**Author: Anton Chekhov**

(1860-1904)

Title: THE CHERRY ORCHARD

Year: 1904

Genre: A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

Big Idea: Disillusionment and Darker Visions

“Every time I see a play by Chekhov, I want to

chuck all my own stuff into the fire.”

Bernard Shaw

CHARACTERS

LUBOV ANDREYEVNA RANEVSKY, a landowner - Lena Alenkina

ANYA, her daughter, aged seventeen - Nastya Tretiak

ERMOLAI ALEXEYEVITCH LOPAKHIN, a merchant - Ivan Tkatch

PETER SERGEYEVITCH TROFIMOV, a student - Sergey Trofimov

DUNYASHA, a maidservant - Daria Golub

A TRAMP - Slava Kurchyak

**ACT ONE**

**Slide1. A room with a window into the garden.**

**Sound : train**

The action takes place on Mme. RANEVSKY’S estate [A room which is still called the nursery. One of the doors leads into ANYA’S room. 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 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.... 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, 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 in my soul.

[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.

LOPAKHIN. And you’ll bring me some kvass.

DUNYASHA. Very well. [Exit.]

[DUNYASHA comes in and brings LOPAKHIN some kvass]

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!

**Sound** : Two carriages are heard driving up to the house.

LOPAKHIN and DUNYASHA quickly go out. **The stage is empty.**

**Enter** LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, ANYA.

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

LUBOV. [Joyfully, through her tears] The nursery!

ANYA. 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, you beautiful room.... I used to sleep here when I was a baby. [Weeps] And here I am like a little girl again. [Kisses ANYA]

And I knew Dunyasha. [Kisses her.]

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]

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.

ANYA. Dunyasha, some coffee, quick.

DUNYASHA. This minute. [Exit.]

ANYA. I did have an awful time, I tell you. Oh God, oh God...

O God...

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

[DUNYASHA has already returned with the coffee-pot and is making the coffee]

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, That would be splendid!

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

DUNYASHA. It must be about three. Time you went to sleep, darling.

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]

Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA, LOPAKHIN

LUBOV. Let me remember now.

LOPAKHIN. Yes, time does go.

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 goes out, shutting the door behind her.]

LUBOV. She’s awfully tired.

[Laughs] You’re just the same as ever, DUNYASHA. [Draws her close and kisses her] I’ll have some coffee now, then we’ll all go.

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; Still, I must have my coffee. Thank you.

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.

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!

LUBOV. I don’t understand you at all, Ermolai Alexeyevitch.

LOPAKHIN. You will get twenty-five roubles a year for each dessiatin. 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, nobody buys any.

[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.

[Looks at his watch] It’s time I went. We shall see each other in three weeks. [Kisses LUBOV ANDREYEVNA’S hand] Now, good-bye. It’s time to go.

[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.

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. [Laughs from joy] It’s all, all white! Oh, my orchard!

[Enter TROFIMOV in a worn student uniform and spectacles]

What a marvellous garden! White 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.]

It’s Peter Trofimov? 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 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.

**ACT TWO**

**Slide2. A bench in the garden,** old tombstones, and an old garden seat. It is close on sunset.

[Exit. Enter LUBOV ANDREYEVNA and LOPAKHIN.]

LOPAKHIN. You must make up your mind definitely, there’s no time to waste. Are you willing to let the land for villas or no? Just one word, yes or no? Just one word! Give me the answer!

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.

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. You must excuse my saying so, but I’ve never met such frivolous people as you before, or anybody so unbusinesslike. 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. Understand it!

LUBOV. Villas and villa residents, it’s so vulgar, excuse me.

LOPAKHIN. I can’t stand it! You’re too much for me! [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

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 tried to poison myself.... It was so silly, so shameful.... [Wipes her tears] Lord, Lord be merciful to me, forgive me my sins! Punish me no more!

LOPAKHIN.. 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!

[Enter TROFIMOV, ANYA, and DUNYASHA.]

LUBOV. [Tenderly] Come, come, my dears.... [Embracing ANYA and DUNYASHA ] 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. [All laugh.]

ANYA. Better tell us something about the planets, Peter.

LUBOV ANDREYEVNA. No, let’s go on with yesterday’s talk!

TROFIMOV. About what? Yesterday we talked for a long time but we didn’t come to anything in the end. We must stop admiring one another. We must work, nothing more.

LUBOV. How clever of you, Peter!

LOPAKHIN. [Ironically] Oh, awfully!

TROFIMOV. The human race progresses, perfecting its powers. We must work, we must help those who seek to know. Meanwhile in Russia only a very few of us work. The vast majority of those intellectuals 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. I don’t like serious conversations.

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.

[They all sit thoughtfully. It is quiet. 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.

TROFIMOV. Or an owl.

LUBOV. [Shudders] It’s unpleasant, somehow. [A pause.] Before the misfortune the same thing happened. An owl screamed and the samovar hummed without stopping.

TROFIMOV. Someone’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?

ANYA. 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... [To ANYA.] Mademoiselle, please give a hungry Russian thirty copecks....

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.]

ANYA. [Frightened] 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.

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.]

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 marvelous places in it. [Pause]

ANYA. [Thoughtful] The moon is rising.

[DUNYASHA is looking for ANYA and calling,“Anya, where are you?”]

THE VOICE OF DUNYASHA. Anya! Where are you?

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

TROFIMOV Let’s go. [They go out.]

THE VOICE OF DUNYASHA. Anya! Anya!

Curtain.

**ACT THREE**

[A reception-room cut off from a drawing-room by an arch. Chandelier lighted. A Jewish band is heard playing in another room. Evening. LUBOV ANDREYEVNA is siting with a book. ]

[Enter ANYA with TROFIMOV.]

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.]

LUBOV. I’ll die of this.

[LOPAKHIN enters.]

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.

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

LUBOV. Is the cherry orchard sold?

LOPAKHIN. It is sold.

LUBOV. Who bought it? [Rising up].

LOPAKHIN. I bought it.

[LUBOV ANDREYEVNA is overwhelmed; she would fall if she were not standing by an armchair.]

LOPAKHIN. I bought it! Wait, ladies and gentlemen, please, my head’s going round, I can’t talk.... [Laughs] 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.... [Hears the band tuning up]

[The band plays. LUBOV ANDREYEVNA sinks into a chair and weeps bitterly.

LOPAKHIN continues reproachfully]

-My poor, dear woman, you can’t go back now.

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**

**Slide 4. Autumn. Yellow garden. Sunny.**

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, you must go off to the station in twenty minutes. Hurry up.

The stage is empty.

**The sounds:** 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.

Curtain.