! Tell me I'm drunk, or mad, or dreaming ... *[Stamps his feet]* Don't laugh at me! If my father and grandfather rose from their graves and looked at the whole affair, and saw how their Ermolai, their beaten and uneducated Ermolai, who used to run barefoot in the winter, how that very Ermolai has bought an estate, which is the most beautiful thing in the world! I've bought the estate where my grandfather and my father were slaves, where they weren't even allowed into the kitchen. I'm asleep, it's only a dream, an illusion ... It's the fruit of imagination, wrapped in the fog of the unknown. . . . *[Picks up the keys, nicely smiling]* She threw down the keys, she wanted to show she was no longer mistress here ... *[Jingles keys]* Well, it's all one! *[Hears the band tuning up]* Eh, musicians, play, I want to hear you! Come and look at Ermolai Lopakhin laying his axe to the cherry orchard, come and look at the trees falling! We'll build villas here, and our grandsons and great-grandsons will see a new life here ... Play on, music! *[The band plays. LUBOV ANDREYEVNA sinks into a chair and weeps bitterly. LOPAKHIN continues reproachfully]* Why then, why didn't you take my advice? My poor, dear woman, you can't go back now. *[Weeps]* Oh, if only the whole thing was done with, if only our uneven, unhappy life were changed!

**PISCHIN:** *[Takes his arm; in an undertone]* She's crying. Let's go into the drawing-room and leave her by herself . . . come on ... *[Takes his arm and leads him out.]*

**LOPAKHIN:** What's that? Bandsmen, play nicely! Go on, do just as I want you to! *[Ironically]* The new owner, the owner of the cherry orchard is coming! *[He accidentally knocks up against a little table and nearly upsets the candelabra]* I can pay for everything! *[Exit with PISCHIN]*

*In the reception-room and the drawing-room nobody remains except LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, who sits huddled up and weeping bitterly. The band plays softly. ANYA and TROFIMOV come in quickly. ANYA goes up to her mother and goes on her knees in front of her. TROFIMOV stands at the drawing-room entrance.*

**ANYA:** Mother! mother, are you crying? My dear, kind, good mother, my beautiful mother, I love you! Bless you! The cherry orchard is sold, we've got it no longer, it's true, true, but don't cry mother, you've still got your life before you, you've still your beautiful pure soul . . . Come with me, come, dear, away from here, come! We'll plant a new garden, finer than this, and you'll see it, and you'll understand, and deep joy, gentle joy will sink into your soul, like the evening sun, and you'll smile, mother! Come, dear, let's go!

*Curtain.*

\*\*\*\*\*

## ACT FOUR

*The stage is set as for Act I. There are no curtains on the windows, no pictures; only a few pieces of furniture are left; they are piled up in a corner as if for sale. The emptiness is felt. By the door that leads out of the house and at the back of the stage, portmanteaux and travelling paraphernalia are piled up. The door on the left is open; the voices of VARYA and ANYA can be heard through it. LOPAKHIN stands and waits. YASHA holds a tray with little tumblers of champagne. Outside, EPIKHODOV is tying up a box. Voices are heard behind the stage. The peasants have come to say good-bye.*

*The voice of GAEV is heard: "Thank you, brothers, thank you."*

**YASHA:** The common people have come to say good-bye. I am of the opinion, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, that they're good people, but they don't understand very much. The voices die away. LUBOV ANDREYEVNA and GAEV enter. She is not crying but is pale, and her face trembles; she can hardly speak.

**GAEV:** You gave them your purse, Luba. You can't go on like that, you can't!

**LUBOV:** I couldn't help myself, I couldn't! *[They go out]*

**LOPAKHIN:** *[In the doorway, calling after them]* Please, I ask you most humbly! Just a little glass to say good-bye. I didn't remember to bring any from town and I only found one bottle at the station. Please, do! *[Pause]* Won't you really have any? *[Goes away from the door]* If I only knew—I wouldn't have bought any. Well, I shan't drink any either. *[YASHA carefully puts the tray on a chair]* You have a drink, Yasha, at any rate.

**YASHA:** To those departing! And good luck to those who stay behind! *[Drinks]* I can assure you that this isn't really champagne.

**LOPAKHIN:** Eight roubles a bottle. *[Pause]* It's devilish cold here.

**YASHA:** There are no fires to-day, we're going away. *[Laughs]*

**LOPAKHIN:** What's the matter with you?

**YASHA:** I'm just pleased.

**LOPAKHIN:** It's October outside, but it's as sunny and as quiet as if it were summer. Good for building. *[Looking at his watch and speaking through the door]* Ladies and gentlemen, please remember that it's only forty-seven minutes till the train goes! You must go off to the station in twenty minutes. Hurry up.

*TROFIMOV, in an overcoat, comes in from the grounds.*

**TROFIMOV:** I think it's time we went. The carriages are waiting. Where the devil are my goloshes? They're lost. *[Through the door]* Anya, I can't find my goloshes! I can't!

**LOPAKHIN:** I've got to go to Kharkov. I'm going in the same train as you. I'm going to spend the whole winter in Kharkov. I've been hanging about with you people,

going rusty without work. I can't live without working. I must have something to do with my hands; they hang about as if they weren't mine at all.

**TROFIMOV:** We'll go away now and then you'll start again on your useful labours.

**LOPAKHIN:** Have a glass.

**TROFIMOV:** I won't.

**LOPAKHIN.** So, you're off to Moscow now?

**TROFIMOV:** Yes. I'll see them into town and to-morrow I'm off to Moscow.

**LOPAKHIN.** Yes. ... I expect the professors don't lecture nowadays; they're waiting till you turn up!

**TROFIMOV:** That's not your business.

**LOPAKHIN:** How many years have you been going to the university?

**TROFIMOV:** Think of something fresh. This is old and flat. [*Looking for his goloshes*] You know, we may not meet each other again, so just let me give you a word of advice on parting: "Don't wave your hands about! Get rid of that habit of waving them about. And then, building villas and reckoning on their residents becoming freeholders in time—that's the same thing; it's all a matter of waving your hands about ... Whether I want to or not, you know, I like you. You've thin, delicate fingers, like those of an artist, and you've a thin, delicate soul ..."

**LOPAKHIN:** [*Embraces him*] Good-bye, dear fellow. Thanks for all you've said. If you want any, take some money from me for the journey.

**TROFIMOV:** Why should I? I don't want it.

**LOPAKHIN:** But you've nothing!

**TROFIMOV:** Yes, I have, thank you; I've got some for a translation. Here it is in my pocket. [*Nervously*] but I can't find my goloshes!

**VARYA:** [*From the other room*] Take your rubbish away! [*Throws a pair of rubber goloshes on to the stage*]

**TROFIMOV:** Why are you angry, Varya? Hm! These aren't my goloshes!

**LOPAKHIN:** In the spring I sowed three thousand acres of poppies, and now I've made forty thousand roubles net profit. And when my poppies were in flower, what a picture it was! So, I, as I was saying, made forty thousand roubles, and I mean I'd like to lend you some, because I can afford it. Why turn up your nose at it? I'm just a simple peasant ...

**TROFIMOV:** Your father was a peasant, mine was a chemist, and that means absolutely nothing. [*LOPAKHIN takes out his pocket-book*] No, no. . . . Even if you gave me twenty thousand, I should refuse. I'm a free man. And everything that all you

people, rich and poor, value so highly and so dearly hasn't the least influence over me; it's like a flock of down in the wind. I can do without you; I can pass you by. I'm strong and proud. Mankind goes on to the highest truths and to the highest happiness such as is only possible on earth, and I go in the front ranks!

**LOPAKHIN:** Will you get there?

**TROFIMOV:** I will. *[Pause]* I'll get there and show others the way *[Axes cutting the trees are heard in the distance]*

**LOPAKHIN:** Well, good-bye, old man. It's time to go. Here we stand pulling one another's noses, but life goes its own way all the time. When I work for a long time, and I don't get tired, then I think more easily, and I think I get to understand why I exist. And there are so many people in Russia, brother, who live for nothing at all. Still, work goes on without that. Leonid Andreyevitch, they say, has accepted a post in a bank; he will get sixty\ thousand roubles a year. . . . But he won't stand it; he's very lazy.

**ANYA:** *[At the door]* Mother asks if you will stop them cutting down the orchard until she has gone away.

**TROFIMOV:** Yes, really, you ought to have enough tact not to do that. *[Exit]*

**LOPAKHIN:** All right, all right . . . yes, he's right. *[Exit]*

**ANYA:** Has Fiers been sent to the hospital?

**YASHA:** I gave the order this morning. I suppose they've sent him.

**ANYA:** *[To EPIKHODOV, who crosses the room]* Simeon Panteleyevitch, please make inquiries if Fiers has been sent to the hospital.

**YASHA:** *[Offended]* I told Egor this morning. What's the use of asking ten times!

**EPIKHODOV:** The aged Fiers, in my conclusive opinion, isn't worth mending; his forefathers had better have him. I only envy him. *[Puts a trunk on a hat-box and squashes it]* Well, of course. I thought so! *[Exit.]*

**YASHA:** *[Grinning]* Two-and-twenty troubles.

**VARYA:** *[Behind the door]* Has Fiers been taken away to the hospital?

**ANYA:** Yes.

**VARYA:** Why didn't they take the letter to the doctor?

**ANYA:** It'll have to be sent after him. *[Exit.]*

**VARYA:** *[In the next room]* Where's Yasha? Tell him his mother's come and wants to say good-bye to him.

**YASHA:** *[Waving his hand]* She'll make me lose all patience!



*DUNYASHA has meanwhile been bustling round the luggage; now that YASHA is left alone, she goes up to him.*

**DUNYASHA:** If you only looked at me once, Yasha. You're going away, leaving me behind.

*[Weeps and hugs him round the neck.]*

**YASHA:** What's the use of crying? *[Drinks champagne]* In six days I'll be again in Paris. To-morrow we get into the express and off we go. I can hardly believe it. Vive la France! It doesn't suit me here; I can't live here . . . it's no good. Well, I've seen the uncivilized world; I have had enough of it. *[Drinks champagne]* What do you want to cry for? You behave yourself properly, and then you won't cry.

**DUNYASHA:** *[Looks in a small mirror and powders her face]* Send me a letter from Paris. You know I\ loved you, Yasha, so much! I'm a sensitive creature, Yasha.

**YASHA:** Somebody's coming.

*He bustles around the luggage, singing softly. Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAEV, ANYA, and CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA.*

**GAEV:** We'd better be off. There's no time left. *[Looks at YASHA]* Somebody smells of herring!

**LUBOV:** We needn't get into our carriages for ten minutes ... *[Looks round the room]* Good-bye, dear house, old grandfather. The winter will go, the spring will come, and then you'll exist no more, you'll be pulled down. How much these walls have seen! *[Passionately kisses her daughter]* My treasure, you're radiant, your eyes flash like two jewels! Are you happy? Very?

**ANYA:** Very! A new life is beginning, mother!

**GAEV:** *[Gaily]* Yes, really, everything's all right now. Before the cherry orchard was sold, we all were excited and we suffered, and then, when the question was solved once and for all, we all calmed down, and even became cheerful. I'm a bank official now, and a financier ... red in the middle; and you, Luba, for some reason or other, look better, there's no doubt about it.

**LUBOV:** Yes. My nerves are better, it's true. *[She puts on her coat and hat]* I sleep well. Take my luggage out, Yasha. It's time. *[To ANYA]* My little girl, we'll soon see each other again ... I'm off to Paris. I'll live there on the money your grandmother from Yaroslav sent along to buy the estate—bless her! —though it won't last long.

**ANYA:** You'll come back soon, soon, mother, won't you? I'll get ready, and pass the exam at the Higher School, and then I'll work and help you. We'll read all sorts of books to one another, won't we? *[Kisses her mother's hands]* We'll read in the autumn evenings; we'll read many books, and a beautiful new world will open up before us. . . *[Thoughtfully]* You'll come, mother ...

**LUBOV:** I'll come, my darling. *[Embraces her.]*

*Enter LOPAKHIN. CHARLOTTA is singing to herself.*

**GAEV:** Charlotta is happy; she sings!

**CHARLOTTA:** *[Takes a bundle, looking like a wrapped-up baby]* My little baby, bye-bye. *[The baby seems to answer, "Oua! Oua!"]* Hush, my nice little boy. *["Oua! Oua!"]* I'm so sorry for you! *[Throws the bundle back]* So please find me a new place. I can't go on like this.

**LOPAKHIN:** We'll find one, Charlotta Ivanovna, don't you be afraid.

**GAEV:** Everybody's leaving us. Varya's going away ... we've suddenly become unnecessary.

**CHARLOTTA:** I've nowhere to live in town. I must go away. *[Hums]* Never mind.

*Enter PISCHIN.*

**LOPAKHIN:** Nature's marvel!

**PISCHIN:** *[Puffing]* Oh, let me get my breath back ... I'm fagged out ... My most honoured, give me some Water ...

**GAEV:** Come for money, what? I'm your humble servant, and I'm going out of the way of temptation. *[Exit.]*

**PISCHIN:** I haven't been here for ever so long ... dear madam. *[To LOPAKHIN]* You here? Glad to see you ... man of immense brain ... take this ... take it. ... *[Gives LOPAKHIN money]* Four hundred roubles ... That leaves 840 ...

**LOPAKHIN:** *[Shrugs his shoulders in surprise]* As if I were dreaming. Where did you get this from?

**PISCHIN:** Stop ... it's hot ... A most unexpected thing happened. Some Englishmen came along and found some white clay on my land ... *[To LUBOV ANDREYEVNA]* And here's four hundred for you ... beautiful lady ... *[Gives her money]* Give you the rest later ... *[Drinks water]* Just now a young man in the train was saying that some great philosopher advises us all to jump off roofs. "Jump!" he says, and that's all. *[Astonished]* to think of that, now! More water!

**LOPAKHIN:** Who were these Englishmen?

**PISCHIN:** I've leased off the land with the clay to them for twenty-four years. ... Now, excuse me, I've no time. ... I must run off ... I must go to Znoikov and to Kardamonov ... I owe them all money ... *[Drinks]* Good-bye. I'll come in on Thursday.

**LUBOV:** We're just off to town, and to-morrow I go abroad.

**PISCHIN.** *[Agitated]* What? Why to town? I see furniture ... trunks ... Well, never mind. *[Crying]* Never mind. These Englishmen are men of immense intellect ... Never mind ... Be happy ... God will help you ... Never mind ... Everything in this world comes to an end ... *[Kisses LUBOV ANDREYEVNA'S hand]* And if you should happen to hear that my end has come, just remember this old ... horse and say: "There was one such and such a Simeonov-Pischin, God bless his soul. . . ." Wonderful weather ... yes ... *[Exit deeply moved, but returns at once and says in the door]* Dashenka sent her love! *[Exit.]*

**LUBOV:** Now we can go. I've two anxieties, though. The first is poor Fiers *[Looks at her watch]* We've still five minutes ...

**ANYA:** Mother, Fiers has already been sent to the hospital. Yasha sent him off this morning.

**LUBOV:** The second is Varya. She's used to getting up early and to work, and now she's no work to do she's like a fish out of water. She's grown thin and pale, and she cries, poor thing ... *[Pause]* You know very well, Ermolai Alexeyevitch, that I used to hope to marry her to you, and I suppose you are going to marry somebody? *[Whispers to ANYA, who nods to CHARLOTTA, and they both go out]* She loves you, she's your sort, and I don't understand, I really don't, why you seem to be keeping away from each other. I don't understand!

**LOPAKHIN:** To tell the truth, I don't understand it myself. It's all so strange ... If there's still time, I'll be ready at once ... Let's get it over, once and for all; I don't feel as if I could ever propose to her without you.

**LUBOV:** Excellent. It'll only take a minute. I'll call her.

**LOPAKHIN:** The champagne's very appropriate. *[Looking at the tumblers]* They're empty, somebody's already drunk them. *[YASHA coughs]* I call that licking it up ...

**LUBOV:** *[Animated]* Excellent. We'll go out. Yasha, allez. I'll call her in. . . . *[At the door]* Varya, leave that and come here. Come! *[Exit with YASHA.]*

**LOPAKHI.** *[Looks at his watch]* Yes ... *[Pause.]* There is a restrained laugh behind the door, a whisper, then VARYA comes in.

**VARYA:** *[Looking at the luggage in silence]* I can't seem to find it ...

**LOPAKHIN:** What are you looking for?

**VARYA:** I packed it myself and I don't remember. *[Pause.]*

**LOPAKHIN:** Where are you going to now, Barbara Mihailovna?

**VARYA:** I? To the Ragulins ... I've got an agreement to go and look after their house ... as housekeeper or something.

**LOPAKHIN:** Is that at Yashnevo? It's about fifty miles. *[Pause]* So life in this house is finished now ...

**VARYA:** *[Looking at the luggage]* Where is it? . . . perhaps I've put it away in the trunk. . . Yes, there'll be no more life in this house ...

**LOPAKHIN:** And I'm off to Kharkov at once . . . by this train. I've a lot of business on hand. I'm leaving Epikhodov here . . . I've taken him on.

**VARYA:** Well, well!

**LOPAKHIN:** Last year at this time the snow was already falling, if you remember, and now it's nice and sunny. Only it's rather cold ... There's three degrees of frost.

**VARYA:** I didn't look. *[Pause]* And our thermometer's broken ... *[Pause.]*

*VOICE AT THE DOOR.* Ermolai Alexeyevitch!

**LOPAKHIN:** *[As if he has long been waiting to be called]* This minute. *[Exit quickly.]*

*VARYA, sitting on the floor, puts her face on a bundle of clothes and weeps gently. The door opens. LUBOV ANDREYEVNA enters carefully.*

**LUBOV:** Well? *[Pause]* We must go.

**VARYA:** *[Not crying now, wipes her eyes]* Yes, it's quite time, little mother. I'll get to the Ragulins to-day, if I don't miss the train ...

**LUBOV:** *[At the door]* Anya, put on your things. *[Enter ANYA, then GAEV, CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA. GAEV wears a warm overcoat with a cape. A servant and drivers come in. EPIKHODOV bustles around the luggage]* Now we can go away.

**ANYA:** *[Joyfully]* Away!

**GAEV:** My friends, my dear friends! Can I be silent, in leaving this house for evermore? —can I restrain myself, in saying farewell, from expressing those feelings which now fill my whole being . . .?

**ANYA:** *[Imploringly]* Uncle!

**VARYA:** Uncle, you shouldn't!

**GAEV:** *[Stupidly]* Double the red into the middle ... I'll be quiet.

*Enter TROFIMOV, then LOPAKHIN.*

**TROFIMOV:** Well, it's time to be off.

**LOPAKHIN:** Epikhodov, my coat!

**LUBOV:** I'll sit here one more minute. It's as if I'd never really noticed what the walls and ceilings of this house were like, and now I look at them greedily, with such tender love ...

**GAEV:** I remember, when I was six years old, on Trinity Sunday, I sat at this window and looked and saw my father going to church ....

**LUBOV:** Have all the things been taken away?

**LOPAKHIN:** Yes, all, I think. *[To EPIKHODOV, putting on his coat]* You see that everything's quite straight, Epikhodov.

**EPIKHODOV:** *[Hoarsely]* You may depend upon me, Ermolai Alexeyevitch!

**LOPAKHIN:** What's the matter with your voice?

**EPIKHODOV:** I swallowed something just now; I was having a drink of water.

**YASHA:** *[Suspiciously]* What manners ...

**LUBOV:** We go away, and not a soul remains behind.

**LOPAKHIN:** Till the spring.

**VARYA:** *[Drags an umbrella out of a bundle, and seems to be waving it about. LOPAKHIN pretends to be frightened]* What are you doing? ... I never thought ...

**TROFIMOV:** Come along, let's take our seats ... it's time! The train will be in directly.

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

**TROFIMOV:** *[Putting them on]* Come on!

**GAEV:** *[Deeply moved, nearly crying]* The train ... the station ... Cross in the middle, a white double in the corner ...

**LUBOV:** Let's go!

**LOPAKHIN:** Are you all here? There's nobody else? *[Locks the side-door on the left]* There's a lot of things in there. I must lock them up. Come!

**ANYA:** Good-bye, home! Good-bye, old life!

**TROFIMOV:** Welcome, new life. *[Exit with ANYA.]*

*VARYA looks round the room and goes out slowly. YASHA and CHARLOTTA, with her little dog, go out.*

**LOPAKHIN:** Till the spring, then! Come on ... till we meet again! *[Exit.]*

*LUBOV ANDREYEVNA and GAEV are left alone. They might almost have been waiting for that. They fall into each other's arms and sob restrainedly and quietly, fearing that somebody might hear them.*

**GAEV:** *[In despair]* My sister, my sister ...

**LUBOV:** My dead, my gentle, beautiful orchard! My life, my youth, my happiness, good-bye! Good-bye!

**ANYA'S VOICE:** *[Gaily]* Mother!

**TROFIMOV'S VOICE:** *[Gaily, excited]* Coo-ee!

**LUBOV:** To look at the walls and the windows for the last time ... My dead mother used to like to walk about this room ...

**GAEV:** My sister, my sister!

**ANYA'S VOICE:** Mother!

**TROFIMOV'S VOICE:** Coo-ee!

**LUBOV:** We're coming! *[They go out.]*

*The stage is empty. The sound of keys being turned in the locks is heard, and then the noise of the carriages going away. It is quiet. Then the sound of an axe against the trees is heard in the silence, sadly and by itself. Steps are heard. FIERS comes in from the door on the right. He is dressed as usual, in a short jacket and white waistcoat; slippers on his feet. He is ill. He goes to the door and tries the handle.*

**FIERS:** It's locked. They've gone away. *[Sits on a sofa]* They've forgotten about me ... Never mind, I'll sit here ... And Leonid Andreyevitch will have gone in a light overcoat instead of putting on his fur coat ... *[Sighs anxiously]* I didn't see .... Oh, these young people! *[Mumbles something that cannot be understood]* Life's gone on as if I'd never lived. *[Lying down]* I'll lie down .... You've no strength left in you, nothing left at all. . Oh, you ... bungler!

*He lies without moving. The distant sound is heard, as if from the sky, of a breaking string, dying away sadly.*

*Silence follows it, and only the sound is heard, some way away in the orchard, of the axe falling on the trees.*

***Curtain.***

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## Plot Overview:

The play begins in the pre-dawn hours of a May morning in Russia. We learn that the cherry trees are in bloom even though it is frosty outside. Yermolay Lopakhin, a friend of the family, and Dunyasha a maid on the Ranevsky estate, wait for the estate's owner Ranevsky at the estate's main house, in a room called "the nursery". Lopakhin reveals that Ranevsky has been in Paris for the last five years. Lopakhin is a local businessman in his mid- thirties, dressed in a fine white suit (with gaudy yellow shoes), whose feelings towards Ranevsky are mixed between affectionate gratitude for past kindnesses, and resentment at her condescension toward him because of his humble, peasant origins. Also on the estate is Simon Yephikodov, a hapless youth nicknamed "Simple Simon" because of his frequent and ridiculous accidents.

Soon, Ranevsky arrives from Paris, along with her daughter Anya, who has been with her there since Easter of that year; Yasha, a young manservant who has accompanied her on her travels; and Charlotte, Anya's governess, who brings along her dog. Also accompanying her are Firs, her 87-year old manservant; her elder, yet still infantile, brother Leonid Gayev; and her adopted daughter Varya; these last three have stayed in Russia but went to the station to greet Ranevsky on her return

Ranevsky expresses her joy and amazement to be home again, while Anya reveals to Varya the relative poverty in which she found her mother when she arrived in Paris and the way in which she continues to spend money. Varya reveals that the family's estate is to be sold at auction on the 22nd of August, in order to pay their debts. Anya reveals that Ranevsky's departure for Paris was caused by her grief over two deaths: that of her husband six years before and that of her son, Grisha, who drowned a month thereafter.

Soon, Anya departs for bed, and Lopakhin brings up the issue of the imminent sale. He proposes a solution; Ranevsky should parcel out the land on her estate, build cottages on the parcels, and lease them out to summer cottage-holders, who are becoming increasingly numerous. Gayev and Ranevsky dismiss the idea, because it would necessitate cutting down the family's beloved (and gigantic) cherry orchard. Before he leaves, Lopakhin offers them a loan of 50,000 rubles to buy their property at auction if they change their minds, and predicts there will be no other way of saving the orchard. Ranevsky then lends some money to a fellow impoverished landowner, Boris Simeonov-Pischik. Peter Trofimov arrives; he was Grisha's tutor before the drowning, and thus he brings back painful memories for

Ranevsky. Before the end of the act, after complaining about Ranevsky's inability to curb her spending, Gayev outlines three alternatives to Lopakhin's plan: a financing scheme involving some banker friends of his, Ranevsky borrowing some money from Lopakhin (without the condition that they then cut down the orchard), and a wealthy aunt in Yaroslavl who might provide a loan.

In the Second Act, we are introduced more closely to the young servants on the estate, Dunyasha, Yasha, and Yephikodov, who are involved in a love triangle: Yephikodov loves Dunyasha, Dunyasha loves Yasha, and Yasha is very much in love with himself. Soon, Lopakhin, Ranevsky, Gayev, Anya and Varya appear, and they are again debating over Lopakhin's plan to turn the orchard into cottage country. Lopakhin becomes frustrated with Ranevsky's reluctance; she, in turn, thinks his plan is vulgar, and says that if they plan to sell the cherry orchard, she wants to be sold along with it. Ranevsky reveals that she has a lover in Paris who has been sending her telegrams, asking her to return, and who robbed her, left her, and as a result drove her to a suicide attempt.

Soon, Trofimov appears, and gives several speeches about the importance of work and the laziness and stupidity of Russian intellectuals. In a quiet moment, the sound of a snapping string is heard, and no one can identify its source. A drunkard appears, asking for directions, and then money; Ranevsky ends up giving him several gold pieces. Disturbed, most of the group leave, except for Anya and Trofimov. They discuss Varya's growing suspicion that Anya and Trofimov are having an affair, which they are not; Trofimov declares that they are "above love". The act ends with Yephikodov sadly playing his guitar and Varya calling out, in vain, for Anya.

In the Third Act, Ranevsky throws a party on the day of the auction. The guests consist of several local bureaucratic officials such as the stationmaster and a post-office clerk. Charlotte entertains the guests with a series of magic tricks. Ranevsky worries anxiously about why Gayev and Lopakhin have not yet returned. Ranevsky fears that the orchard has been lost, that the aunt in Yaroslavl has apparently not given them enough money to buy it, and that Gayev's other sources have failed to come through. She and Trofimov get into an argument; Trofimov accuses her of not being able to face the truth, and she accuses him of being unusual for never having fallen in love. Lopakhin and Gayev soon return from the auction. Lopakhin reveals to everyone that he has bought the estate and intends to carry out his plans for the orchard's destruction. Anya tries, in vain, to comfort her mother.



In the last act, it is October, and the trees in the cherry orchard are already being cut down. All the characters are in the process of leaving; Lopakhin will depart to Kharkov for the winter, Varya to the Ragulins', another family that lives fifty miles away. Gayev plans to live in the town, working at a bank, Anya will go off to school, and Ranevsky will leave for Paris with Yasha, to rejoin her lover. Charlotte has no idea what she will do, but Lopakhin assures her he will help her find something. Trofimov and Lopakhin exchange an affectionate if contentious farewell; Yasha leaves Dunyasha, weeping, without a second thought; and Anya tearfully says goodbye to her mother. Anya worries that Firs, who has taken ill, has not been sent to the hospital as he was supposed to be, but Yasha indignantly assures Anya that he has. Ranevsky encourages Lopakhin to propose to Varya; but the proposal is never made—Lopakhin leaves Varya alone, and in tears. Finally, Gayev and Ranevsky bid a tearful farewell to their house. Everyone leaves, locking the doors behind them.

But Firs is, in fact, accidentally left behind, having fallen ill and being forgotten in the rush of the departure. He walks onstage after everyone else has left, quietly muttering about how life has left him by. He lies on the couch, and silently expires as two sounds are heard; again, the sound of a string snapping, and the sound of an axe cutting down a cherry tree in the orchard.

## **Character List:**

### **Mrs. Lyuba Ranevsky**

Ranevsky's character is defined by flight, both physical and emotional. Physically, she is continuously fleeing from location: the play opens with her flight from Paris, home to Russia, after a suicide attempt provoked by her lover. We learn later that a similar flight occurred five years previously, after the closely spaced deaths (only separated by a month) of her son and her husband. The play will end with her fleeing again, from the estate she has lost, back to Paris and the arms of the very same lover. And her flight from Paris to Russia is paralleled by an emotional flight from the present to the past: she is a woman besieged by memories of her tragic adult life and seeking refuge in her memories of an idyllic childhood. Her first words on returning to the estate, "nursery!" indicates this. Her vision of her own mother walking through the cherry orchard reinforces the picture of a woman suffering from illusions, the illusion that she can recapture the idyll of her childhood and block out the tragic events of the past six years from her mind. Her rejections of Lopakhin's business proposals as being "vulgar" also seems a willful ignorance on her

part, a stubborn refusal to accept the unpleasant facts about her situation and a flight from a fact about her current life, which is that she is impoverished and in debt.

Ranevsky's flight home, both in body and in mind, is doomed from the very start of the play, for two reasons. First of all, home is not the safe place she might have imagined it to be; it too is tainted by tragedy, as she is soon reminded of by the appearance of Trofimov, her dead son's tutor. She is unable to return to her idyllic childhood state; the memories of her tragic adult life remain with her, either in the form of Trofimov or the telegrams from her lover in Paris. Secondly, she cannot flee from her debts; the bank will remember them if she does not. But Ranevsky is paralyzed in the face of the impending destruction; unable to stay in the present emotionally, her flight from those present defeats itself, by making the loss of her estate and the destruction of the orchard inevitable.

But Ranevsky is kind and generous, and we get the feeling that for her, ideals such as love are not empty words for she has suffered for them. And she is well loved by not only her family, but also by Lopakhin, who says she has done many kind things for him and who also comments on her "irresistible eyes". So she is a sympathetic character. This sympathetic nature gives her loss of the orchard a poignancy that has made some call the play a tragedy. For Ranevsky identifies herself with the orchard, and she says in Act Two that if the orchard is sold, she might as well be sold with it. The orchard also symbolizes her memories, and we can see this in the fact that it places an identical emotional burden on her as her memories do; it draws her towards the past and prevents her from moving on with her life. The symbolism of the play is tightly woven with its physical details here, for destruction of the orchard—the physical symbol of her memories—gives Ranevsky a chance to move beyond those memories, a chance she will hopefully take.

## **Yermolay Lopakhin**

Lopakhin is the character, more than any other, constantly in charge of driving the play forward; he is its source of energy and action. He is a character full of details, plans, and action; he outlines a plan for Ranevsky to save her estate, offers her a loan, ends up buying the estate in the end and readily informs us of the price of champagne (Act Four). But he too, like Ranevsky, is fleeing emotionally from his memories, which are memories of his brutal peasant upbringing.

What seems to hold back his flight is his attachment to Ranevsky. In his first moments on-stage, he tells of a time when his father beat him, but he also relates Ranevsky's subsequent

kindness to him. Ranevsky is a member of the same landowning class that oppressed his forefathers and is also a particularly kind figure from his days as a peasant. Lopakhin's attitude towards Ranevsky is thus ambivalent from the start. He is grateful for her "kindness," but at the same time she is a key figure in memories that he has sought to put behind him, both in his manner of dress and through constant, hard work. This tension resolves itself finally in Act Three of the play, when he buys the orchard. His insensitivity to Ranevsky is not merely the result of his peasant upbringing, and the fact that he does not end up proposing to Varya, which would make him part of Ranevsky's family, is not accidental. They both symbolize the fact that he considers himself to have broken free from, or "forgotten," his past, and this means also breaking free from and forgetting his gratitude to Ranevsky

### **Peter Trofimov**

Trofimov is the "eternal student", as Lopakhin calls him, and he provides most of the explicit ideological discussion in the play. Trofimov makes the play's social allegory explicit. He idealizes work, as well as the search for truth, decrying the poor living conditions in which most Russian peasants live, as well as the "Russian intellectuals" whose inactivity he deems responsible for these conditions. His idealism and intellectualism make him a foil for the practical, materialistic Lopakhin, but he also serves as a foil for Ranevsky. His emphasis on truth over love and beauty and his orientation towards the future, contrasts with her devotion to love and beauty and her obsession with the past. These elements of both their personalities become united in the cherry orchard. Whereas Ranevsky sees the orchard as beautiful and interesting, to Trofimov it is a symbol of Russia's oppressive past and the dehumanization caused by families such as Ranevsky's through the institution of serfdom.

### **Leonid Gayev**

Gayev is Ranevsky's brother. He has several intriguing verbal habits; he frequently describes tricky billiards shots at odd and inappropriate times. He also will launch into overly sentimental and rhetorical speeches before his niece Anya stops him, after which he always mutters "I am silent" at least once. Gayev is a kind and concerned uncle and brother, but he behaves very differently around people not of his own social class. He is fifty-one years old, but as he notes, this is "difficult to believe", because he is in many ways an infant.

He constantly pops sweets into his mouth, insults people (such as Lopakhin) with whom he disagrees, and has to be reminded to put on his jacket by Firs.

## **Varya**

Varya is Ranevsky's adopted daughter, who is twenty-four years old. She is in love with Lopakhin, but she doubts that he will ever propose to her. Varya is hard-working and responsible and has a similar work ethic to Lopakhin. She is also something of a cry-baby, often in tears; but this may reflect her sense of powerlessness, as she is the one character in the play who may be most affected by the loss of the estate. She is the estate's manager, so she will lose her job if Ranevsky loses the estate, but, lacking money or a husband, she has no control over its fate or her own.

## **Anya**

Ranevsky's biological daughter, Anya is seventeen years old. She seems to have lived a sheltered life. She greatly enjoys the company of Trofimov and his lofty idealism, and is quick to comfort her mother after the loss of her orchard. Anya and Trofimov become so close that Varya fears they may become romantically involved.

## **Boris Simeonov-Pischik**

A nobleman, and fellow landowner, who is, like Ranevsky, in financial difficulties. Pischik is characterized mainly by his boundless optimism—he is always certain he will find the money somehow to pay for the mortgages that are due—but also by his continual borrowing money from Ranevsky. Pischik is something of a caricature; his name, in Russian, means "squealer," appropriate for someone who never stops talking.

## **Charlotte**

Anya's governess. Charlotte traveled from town-to-town performing tricks such as "the dive of death" when she was very young, before her Father and Mother both died. Charlotte is something of a clown, performing tricks for the amusement of the elite around her, such as Yasha, Ranevsky, and Yopakhin, while, at the same time, subtly mocking their pre-occupations.

## **Firs**

Ranevsky's eighty-seven-year-old manservant. Firs is always talking about how things were in the past on the estate, when the estate was prosperous, and the master went to Paris by carriage, instead of by train; most importantly, he frequently talks about how life was before the serfs were freed. He is possibly senile, and is constantly mumbling. He is the only surviving link to the estate's glorious past, and he comes to symbolize that past.

## **Simon Yephikodov**

Yephikodov is a clerk at the Ranevsky estate. He is a source of amusement for all the other workers and amusement for all the other workers, who refer to him as "Simple Simon". Yephikodov provides comic relief, with his self-conscious pose as the hopeless lover and romantic, often contemplating suicide. He loves Dunyasha, to whom he has proposed.

## **Yasha**

Yasha is the young manservant who has been traveling with Ranevsky ever since she left for France. He is always complaining about how uncivilized Russia is when compared to France, exploits Dunyasha's love for him for physical pleasure, and openly tells Firs that he is so old he should die. Most of the characters besides Ranevsky regard him as repulsive and obnoxious. He has a strong taste for acrid-smelling cigars.

## **Dunyasha**

A maid on the Ranevsky estate. She functions mainly as a foil to Yasha, her innocent naïveté and love for him emphasizing and making clear his cynicism and selfishness. She is also the object of Yephikodov's affections, a status about which she is very confused.

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## **Glossary**

<b>Nosegay</b>	: Bouquet of flowers tied at the base.
<b>Kvass</b>	: (especially in Russia) a fermented drink, low in alcohol, made from rye flour or bread with malt.
<b>Propitious</b>	: indicating a good chance of success.
<b>Ruble</b>	: the basic monetary unit of Russia and some other former republics of the Soviet Union.
<b>Cannon off</b>	: to knock or hit against someone or something forcefully and suddenly, usually at an angle.
<b>Patchouli</b>	: a fragrant herb native to Southeast Asia, with many commercial uses for its essential oil.
<b>Glutton</b>	: an excessively greedy eater.
<b>Knave</b>	: a dishonest or unscrupulous man.
<b>Mangy</b>	: suffering from mange, a skin disease that causes hair loss and roughness, or old and dirty.
<b>Extenuating circumstances</b>	: factors that reduce the seriousness or blame worthiness of a crime, offense, or fault.
<b>Perpendicular</b>	: an angle of 90° to a horizontal line.
<b>Snapped String</b>	: the Sound of Melancholy.
<b>Salto-mortale</b>	: a dangerous and daring jump.
<b>Incorrigible</b>	: a liar, a rogue, or a prisoner.
<b>Equine</b>	: relating to or affecting horses or other members of the horse family
<b>Ventriloquist</b>	: a person, especially an entertainer, who can make their voice appear to come from somewhere else, typically a dummy of a person or animal
<b>Ein, Zwei, drei</b>	: translated from German one, two, three.
<b>Muddled</b>	: Jumbled.
<b>Guter mensch Aber Schlechter maskant</b>	: Good man but poor

## **Comprehension:**

### **I. Answer the following questions in about a page each:**

1. How does Anton Chekhov portray the theme of social change in the play, *The Cherry Orchard*.
2. Critically analyse the character of Peter Trofimov.
3. Explain the role of Firs and what he symbolizes in the play.

**II. Answer the following questions in about two pages each:**

1. Discuss the theme of social change and the decline of the Russian aristocracy as depicted in *The Cherry Orchard*.
2. Analyse the character of Madame Ranevsky and her inability to cope with change and loss.
3. Critically analyze the ending of the play.

**Suggested Reading:**

- *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov
- *Three sisters* by Anton Chekhov

## 2. Appointment With Love

**Sulamith Ish-Kishor**

### Pre- Reading:

- Do you think people can accurately show their real personality through letters or messages; In today's world of online dating and digital communication, how do we judge personality?
- Discuss the role of physical appearance in romantic relationships, especially when people communicate only through writing.
- How do people choose between emotional desire and moral responsibility, especially in moments of intense emotion?

### About the Author:



Sulamith Ish-kishor (1896 – June 23, 1977) was an American writer, known for her religious and children's literature. Ish-kishor was born in London, England, one of eight children of Ephraim and Fanny Ish-Kishor. Her father was a well-known writer of Jewish children's literature and an early proponent of Hovevei Zion, a pre-Zionist movement, and later of political Zionism. Her older sister, Judith Ish-kishor, was a pioneering

writer of Jewish children's literature in English.

Sulamith began writing at age 5 and had several of her poems printed in British publications by the time she was 10. When Sulamith was 13, her family moved to New York City (like the family in her novel *Our Eddie*).

At Hunter College, she studied languages and history. She wrote widely, and was published in several magazines, including *The New Yorker*, *Saturday Review*, and *Reader's Digest*. Her now-classic story of a long-distance correspondence and its fateful conclusion, "Appointment with Love," was published in a 1943 edition of *Collier's* and was subsequently plagiarized by preacher-author Max Lucado (as "The Rose") in a 1992 collection.



## About the text:

"Appointment with Love" by Sulamith Ish-Kishor is a touching short story that explores themes of love, hope, and human connection. The story revolves around the unexpected meeting between two characters who arrange to meet at a designated time, their "appointment of love." Through their encounter, the narrative highlights the importance of faith in love and the power of human relationships to bring meaning and joy even in difficult circumstances. Ish-Kishor's delicate storytelling captures the essence of emotional vulnerability and the magic of a moment shared between two hearts.

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Six minutes to six, said the clock over the information booth in New York's Grand Central Station. The tall young Army officer lifted his sunburned face and narrowed his eyes to note the exact time. His heart was pounding with a beat that choked him. In six minutes, he would see the woman who had filled such a special place in his life for the past 18 months, the woman he had never seen yet whose words had sustained him unfailingly.

He placed himself as close as he could to the information booth, just beyond the ring of people besieging the clerks...

Lieutenant Blandford remembered one night in particular, the worst of the fighting, when his plane had been caught in the midst of a pack of Zeros. He had seen the grinning face of one of the enemy pilots.

In one of his letters, he had confessed to her that he often felt fear, and only a few days before this battle, he had received her answer: "Of course you fear...all brave men do. Didn't King David know fear? That's why he wrote the 23rd Psalm. Next time you doubt yourself, I want you to hear my voice reciting to you: 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me.'" And he had remembered; he had heard her imagined voice, and it had renewed his strength and skill.

He was going to hear her voice now. Four minutes to six. A girl passed closer to him, and Lt. Blandford started. She was wearing a flower, but it was not the little red rose they had agreed upon. Besides, this girl was only about 18, and Hollis Meynell had told him she was 30. "What of it?" he had answered, "I'm 32." He was 29.

His mind went back to that book - the book the Lord Himself must have put into his hands out of the hundreds of Army library books sent to the Florida training camp. Of Human Bondage, it was; and throughout the book were notes in a woman's writing. He had always hated that writing-in-habit, but these remarks were different. He had never believed that a woman could see into a man's heart so tenderly, so understandingly. Her name was on the bookplate: Hollis Meynell. He had got hold of a New York City telephone book and found her address. He had written, she had answered. Next day he had been shipped out, but they had gone on writing.

For thirteen months she had faithfully replied. When his letters did not arrive, she wrote anyway, and now he believed he loved her, and she loved him. But she had refused all his pleas to send him her photograph. She had explained: "If your feeling for me had no reality, what I look like won't matter. Suppose I am beautiful. I'd always be haunted that you had been taking a chance on just that, and that kind of love would disgust me. Suppose that I'm plain, (and you must admit that this is more likely), then I'd always fear that you were only going on writing because you were lonely and had no one else. No, don't ask for my picture. When you come to New York, you shall see me and then you shall make your own decision."

One minute to six - Lieutenant Blandford's heart leaped higher than his plane had ever done.

A young woman was coming toward him. Her figure was long and slim; her blond hair lay back in curls from her delicate ears. Her eyes were blue as flowers; her lips and chin had a gentle firmness. In her pale green suit, she was like springtime come alive.

He started toward her, entirely forgetting to notice that she was wearing no rose, and as he moved, a small, provocative smile curved her lips.

"Going my way, soldier?" she murmured.

Uncontrollably, he made one step closer to her. Then he saw Hollis Meynell.

She was standing almost directly behind the girl, a woman well past 40, her graying hair tucked under a worn hat. She was more than plump. Her thick-ankled feet were thrust into low-heeled shoes. But she wore a red rose on her crumpled coat. The girl in the green suit was walking quickly away.

Blandford felt as though he were being split in two, so keen was his desire to follow the girl, yet so deep was his longing for the woman whose spirit had truly companioned and upheld his own; and there she stood. Her pale, plump face was gentle and sensible; he could see that now. Her gray eyes had a warm, kindly twinkle.

Lieutenant Blandford did not hesitate. His fingers gripped the small worn, blue leather copy of Human Bondage, which was to identify him to her. This would not be love, but it would be something precious, something perhaps even rarer than love - a friendship for which he had been and must ever be grateful.

He squared his broad shoulders, saluted and held the book out toward the woman, although even while he spoke he felt shocked by the bitterness of his disappointment.

"I'm Lieutenant John Blandford, and you - you are Miss Meynell. I'm so glad you could meet me. May...may I take you to dinner?"

The woman's face broadened in a tolerant smile. "I don't know what this is all about, son," she answered. "That young lady in the green suit - the one who just went by - begged me to wear this rose on my coat. And she said that if you asked me to go out with you, I should tell you that she's waiting for you in that big restaurant across the street. She said it was some kind of a test. I've got two boys with Uncle Sam myself, so I didn't mind to oblige you."

## **Glossary**

**Lieutenant** : A junior officer rank in the military.

**Pounding** : Beating strongly or rapidly, usually referring to the heart.

**Sustained** : Supported or kept someone going emotionally or mentally.

**Besieging** : Surrounding and crowding aggressively, often demanding something.

**Midst** : The middle or center of something, often something chaotic or dangerous.

**Reciting** : Saying aloud something memorized or written, like a poem or passage.

**Provocative** : Causing excitement, curiosity, or interest; sometimes flirtatious.

**Gripped** : Held something tightly, especially due to emotion or intensity.

- Haunted** : Troubled or disturbed continually by a memory or fear.
- Plump** : Slightly overweight in a soft or rounded way.
- Twinkle** : A shining or sparkling light, often used to describe kind or lively eyes.
- Disappointment** : A feeling of sadness or frustration when expectations are not met.
- Oblige** : To do something as a favor or because it is requested.
- Saluted** : A formal gesture of respect or recognition, especially by military personnel.
- Test** : A situation or act meant to determine a person's true character.

## **Comprehension:**

### **I. Answer the following questions in about a page each:**

1. Discuss how the theme of appearance versus reality is developed in the story.
2. Describe Lieutenant Blandford's feelings and thoughts as he waits in Grand Central Station.
3. Explain the agreement between Blandford and Hollis about how they would recognize each other.
4. What is the significance of the woman in the green suit asking the older woman to wear the rose?
5. Describe the emotional and moral conflict Blandford experiences when he realizes the truth.
6. Compare and contrast the two women: the girl in green and the woman with the rose.
7. What message does the story convey about human connection in times of hardship?

### **II. Answer the following questions in about two pages each:**

1. Explain the symbolic importance of the red rose in the story.
2. "This would not be love, but it would be something precious." — Explain what Blandford means by this line.
3. How does the story challenge societal expectations about beauty, age, and love?
4. Analyse the significance of physical appearance and how it is contrasted with inner qualities.

### **Suggested Reading:**

- *The Last Leaf* by O. Henry
- *A Cup of Tea* by Katherine Mansfield
- *The Door* by E.M. Forster
- *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde
- *The Gift of the Magi* by O. Henry

### **References:**

- <https://janice142.com/joyPage/AppointmentWithLove.htm>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ompgOBfnwzQ>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sulamith\\_Ish-Kishor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sulamith_Ish-Kishor)
- <https://www.scribd.com/document/450997796/APPOINTMENT-WITH-LOVE>

### 3. YOU WILL PREVAIL

**Sundar Pichai**

#### **Pre-Reading :**

- Write down one goal you want to achieve in the next five years. Reflect on how pursuing your passion can lead to meaningful contributions and a positive impact.
- List issues in the world that frustrate you (e.g., climate change, inequality). Then, brainstorm ways you can help solve them through actions, solutions, or innovations.
- Discuss how each generation builds on the progress of the previous one. Identify innovations or societal changes that have shaped your lives (e.g., the internet, smartphones).
- Imagine you are graduating during a global crisis without a live ceremony—friends and family can't be there in person. What emotions would you feel?

#### **About the Speaker**



Sundar Pichai, born on June 10, 1972, in Madras (now Chennai), India, is an Indian-born American business executive who is the CEO of Alphabet Inc. and its subsidiary Google. He earned his degree in Metallurgical Engineering from IIT Kharagpur, followed by an M.S. from Stanford University and an MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Under his leadership, Google expanded in areas such as AI (Gemini chatbot), Google Pixel, Google Nest, Google Workspace, Google Cloud, Waymo (self-driving cars), and Wing Aviation (drone delivery). Pichai is known for his calm leadership and focus on innovation.

#### **About the speech:**

Sundar Pichai's commencement speech titled "You will prevail", which was delivered to the Class of 2020 on YouTube, conveys a message of hope and resilience. The speech first appeared in "Dear Class of 2020", a virtual commencement celebration (organised during the **COVID-19 pandemic**) bringing together inspirational leaders and artists to celebrate graduates, their families, and their communities. Below is the speech delivered by Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google.

**SPEECH:**

Hello, everyone. And congratulations to the Class of 2020, as well as your parents, your teachers, and everyone who helped you get to this day.

I never imagined I'd be giving a commencement speech with no live audience ... from my backyard. But it's giving me a much deeper understanding of what our YouTube Creators go through! And I certainly never thought I'd be sharing a virtual stage with a former President ... a First Lady, a Lady Gaga, and a Queen Bey ... not to mention BTS.

I don't think this is the graduation ceremony any of you imagined. At a time when you should be celebrating all the knowledge you've gained, you may be grieving what you've lost: the moves you planned, the jobs you earned, and the experiences you were looking forward to. In bleak moments like these, it can be difficult to find hope.

So let me skip right to the end and tell you what happens: you will prevail.

That's not really the end of the speech, so don't get too excited.

The reason I know you'll prevail is because so many others have done it before you. One hundred years ago, the class of 1920 graduated into the end of a deadly pandemic. Fifty years ago, the class of 1970 graduated in the midst of the Vietnam War. And nearly 20 years ago, the class of 2001 graduated just months before 9/11.

There are notable examples like this. They had to overcome new challenges, and in all cases, they prevailed. The long arc of history tells us we have every reason to be hopeful.

So, be hopeful.

There's an interesting trend I've noticed: It's very conventional for every generation to underestimate the potential of the following one.

It's because they don't realise that the progress of one generation becomes the foundational premise for the next. And it takes a new set of people to come along and realise all the possibilities.

I grew up without much access to technology. We didn't get our first telephone till I was 10. I didn't have regular access to a computer until I came to America for graduate school. And our television, when we finally got one, only had one channel.

So imagine how awestruck I am today to be speaking to you on a platform that has millions of channels.

By contrast, you grew up with computers of all shapes and sizes. The ability to ask a computer anything, anywhere—the very thing I’ve spent my last decade working on—is not amazing to you. That’s OK, it doesn’t make me feel bad, it makes me hopeful!

There are probably things about technology that frustrate you and make you impatient.

Don’t lose that impatience. It will create the next technology revolution and enable you to build things my generation could never dream of.

You may be just as frustrated by my generation's approach to climate change or education. Be impatient. It will create the progress the world needs.

You will make the world better in your own ways. Even if you don’t know exactly how. The important thing is to be open-minded so you can find what you love.

For me, it was technology. The more access my family had to technology, the better our lives got. So when I graduated, I knew I wanted to do something to bring technology to as many others as possible.

At the time, I thought I could achieve this by helping build better semiconductors. I mean, what could be more exciting than that?

My father spent the equivalent of a year’s salary on my plane ticket to the U.S. so I could attend Stanford. It was my first time ever on a plane. But when I eventually landed in California, things weren’t as I had imagined. America was expensive. A phone call back home was more than \$2 a minute, and a backpack cost the same as my dad’s monthly salary in India.



Sundar Pichai, as a Stanford graduate student

And for all the talk about the warm California beaches ... that water was freezing cold!

On top of all that, I missed my family, my friends, and my girlfriend—now my wife—back in India.

A bright spot for me during this time was computing. For the first time in my life, I could use a computer whenever I wanted to. It completely blew my mind.

And at that same moment, the internet was literally being built all around me. The year I arrived at Stanford was the same year the browser Mosaic was released, which would popularise the World Wide Web and the internet.



The summer I left was the same summer that a graduate student named Sergey Brin met a prospective engineering student named Larry Page.

These two moments would profoundly shape the rest of my life. But at the time, I didn't know it.

It took me a while to realise that the internet would be the single best way to make technology accessible to more people. As soon as I did, I changed course and decided to pursue my dreams at Google.

Inspired by the wonder that first browser created in me, I led the effort to launch one—called Chrome—in 2009, and drove the effort to help Google develop affordable laptops and phones so that a student growing up, in any neighbourhood or village, in any part of the world, could have the same access to information as all of you.

Had I stayed the course in graduate school, I'd probably have a Ph.D. today—which would have made my parents really proud. But I might have missed the opportunity to bring the benefits of technology to so many others.

And I certainly wouldn't be standing here speaking to you as Google's CEO. Believe me when I say I saw none of this coming when I first touched down in the state of California 27 years ago.

The only thing that got me from here to there—other than luck—was a deep passion for technology and an open mind.

So, take the time to find the thing that excites you more than anything else in the world. Not the thing your parents want you to do. Or the thing that all your friends are doing. Or that society expects of you.

I know you're getting a lot of advice today. So let me leave you with mine:

Be open ... be impatient ... be hopeful.

If you can do that, history will remember the Class of 2020 not for what you lost, but for what you changed.

You have the chance to change everything. I am optimistic you will.

Thank you

## Glossary:

<b>Semiconductor</b>	:	a solid substance that allows heat or electricity to pass through it or along it in particular conditions
<b>Lady Gaga</b>	:	American Singer and Songwriter, Actress
<b>Queen Bey</b>	:	American Singer and Songwriter, Actress
<b>BTS</b>	:	Boy Band of South Korea
<b>9/11</b>	:	Refers to the terrorist attack on America's World Trade Center
<b>Prevail</b>	:	to win or be accepted, especially after a fight or discussion

## Comprehension

### I. Answer the following questions in about a page each:

1. Examine how Sundar Pichai uses personal anecdotes to strengthen the motivational tone of his speech.
2. Why does Sundar Pichai confidently tell graduates, "You will prevail"? What evidence does he provide from past generations, and how does it strengthen his message?
3. How did Sundar Pichai's experiences with limited access to technology influence his career?
4. "Be open, be impatient, be hopeful" – Explain the significance of this advice in the context of Sundar Pichai's speech.
5. Evaluate Sundar Pichai's views on generational progress and how each generation contributes to building a better future.

### Source link:

[\[ENGLISH SPEECH | SUNDAR PICHAI: You Will Prevail \(English Subtitles\) - YouTube\]](#)

## 4. I STILL MATTER

Patricia A Fleming

### Pre-Reading:

- What qualities do you think stay the same in a person, even as they age?
- Why might someone feel lonely or less valued as they get older?
- How do you think older people feel when others focus only on their appearance or age?
- Why is it important to value people for who they are on the inside, regardless of their age or appearance?

### About the Poet:



Patricia A. Fleming is a contemporary American poet known for her sincere and emotionally resonant verses that explore themes such as aging, inner strength, identity, and the enduring human spirit. She started writing at an early age and kept journals throughout her life, using writing as a way to reflect and connect with her inner self. After retiring in 2016, she began writing poetry more seriously and now writes nearly every day.

### About the Poem:

The poem “I Still Matter” is a heartfelt reflection on aging and the challenges that come with it. The speaker honestly describes the physical changes and difficulties they face, such as memory loss, tiredness, and a body that no longer feels strong. Despite these struggles, the poem emphasizes the enduring spirit within—the inner self that remains vibrant, loving, and full of life. The speaker expresses sadness over feeling different from her younger self but also finds strength in accepting her current state. The poem highlights important themes of self-worth, resilience, and the idea that true value lies not in outward appearance or abilities but in the enduring heart and soul. Ultimately, it is a powerful message about embracing life at every stage and recognizing the beauty and worth that persist beyond physical decline.

My looks are nothing special,  
My face reveals my age,  
My body shows some wear and tear,  
And my energy is not the same.  
Too often my memory fails me,  
And I lose things all the time.  
One minute I know what I plan to do,  
And the next it may just slip my mind.  
I try hard to avoid my mirror.

There are things I would rather not see,  
And even those times when I just catch a glimpse,  
I can no longer recognize me.  
The things I used to do with ease  
Can now cause aches and pains,  
And the quality of the things I do  
Will never be quite the same.  
I always compare my older self  
To those younger versions of me,  
And I know I'm wasting too much time  
Missing who I used to be.  
But the thing that really makes me sad  
Is despite what people see,  
Underneath my tattered, worn out shell,  
I'm still the same old me.  
My heart can still feel endless love,  
And at times it still can ache.  
My heart can fill with so much joy,  
And then it can suddenly break.  
My soul can still feel sympathy  
And longs for forgiveness and peace,  
And there are times its light shines boldly through,  
And times when it longs for release.  
It is true, maybe now that I'm older,

Feeling lonely may be status quo,  
But it also has made me more willing

To forgive and let past conflicts go.

So maybe to some I look ugly and old,  
A person who barely exists.  
I'm still quite aware of the beauty inside,  
And my value should not be dismissed.  
So, although not as strong and no beauty, it is true,  
I'm still here and want so much to live,  
And I know that there is no one in this world quite like me,  
And no one who has more to give.

### **Glossary:**

**Wear and tear** : The natural damage or weakening caused by age or use, showing physical decline.

**Slip my mind** : To forget something temporarily.

**Glimpse** : A brief or quick look, often catching only a partial view.

**Aches and pains** : Physical discomforts, usually mild but persistent reminders of aging.

**Tattered** : Torn, worn-out, or in poor condition, often used to describe old clothes or, metaphorically, the body.

**Shell** : The outer covering or body, symbolizing the physical self-separate from inner identity.

**Status quo** : The existing state or condition

**Dismissed** : Ignored or treated as unimportant.

### **Comprehension:**

#### **I. Answer the following questions in about a page each:**

1. Discuss how the poem "I Still Matter" challenges common stereotypes about aging. What messages does the poem convey about growing older?
2. Reflect on the theme of self-acceptance in the poem. How does the speaker come to terms with aging, and what valuable lessons can readers take from her attitude?

3. How does the contrast between the speaker's physical appearance and her inner self enhance the overall message of the poem?

**II. Answer the following questions in about two pages each:**

1. How does the speaker show her true self despite aging? How does this challenge stereotypes?
2. What does the poem say about feeling invisible? What does the speaker want others to see?
3. How do the speaker's feelings change from physical aging to self-worth? Give examples.

**Suggested Reading/Extended Activity**

- Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night by Dylan Thomas
- When I Am Old by William Butler Yeats
- Watch the Movie: How Old Are You? (2014, Malayalam), directed by Rosshan Andrews

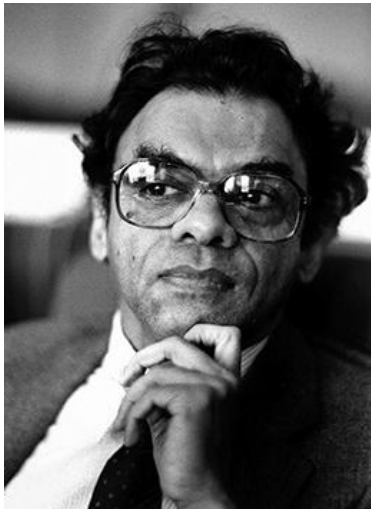
## 5. A RIVER

A K Ramanujan

### Pre-Reading:

- Have you ever seen a river during summer and during the rainy season? How does its appearance change with the seasons?
- Why do you think poets and writers often describe rivers in their works? What might rivers symbolize in literature?
- Do you think poets should write only about beautiful things, or should they also talk about pain and tragedy? Why?
- What are some common problems caused by floods in cities and villages? How do people usually respond to them?

### About the Poet:



A.K. Ramanujan (1929-1993) was a renowned Indian poet, translator, folklorist, and philologist, born in Mysore. He studied at the University of Mysore and Deccan College in Pune, and later earned a Ph.D. from Indiana University. Writing in both English and Kannada, Ramanujan's poetry is known for its modern style and themes that connect cultures across nations. As a scholar, he made important contributions to linguistics, folklore, and cultural studies. Some of his notable works include *A Flowering Tree and Other Oral Tales from India* (1997), *Folktales from India: A Selection of Oral Tales from Twenty-Two Languages* (1991), and *The Interior Landscape: Love Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology* (1967).

For much of his career, Ramanujan taught at the University of Chicago, where he helped build the South Asian studies programme. In 1976, the Indian government honoured him with the Padma Shri, the country's fourth-highest civilian award. He also received a MacArthur Fellowship. To recognize his impact, the South Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies awards the A.K. Ramanujan Book Prize for Translation in his name.

### About the Poem:

The poem "A River" was published in *The Striders*, A.K. Ramanujan's first book of poems. The poet's use of wit, irony, humour, and vivid imagery, along with the irregularity of form and absence of rhyme, is typical of his distinctive style. In this poem, Ramanujan reflects on

the Vaigai River, which flows through Madurai, the ancient cultural centre known as the "city of temples and poets." While traditional poets glorified the city and sang only of the river in flood, Ramanujan draws attention to its two contrasting faces: in summer, the river dries to a trickle, exposing debris and neglect, whereas during the rains, the full force of Vaigai is unleashed within the very first half hour, causing devastation. Through stark and ironic imagery, the poet critiques the callous indifference of both the public and poets who ignore the real human suffering—such as the loss of a pregnant woman and village homes—caused by the flood. The poem ultimately questions the role of poetry and the selective memory of tradition, urging that literature should reflect not only beauty and grandeur but also truth and tragedy.

In Madurai,  
city of temples and poets,  
who sang of cities and temples,  
  
every summer  
a river dries to a trickle  
in the sand,  
baring the sand ribs,  
straw and women's hair  
clogging the watergates  
at the rusty bars  
under the bridges with patches  
of repair all over them  
the wet stones glistening like sleepy  
crocodiles, the dry ones  
shaven water-buffaloes lounging in the sun.

The poets only sang of the floods.

He was there for a day  
when they had the floods.  
People everywhere talked  
of the inches rising,



of the precise number of cobbled steps  
run over by the water, rising  
on the bathing places,  
and the way it carried off three village houses,  
one pregnant woman  
and a couple of cows  
named Gopi and Brinda as usual.

The new poets still quoted  
the old poets, but no one spoke  
in verse  
of the pregnant woman  
drowned, with perhaps twins in her,  
kicking at blank walls  
even before birth.

He said:  
the river has water enough  
to be poetic  
about only once a year  
and then  
it carries away  
in the first half-hour  
three village houses,  
a couple of cows  
named Gopi and Brinda  
and one pregnant woman  
expecting identical twins  
with no moles on their bodies,  
with different coloured diapers  
to tell them apart.

## Glossary:

- Madurai** : one of the largest cities in Tamil Nadu; located on the banks of River Vaigai
- Trickle** : a very small flow of water; suggests the river nearly drying up.
- sand-ribs** : columns of dry sand on the river bank, left exposed by receding waters.
- Water gates** : a floodgate; a gate opening onto water, or mainly accessible by water.
- cobbled** : paved with cobblestones (rectangular paving stones with curved top)

## Comprehension:

### I. Answer the following questions in about a page each:

1. Analyse the significance of the river Vaigai as both a physical and symbolic presence in the poem.
2. Why does the poet criticize both the old and the new poets in the poem "A River"?
3. What human tragedy is described in the poem, and why is it significant?
4. Discuss how the poem reflects the indifference of society towards natural disasters.

### II. Answer the following questions in about two pages each:

1. Discuss the theme of the poem bringing out the irony intended by the poet.
2. Comment on the style and various literary devices used by the poet in the poem.
3. What is Ramanujan's attitude towards the poets of the city? Justify your answer with evidence from the text.

## Suggested Reading:

- *Flood* by Arun Kolatkar
- *A River's Story* by Ruskin Bond
- *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh

**SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT**  
**QUESTION PAPER PATTERN**  
**B.C.A. AND OTHER PROGRAMMES UNDER FACULTY OF COMPUTER**  
**APPLICATIONS**  
**III SEMESTER**  
**GENERAL ENGLISH**

Time: 3 hours

Max. Marks: 80

**Instruction:** *Read the instructions*  
*Answer all the questions*

**UNIT – I**  
**LITERARY SKILLS**  
**(Play)**

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| I. Answer in a page. (Two questions out of Three)         | 2x5=10  |
| II. Answer in about 2 – 3 pages (One question out of Two) | 1x10=10 |

**(Short Story, Speech and Poems)**

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| III. Answer in a page. (Four questions out of Five) | 4x5=20 |
|---|--------|
- (Answer from all the three literary texts)

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**MODEL QUESTION PAPER**  
**B.C.A. AND OTHER PROGRAMMES UNDER FACULTY OF COMPUTER**  
**APPLICATIONS**  
**ALCHEMY**  
**III SEMESTER**  
**GENERAL ENGLISH**

Time : 3 hours

Max. Marks: 80

**Instruction** :        *Read the instructions*  
                              *Answer all the questions*

**UNIT – I**  
**LITERARY SKILLS**  
**(Play)**

**I. Answer in a page. (Two questions out of Three)** **2x5=10**

1. What does Lopakhin represent in the play *The Cherry Orchard*?
2. How does Chekov use symbolism in the play?
3. What role does Varya play in *The Cherry Orchard*?

**II. Answer in about 2 – 3 pages (One question out of Two)** **1x10=10**

1. Compare and contrast the character of Madame Ranevsky and Lopakhin in the play *The Cherry Orchard*.
2. My Orchard! \_ my sweet, beautiful orchard! My life, my youth, my happiness, good-bye! – Explain briefly on the statement.

**(Short Story, Speech and Poems)**

**III. Answer any Four questions out of Five** **4x5=20**  
*(Answer from all the three literary texts)*

1. Analyze the character of Lieutenant Blandford in the story, *Appointment with Love*.
2. What is the central message in Sundar Pichai's speech?
3. What is the twist at the end of the story *Appointment with Love*?
4. What does the river symbolise in the poem?
5. How does the poet portray the theme of self-worth and resilience in the poem, *I Still Matter* - Elaborate

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