

Dried Cherries: A Sequel to The Cherry Orchard  
A Full-Length Play

**Character Breakdown:**

**LYUBOV:** Fifties; Lady and Owner of the Estate; Beautiful but unable to let go of HER aristocratic past

**LOPAKHIN:** Late thirties; former serf; now a member of the wealthy middle class; purchases the Estate and cherry orchard; engaged to Varya

**VARYA:** Mid twenties; adopted daughter of Lyubov; hard-working and responsible; engaged to Lopakhin

**FIRS:** Elderly Butler of the estate; accidentally abandoned after the Estate and cherry orchard are sold

**FESTE:** Early to late fifties; The witty Court jester in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*; He is hired to cut down the cherry orchard by Lopakhin; He discovers Firs in the abandoned estate

**PIGEON:** Early to late fifties; The dim-witted clown who is frequently written out of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*; He is hired to cut down the cherry orchard by Lopakhin; He discovers Firs in the abandoned estate.

**Setting:**

The Estate and Cherry Orchard once owned by the wealthy and beautiful Lyubov. The plot begins where Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* ends. Because of the unusual nature of the play, different countries/cities are represented (namely, Russia, Illyria, Rome)

\*After the arrival of LYUBOV, the set must become more claustrophobic and restricting to convey a sense of entrapment

*Dried Cherries* picks up where Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* ends. Lopakhin, the former house servant turned wealthy banker, purchases the Russian Estate and cherry orchard where he was raised. He haughtily throws his former family out of their lifetime home. When Feste and Pigeon, two clowns hired to chop the orchard, find that elderly butler, Firs, was abandoned, they must make an emotional decision regarding Firs' wish to die. More commotion arises when the previous owner of the Estate, Lyubov, returns to fight for what is rightfully hers. Lopakhin gives into Lyubov's wishes at the expense of his angry fiancé, Varya (Lyubov's adopted daughter), who fears her mother will eventually take Lopakhin away from her. *Dried Cherries*, in a more modern and contemporary context, examines how Classicism, if taken too far, can chip away at a society.

Scene 1:

*It is October. A key is heard locking the door to the estate, then the carriages are heard leaving. It becomes quiet. In the silence, the dull sound of the axe cutting the cherry orchard is heard, sounding lonely and sad. Footsteps are heard; FIRS appears at the door to the right. HE is dressed, as always, in a jacket and white waistcoat. On HIS feet HE wears slippers. HE is sick.*

FIRS

*(tries the doorknob)* Locked. They left.... *(Sits on the divan)* Forgot about me...It's nothing...I'll sit here awhile...I'll bet Anya didn't put on the fur coat, but went out in the cloth coat... And I didn't see to it. Young and great! Life has passed by as if it were never lived...*(Lies down)* I'll lie down awhile... You don't have your strength now, do you? Nothing's left, nothing...Ah you...Nincompoop!....*(Lies still)*

*A distant sound is heard, as if coming from the sky – the sound of a snapping string, dying away, sad. The silence descends and FIRS drifts off to sleep. Behind HIM, lights shine on two singing clowns in a nearby cherry orchard.*

FESTE

My guitar string snapped right off! *(tries to fix it)* What'll I do without my guitar? My music and my witty repartee are my bread and butter.

*Struggles to fix guitar*

Pigeon? Pigeon? Do you hear me?

*The other clown, PIGEON, attempts to pick up HIS axe, but it is far too heavy. HE attempts to lift it, and then succumbs to its heaviness.*

PIGEON

I heard you loud and clear, Feste. But, I cannot seem to lift this enormous axe. It's heavy and I am obviously too weak. See?

*Tries to lift axe, but falls  
FESTE chuckles*

PIGEON

Stop laughing at me, Fool!

FESTE

I'm sorry. You keep doing the same thing, and fail each and every time. I don't mean to make fun, but it's very comedic.

PIGEON

Ha. Ha. The joke's on me. The joke is *always* on me. I've had enough. I am going to take a short nap.

*PIGEON lies down on the ground*

FESTE

No, Pigeon. We were hired by Yermoldy Lopakhin to chop this entire cherry orchard down as swiftly as possible.

PIGEON

Yermoldy? As in, "you're moldy?" (*laughs hysterically at HIS own joke*)

FESTE

Enough, you simpleton.

FIRS

(*Disoriented, HE begins to awaken*) My family? Is that my family? They haven't forgotten about me, after all. Are they returning? Perhaps Lyubov has decided not to travel to Paris? Maybe Anya will finish school when things are more settled? But, why do they sound so *happy*? They were sobbing before they left.

FESTE

Do you hear that, Pigeon?

FIRS

Why does no one answer me? Idiots. This estate will soon be sold at an auction and they forgot all about me.

PIGEON

(*points to estate*) There's somebody in there.

FESTE

That's impossible. Yermoldy Lopakhin said the estate was empty, and that the entire cherry orchard needs to be chopped down.

FIRS

I'm here. I am in *here*. You thought I was at the hospital, but I've been here the whole time, you fools! (*begins to cough*)

PIGEON

There is *definitely* someone in that estate.

FIRS

Have you decided against Paris? Are you returning? I never truly lived.

FESTE

He sounds old and sick. Do you hear how he coughs?

PIGEON

I heard him say something about a hospital. What if it's a *mental* hospital?

FESTE

Who cares if it is?

PIGEON

He could be dangerous.

FESTE

He sounds ancient. He wouldn't have the strength to do us harm.

PIGEON

How do we really know he's ancient? He could be a young man pretending to be an old man so he can lure us into the estate and KILL us.

FESTE

That's preposterous.

PIGEON

It happens all the time in Rome. I don't quite know where you're from, but I am Roman clown.

FESTE

Take it easy, Gladiator. Do you *really* feel like chopping down 2,500 acres worth of trees?

PIGEON

2,500 acres? That's ludicrous.

FESTE

Precisely. Let *Yermoldy* chop down his *own* cherry orchard. I say, "You bought it, you chop it."

PIGEON

I agree wholeheartedly. Let's go.

*THEY run to the estate and knock on the door.*

FIRS

*(shuffles slowly to the door)* Is that you, Lyubov? Oh, my lady has come back again. Hold on. Hold on. I can only move so quickly.

*Another knock*

I said hold on. I am ancient and ill. *(opens the door to find FESTE and PIGEON)* Who in God's name are you?

FESTE

My name is Feste.

FIRS

*(looks at FESTE'S jester garb)* Feste? Are you a clown?

FESTE

A Fool, actually. I was a Court Jester for a Countess. My friend and I were hired by Lopakhin to chop down your cherry orchard.

FIRS

*(looks at Pigeon)* And, what's your name?

PIGEON

My name is Pigeon, Sir.

FIRS

Who would name their baby *Pigeon*?

PIGEON

I was once a messenger for an Emperor named Saturninus in Rome. I was a messenger for the Court. I delivered messages ... and pigeons.

*FIRS laughs*

FIRS

Ah, come in. My name is Firs. I am a long-time servant for this estate. The estate was sold, and my family left me behind. I thought you were my Lady and her daughter. But, instead you are two clowns. Shit.

FESTE

Allow me to bring you some cheer. As you know, my name is Feste. I am basically a walking, talking, living, breathing festival.

FIRS

No music. No festival. My life is over. Just let me lie down over there and croak. *(points to divan)*

FESTE

You may lie down. But, I'm not sure I'll allow you to croak.

FIRS

What were you and Pigeon doing in the cherry orchard?

FESTE

A man named Lopakhin hired us to chop down the *entire* cherry orchard. As in all 2,500 acres.

PIGEON

2,500 acres of cherry trees!

FIRS

That abhorrent Lopakhin. What is this? A tree-chopping extravaganza? Not only did he hire you to chop 2,500 acres worth of trees, but he shattered the heart of Lyubov. She lacked the proper management skills that left her nearly bankrupt. I waited on them hand and foot since I was a boy/

PIGEON

Hold on a second. This family had *peasants*? They still owned *peasants*?

FIRS

You say that as if it were something terrible.

PIGEON

Did you actually enjoy being a servant?

FIRS

Of course I did. I was their senior valet. I lived a life of comfort ... of security. Then that unreasonable Emperor Czar What's-His-Name ... went and *changed* everything around. We didn't ask for The Emancipation Manifesto.

PIGEON

Why wouldn't you want to be emancipated?

FIRS

When they set us free, I was already senior valet. But, I didn't agree to freedom, and I stayed with the masters. I remember everyone was glad for some reason ... other serfs ...but, *why* they were glad, I will never understand.

PIGEON

So, you stayed?

FIRS

Yes. Along with the other serfs including Lopakhin. He is the son and grandson of peasants. He actually was a former peasant himself. But, after the Emancipation Manifesto rubbish, he worked his way up and became a wealthy banker.

FESTE

But, why was it so important for him to buy the estate and chop down this glorious cherry orchard?

FIRS

He saved my Lady and her family from financial ruin by purchasing the estate at the auction. However, he plans on making summer cottages once the orchard and estate are destroyed. Lopakhin wants to rent the cottages to make even more money.

PIGEON

But, where will you go once the cottages are built and the estate destroyed?

FIRS

I'm staying right where I am.

PIGEON

But, you can't. Your home will be demolished.

FIRS

I'm not going anywhere. *This* is my home. *This* is my world. Right here. Just like Lyubov once said, "without the cherry orchard my life has no meaning."

PIGEON

You mean to tell me that you are soon to be *homeless*? Do you have anywhere to go – anywhere at all? our life does not have to end just because the world around you is changing.

FIRS

I just want to die. There will be nothing left.

PIGEON

We can't just leave you to die. Isn't that right, Feste?

FIRS

Please won't you go to the kitchen cupboard and retrieve a small glass bottle with liquid inside?

PIGEON

I don't like where this could be leading ...

FESTE

Let's honor the man's request. You stay with Firs, and I'll obtain the bottle.

PIGEON

I have a strange feeling about this, Feste ...

FESTE

Try to relax.

FIRS

Listen to the clown, Pigeon.

*FESTE exits and comes back with the bottle and hands it to FIRS*

FESTE

What's in this bottle?

FIRS

Just a little Arsenic. It's sold fairly openly because it helps to kill flies and weeds.

PIGEON

Arsenic. No. Everyone knows that it is the "poisoner of Kings."

FIRS

And, hopefully, the poisoner of Firs. With your assistance, that is.

PIGEON

*(takes bottle from FIRS)* Don't you dare! Feste. Say something. We can't assist in Firs' death.

*THEY both walk a few feet away*

FESTE

It appears Firs had a full and happy life as a serf. He is old, sickly, and this estate is about to be destroyed. He has nowhere to go, and even if he did, it's doubtful he would survive the trip.

PIGEON

You can't be suggesting ...

FESTE

Let him die with dignity, and on his own terms. Let him die in the comfort of his own home.

PIGEON

But, wouldn't that make us murderers? Criminals? What if we were caught? What if Lopakhin arrives?

FESTE

We're not criminals. I think we would be providing Firs the peaceful death he so wants and deserves.

PIGEON

Death is death. And, we will be the ones who cause death. I *don't* like this idea one bit.

FESTE

We could give him the Arsenic *slowly*. Maybe put a few drops in his tea? We could dim the lights and play music. It could be a sacred experience.

PIGEON

I am very uncomfortable with this ...

FIRS

I lived my life. My family abandoned me. My beloved home will soon be history ...

PIGEON

Do you have other family members?

FIRS

No.

PIGEON

Friends?

FIRS

How many opportunities do you think a live-in butler has to make friends?

PIGEON

I don't know. I've never been a live-in butler.

FIRS

You only socialize with the people you serve.

PIGEON

Are there any neighbors who could take care of you?

FIRS

I live in an estate on 2,500 acres of land. What neighbors? I am alone.

PIGEON

Feste. Perhaps we can take care of him?

FIRS

All my life, I've taken care of others. I simply don't want anyone to take care of me.

PIGEON

I don't know about Feste, but I'd be happy to be your care-taker.

FIRS

You're very kind. But, I'd only be a burden to you. I want to go peacefully.

FESTE

I think it's the proper thing to do. Firs is practically begging us.

*PIGEON paces*

FESTE

Look at the poor man. He needs help.

PIGEON

(*to FIRS*) Are you sure about this? This is a very big decision. Is there any chance Lopakhin will walk through that door?

FIRS

Ha! No chance whatsoever. That man is nothing but a coward. He wanted to propose to Lyubov's adopted daughter, Varya. But, he never worked up the nerve. He had every opportunity to propose marriage, but he was too spineless. Varya is now a housekeeper to another family. He's never coming back.

FESTE

Would you like the mercy death to begin this evening?

FIRS

You would really do this for me?

FESTE

We'll be sure to keep you comfortable, and we will not leave your side.

PIGEON

But, if you need some time to think this over, just say the word /

FIRS

Bless you, Feste and Pigeon. This is absolutely what I want.

*Blackout*

Scene 2:

*FIRS is lying down on the divan under many blankets. FESTE sits on a nearby chair and quietly plays the tabor. Candles are aglow on the end tables. PIGEON brings FIRS a cup of tea.*

PIGEON

Here you go. A nice cup of Earl Gray tea.

FIRS

Does it have the “potion” in it?

PIGEON

Yes.

FIRS

Good. I’ll take a few sips and lie down.

*When FIRS is finished with his tea, he hands it to PIGEON who places it on the end table. FESTE plays soft music on HIS tabor.*

Thank you, Pigeon. I think I’ll close my eyes.

*FIRS coughs and quietly mumbles something incoherent  
FESTE and PIGEON sit up to see if FIRS is still alive. HE starts quietly snoring, so  
THEY relax in their chairs*

PIGEON

How can you remain so calm, Feste? Is he going to suffer?

FESTE

I highly doubt it. Especially if we administer the Arsenic slowly and watch him carefully.

PIGEON

But what if he suffers and he needs a hospital? They’ll say we’ve poisoned him.

FESTE

Please, try to remain calm.

PIGEON

What are we to do while he naps? Just sit and stare at him?

FESTE

*(picks up a book of The Sonnets of William Shakespeare)* I plan on reading.

PIGEON

I don't know how to read, Feste. And, how can you concentrate on reading at a time like this?

FESTE

We are honoring his wishes.

FIRS

*(coughs and has a small hallucination)* The cherry orchard is sold, it's gone, that's true, true, true, but don't cry, mama, your life remains ahead of you.

PIGEON

What should we do? He's obviously upset and recalling a distressing memory.

FESTE

Perhaps offer him some more tea with the "potion" in it?

PIGEON

Maybe the potion is causing him to hallucinate. *(to FIRS)* Try not to fret, Firs. It was just a bad dream.

FESTE

We are right here beside you. Please try to get a little more shuteye.

PIGEON

Is the Arsenic harming him?

FESTE

I doubt it. The poor thing probably has dementia or some other awful ailment of the mind.

*FESTE picks up his book and browses it to find a sonnet to read*

*(leafs through pages)* Would it help if I read a sonnet to you?

FIRS

*(a more severe cough)* And they used to sell cartloads of dried cherries to Moscow, and Kharkov. There was money then! And the dried cherries were so soft, juicy, sweet, fragrant ... They knew the way to do it.

FESTE

Poor, pitiful man. He's dreaming of bygone days.

*Pause*

FIRS

Clowns?

FESTE and PIGEON

Yes?

FIRS

When you were beginning to chop the cherry orchard ...

FESTE

Yes?

FIRS

Were the blossoms still in bloom?

FESTE

Yes, as a matter of fact they were. But, I found it peculiar for them to be blooming in October.

FIRS

Could you go to the orchard and pick some of the cherry blossoms and place them in vases?

PIGEON

I don't see why not. But, it's starting to get dark.

FESTE

You'd better hurry, then. He probably wants to see those cherry blossoms one last time.

*FIRS nestles under his covers while PIGEON exits.*

FIRS

Could I have one more sip of tea?

FESTE

Of course.

FIRS

Thank you.

*FIRS nods off to sleep. FESTE quietly begins playing his tabor. Soon after, PIGEON arrives with cherry blossoms. HE slowly puts them in vases, and sets them atop the end tables surrounding FIRS*

FESTE

Open your eyes, Firs.

FIRS

And the dried cherries were so soft, juicy, sweet, fragrant ...

PIGEON

Here they are.

*FIRS takes in the scent, looks at them admiringly, then cries softly*

FESTE

The orchard is intact. No one cut it. The cherry orchard surrounds you.

FIRS

*(lies down again. HIS face appears slightly jaundiced)* The cherry orchard surrounds me ... *(very quietly)* The cherry orchard surrounds me. No one cut it. The cherry orchard surrounds me.

*FIRS dies peacefully. BLACKOUT.*

Scene 3:

*It is the next morning. The estate is cold and very drafty. FIRS is still on the divan, while FESTE and PIGEON are sleeping on the lounge chairs next to HIM.*

PIGEON

I'm freezing in here.

FESTE

I know. I can't seem to stop shivering.

*FESTE and PIGEON both look at FIRS*

PIGEON

Should I offer him another blanket?

FESTE

I don't think that's necessary given the circumstances.

PIGEON

It just seems the right thing to do. *(PIGEON drapes his blanket over FIRS very gently)*  
Do you still think we did the right thing?

FESTE

I do. Firs was safe and contented.

PIGEON

He seemed to die so serenely.

FESTE

Firs lived and died on his *own* terms. Personally, I feel that is something to be commended.

PIGEON

But, what should we do with the body?

FESTE

He would want to be buried in the cherry orchard.

*PIGEON nods HIS head "Yes." HE walks to the windows and peers outside.*

Feste! Feste! Come here. You won't believe this.

FESTE

*(runs to the window)* Believe what?

PIGEON

Snow. *Heavy* snow. We are *covered* in snow.

FESTE

It was so *warm* yesterday and last night. And now, *snow*?

PIGEON

It's so strange.

FESTE

And, yet, so picturesque.

PIGEON

But, we can't bury Firs in all this snow. The blossoms have fallen off the trees. Icicles are now hanging from the drooping branches.

FESTE

An absolute phenomenon.

PIGEON

What do you mean?

FESTE

Firs died and took the cherry orchard with him.

PIGEON

An era is over. *(pause)* I'll make us a pot of hot coffee.

*FESTE and PIGEON continue to look around the living room and out the window.*

FESTE

That would be nice, Pigeon. Although, the estate seems much warmer now.

PIGEON

It does seem warmer. I'll make us one anyway.

*PIGEON exits while FESTE hums and walks around, exploring the estate.*

PIGEON

A cup for you. (*hands cup to FESTE*) And, a cup for me.

*THEY awkwardly drink THEIR coffee*

FESTE

We need to return the Arsenic to where you found it.

*Finds Arsenic and hands it to PIGEON*

PIGEON

Absolutely! A smart idea! (*exits with Arsenic*)

FESTE

We really ought to dump the remains of ... dump the remains ... of Firs' teacup. Let's give it a good *scrub*, I mean *wash*. I'm not frightened or anything. I just want to take some extra precautions.

*FESTE exits with the teacup*

PIGEON

Good thinking.

*THEY slowly return to the living room, not quite sure what to do next.*

Feste?

FESTE

Yes?

PIGEON

I know you said we have nothing to worry about ...

FESTE

Yes?

PIGEON

And, I am probably overreacting ...

FESTE

Just tell me what's on your mind, Pigeon.

PIGEON

... just in case *anyone* comes back here ...

FESTE

Oh, spill it, Pigeon!

PIGEON

I think we need to wipe the bottle of Arsenic. Our fingerprints are on the bottle of Arsenic.

FESTE

Yes. Wipe down the bottle of Arsenic as thoroughly as possible ...

*PIGEON Exits to kitchen*

It's so ... *empty*. No curtains. No works of art. Sparse furniture. At least they left the divan and the two lounge chairs.

PIGEON

I feel as if this family and their servants are still here.

FESTE

Stop talking nonsense. I think he's staying in Kharkov. He's going to make summer estates.

PIGEON

I may not possess your mind and wit. But, I'm somewhat intuitive. I sense things.

FESTE

Now you're beginning to startle me.

PIGEON

Well, it's fairly strange they left some furniture. But ... but ... why did they leave *him*?

FESTE

I have been trying to figure that out, too. Who leaves an elderly and infirmed man behind? It's inhumane.

PIGEON

It's cruel.

FESTE

Firs was in no position to take care of himself.

PIGEON

Maybe we could have found a live-in governess?

FESTE

But, Firs didn't want that.

PIGEON

He didn't even want *us* to look after him.

FESTE

Also, the estate no longer belonged to him. It's going to be destroyed soon anyway.

PIGEON

You're probably right. Poor Firs.

FESTE

Poor departed soul.

*Awkward pause*

PIGEON

I don't like being alone with a dead man.

FESTE

You're hardly alone.

PIGEON

And, I'm so grateful for your company. But, don't you find it eerie for us to be alone with a dead man in an abandoned estate?

FESTE

Not at all.

PIGEON

Really?

FESTE

It doesn't bother me in the least.

PIGEON

Why?!?

FESTE

Life cannot exist without death. Why be afraid of the inevitable?

PIGEON

But, isn't it strange to see him lying there ... dead?

FESTE

It's not strange. It's transcendent. Firs has gone to the great cherry orchard in the sky!

PIGEON

But, you don't know that for a fact.

FESTE

It's just what I believe.

*The wind from outside causes the window panes to shake*

PIGEON

It's Firs.

FESTE

What are you talking about?

PIGEON

... the windows ...

*Another wind gust causes the window panes to shake*

*(whispers)* He can hear us.

FESTE

It's just the wind, Pigeon.

PIGEON

Maybe he's haunting us.

FESTE

Why would he do that? We honored his final request.

PIGEON

Maybe he changed his mind ...

FESTE

You can't change your mind about things after you've died!

PIGEON  
How can you be so sure?

FESTE  
Because you're DEAD.

*THEY stare at FIRS. Awkward pause.*  
Pigeon. You need a nap.

PIGEON  
Yes. A nap might calm my nerves.

FESTE  
Grab some pillows and blankets and we'll nap upstairs so you don't get frightened again.

PIGEON  
Can you?

FESTE  
Fine. *(grabs pillows and blankets)*

PIGEON  
Goodnight, Feste.

PIGEON and FESTE  
*(offstage)* Goodnight, Firs.

*BLACKOUT.*

#### Scene 4

*VARYA and LOPAKHIN arrive back at the estate.*

LOPAKHIN  
Cherry blossoms?

VARYA  
Oh, my God. Do you think Firs brought them in?

LOPAKHIN  
He was far too frail for that. Maybe the people I hired to chop down the cherry orchard brought them in?

VARYA  
But, *why?* That's an odd thing to do. Especially with all this snow . . .

LOPAKHIN

What's on the divan, Varya? It seems like a body of a person is...is...underneath that blanket ...

VARYA

I feel faint. I feel sick.

*THEY slowly approach the divan*

LOPAKHIN

Do you think it is?

VARYA

Yes. I think there's a good possibility.

LOPAKHIN

*(stops in HIS tracks)* Varya. Remove the blanket, please.

VARYA

I can't. I'm frightened.

LOPAKHIN

You're right. I am the man of the estate now. I am in charge. I'll do it.

VARYA

I can't look.

LOPAKHIN

*(removes the blanket and sees FIRS)* No. No. No. No. No. No. No ...

VARYA

*(runs to FIRS)* Perhaps he's sleeping? Maybe he's sleeping?

LOPAKHIN

*(touches FIRS cold and lifeless hand)* He's gone. He's dead.

VARYA

Poor Firs. *(kisses FIRS' forehead)*

LOPAKHIN

We abandoned him.

VARYA

My premonition was true.

LOPAKHIN

What have I done?

VARYA

*(gently covers FIRS with blanket)* Goodnight, old man.

LOPAKHIN

*(remembering)* Now the cherry orchard is mine. Mine! *(in tears)* I was such a braggart.

VARYA

We must try to forgive ourselves. It's not like we left him intentionally. . .

LOPAKHIN

I killed him . . . an innocent old man . . .

VARYA

*Stop /*

LOPAKHIN

Firs was an intricate part of this family for at least forty years.

VARYA

But, we *all* left him.

LOPAKHIN

But, *I* purchased this estate and orchard out of pure and unbridled arrogance.

VARYA

But, you saved the family from financial ruin.

LOPAKHIN

Then, I kicked them out of their home and made plans to build summer cottages. Who am I?

VARYA

You are my fiancé. We shared a train. You *finally* proposed to me. . .

LOPAKHIN

I don't deserve you.

VARYA

Stop talking nonsense. I have just as much sorrow and remorse as you. But we'll get through this.

LOPAKHIN

It's the all-encompassing shame.

VARYA

We are starting a life. *Together*. You promised.

LOPAKHIN

I know.

VARYA

Yes, we did a terrible, terrible thing, but it was a mistake.

LOPAKHIN

A mistake that cost a man his life.

VARYA

You did not cost a man his life. Everybody was so frantic and anxious before we departed. It was utter chaos.

LOPAKHIN

Still ...

VARYA

Unfortunately, we forgot about Firs in the midst of all the madness. Once we realized our mistake on the train, it was too late to come back.

LOPAKHIN

Even if we wanted to return, we couldn't.

VARYA

No one was expecting a blizzard in October!

*THEY embrace*

I feel badly, too.

LOPAKHIN

*(hears stirring from upstairs)* What was that noise?

VARYA

Who's there?

*VARYA holds onto LOPAKHIN, perplexed and frightened. FESTE and PIGEON saunter down the stairs*

PIGEON

You must be Lopakhin.

LOPAKHIN

Yes ... I am Lopakhin. How did you know my name?

PIGEON

I heard her call you Lopakhin from upstairs ...

LOPAKHIN

Who are you, and what are you doing here?

PIGEON

My name is Pigeon, Sir.

FESTE

I'm Feste. Pleased to meet you. You hired us to chop down the cherry orchard.

VARYA

But, you are clowns. (*to LOPAKHIN*) Why would you hire clowns, dear?

LOPAKHIN

Well, they were looking for work. They responded quickly to an ad I placed in the newspaper. But, yes. I was hardly expecting two clowns.

PIGEON

Oh, we're not just your everyday, run-of-the-mill clowns. I am often referred to as "clown" or "fool" in *Titus Andronicus*.

LOPAKHIN

What in the devil is a Titus Andronicus?

PIGEON

Oh, it's a revenge tragedy by William Shakespeare written in 1594. Sadly, I only have 21 lines. I am so often written out of *Titus*. The only reason why some directors keep me is because Titus mistakes me as a clown. From *Heaven*. Was Titus spiraling into madness? Was he not?

LOPAKHIN

Titus sounds insane.

PIGEON

Scholars are still trying to figure that out, actually.

VARYA

(*points to FESTE*) And, who are you?

FESTE

(*kisses VARYA'S hand*) Pleased to meet you, madam. My name is Feste. I am the beloved, witty clown in Shakespeare's brilliant comedy *Twelfth Night (Or, What You Will)*.

PIGEON

Out of curiosity, how many lines did Shakespeare write for you?

FESTE

308!

PIGEON

No fool can live up to your legacy, Feste. You set the bar so high.

FESTE

I know. I *know*. I am the commentator of all events in the play. I am known and loved for my brilliant wit. We will be immortalized until the end of time.

LOPAKHIN

But, I hired you to cut down the cherry orchard. What are you doing inside the estate?

PIGEON

(*points to FIRS*) While we were chopping, we heard Firs crying and wailing that he was left behind.

LOPAKHIN

He was crying? He was wailing?

FESTE

I wouldn't go *that* far.

PIGEON

He was full of sorrow.

LOPAKHIN

My God!

VARYA

Oh, Lopakhin.

FESTE

He was merely in need of company, so Pigeon and I happily agreed to stay with him due to his age and deteriorating health.

LOPAKHIN

Thank you both. That makes me feel better. So, Firs died of natural causes?

VARYA

*Are* the two of you aware that he died?

PIGEON

Yes, yes. He wanted to be surrounded by cherry blossoms before he died.

LOPAKHIN

What do you mean by “before he died?”

FESTE

Don’t listen to this silly, silly man! Firs merely wanted to be surrounded by cherry blossoms because he appreciated their beauty. They brought him such comfort.

LOPAKHIN

So he died of natural causes?

*FESTE and PIGEON stare at one another*

PIGEON

Come on, Feste. They deserve to know the truth.

FESTE

I’m leaning towards alternative facts ...

PIGEON

Isn’t that just a fancy way of saying lies?

*FESTE shrugs*

PIGEON

Varya and Lopakhin are Firs’ family. (to *LOPAKHIN and VARYA*) Firs gave us full permission to slowly poison him.

*FESTE does a facepalm*

VARYA

POISON HIM?

LOPAKHIN

You *poisoned* Firs?

FESTE

*(flop sweat)* Don't be preposterous. *(angrily points to PIGEON)*. You are mad. It must be from lack of sleep. It must be from this freezing weather.

LOPAKHIN

Tell us the truth. Did you poison Firs?

PIGEON

Yes. We added small amounts of Arsenic to his Earl Gray Tea.

VARYA

ARSENIC?

FESTE

*(fans HIMSELF)* Don't listen to poor, pitiful Pigeon. He's a fool. He's a clown.

PIGEON

Tell them the truth, Feste. Firs gave us complete permission.

LOPAKHIN

He asked you to help him die?

PIGEON

Yes. Firs asked us to help him die. *(to FESTE)* It's not right to lie. They have every right to know the truth. Didn't you hear them crying before we came downstairs?

FESTE

Such a silly, silly clown.

PIGEON

I just don't want them to feel solely responsible.

FESTE

You are talking nonsense. Gibberish. Now, run along. Scurry!

LOPAKHIN

I need to know the truth. Right now.

FESTE

The truth? The truth? *(pacing)* The truth is you are soon to be married. Congratulations. I am a song and dance man. Why don't we sing a song of celebration?

VARYA

Not now.

PIGEON

They deserve to know the truth. They were like family to Firs. Family needs to know exactly what happened.

FESTE

Family. Right. *(pause)* We honored Firs' last wishes and assisted in his death. But, we can assure you he died peacefully.

LOPAKHIN

You just admitted you poisoned Firs with Arsenic. Varya is my witness. I'm sorry, but I have to turn you over to the Police.

VARYA

Maybe we should talk this out, Lopakhin?

LOPAKHIN

No. They are murderers. Criminals.

PIGEON

But, we were only doing what Firs wanted. Right, Feste?

FESTE

He was unhappy. He was in despair. He was very weak /

LOPAKHIN

Was he sick? Was he dying?

FESTE

No.

LOPAKHIN

Did he still have his wits about him?

PIGEON

Yes.

LOPAKHIN

You simply don't kill a man if he's not dying, and if he's still mentally sound.

VARYA

But, they were only doing what they thought was right/

LOPAKHIN

I need my future wife to agree with me.

VARYA

...

FESTE

But, you abandoned him.

PIGEON

You were the one who left him behind.

LOPAKHIN

But, I *returned* to find a *dead* man.

FESTE

You abandoned him like a remnant of the distant past. He was forgotten long before the estate was sold.

LOPAKHIN

Exactly what are you insinuating?

FESTE

People stopped paying attention to Firs years ago.

LOPAKHIN

And, how would you know that?

FESTE

He more or less told us. All the attention was on Lyubov and Anya. He's been ignored for years.

VARYA

He's right. Firs was old and weak. He shuffled around and complained all the time. I don't remember the last actual conversation I had with Firs.

LOPAKHIN

These fools weren't living in the estate. They know nothing about our family.

VARYA

As we were packing to leave, everyone thought Firs was at the hospital/

FESTE

Firs mentioned that. He was inside this estate while every person thought someone had taken him to the hospital.

VARYA

We stopped paying attention years ago.

LOPAKHIN

But they murdered him.

PIGEON

Feste is right. Maybe you are guiltier than us.

LOPAKHIN

It doesn't matter. The authorities will never believe you. Everyone in this town *knows* and respects me. (*forcefully grabs FESTE and PIGEON*) I'm turning you in now.

FESTE

Varya! Can't you do something/

VARYA

Lopakhin. Don't turn them in.

LOPAKHIN

I have to. My conscience won't let me do otherwise.

VARYA

But, they stayed with Firs. They were there for him, while we mostly ignored the old man.

LOPAKHIN

They killed him.

VARYA

They *listened* to him.

LOPAKHIN

You don't kill a man who is not dying and still has his mental faculties.

VARYA

They *listened*. Firs voice could *never* rise above the constant chaos of this estate. Feste and Pigeon were there for him in ways we never were.

LOPAKHIN

Stop philosophizing. I'm a rational being. And, the cold, hard, fact is they took Firs' life. The proper thing to do is turn them over to the authorities.

VARYA

I don't agree.

LOPAKHIN

Varya. I need you as a witness. You heard them confess their crime.

FESTE

Don't listen to him. Please help us!

*PIGEON releases HIMSELF from LOPAKHIN'S grip, grabs a vase, and shatters it*

VARYA

What are you doing?

PIGEON

*(uses a piece of shattered glass as a dagger and points it at LOPAKHIN)* Let my friend go.

LOPAKHIN

You're threatening me?

VARYA

Don't point that thing at my fiancé/

PIGEON

I'll stop if you don't take us to the Cops/

LOPAKHIN

I'm not afraid of a clown /

PIGEON

*(gets closer to LOPAKHIN with the dagger)* I'm no ordinary clown. I'm a ROMAN clown.

FESTE

Romans can be barbarians. Ruthless barbarians.

PIGEON

That's right. Romans aren't afraid of bloodshed. In fact, they kind of like it.

LOPAKHIN

Bloodshed?

PIGEON

You heard me. I know *exactly* where to stab you so that you'd die instantly. Or, I could choose to stab you where you'd suffer a *slow* and *agonizing death*. You decide.

LOPAKHIN

Fine. *(releases FESTE)* I've let him go. Now, get that dagger away from me.

PIGEON

I'm not sure I trust you just yet/

VARYA

Drop the dagger, Pigeon.

PIGEON

Do I have your word that you won't take us to the Police?

LOPAKHIN

You have my word.

FESTE

You're the one who abandoned an elderly, infirmed, sickly, weak, old man.

PIGEON

*(taunts HIM with dagger)* You deserted a family member. He never would have survived on his own.

FESTE

We are not murderers. He thanked us for honoring his wishes.

LOPAKHIN

I've released Feste. I won't take you to the police. Can you please get that dagger away from me?

PIGEON

*(taunts HIM with dagger)* If you change your mind and take us to the Police, we'll just tell them the abandonment story. And, Varya will side with *us*. Are we clear?

VARYA

I just defended you and Feste. Then, you pointed a dagger at my husband-to-be.

LOPAKHIN

No more daggers. We're clear, Pigeon.

VARYA

But, they could have killed you, Lopakhin.

LOPAKHIN

Precisely. I don't want to be killed. Agree with the clowns.

VARYA

Fine. We're clear.

PIGEON

*(drops the dagger)* Never mess with a Roman clown.

Scene 5:*In the snowy Cherry Orchard*

LOPAKHIN

Never mess with a Roman clown. We abandoned Firs years ago? Everyone has gone stark raving mad. (*looks around*) And, just like that, the snow stopped.

*Drops to the ground and makes a snow angel*

I haven't done this since I was a child. Lyubov, do you remember making snow angels with me? Why did I ever think I could sell the cherry orchard?

*HE sits up, takes in the scenery*

Lord, you gave us vast forests .... Boundless fields ... Broad horizons ...

*HE notices the little white tree that is bent over. HE walks to it, and touches it.*

And living here ... We really ought to be ... giants ... I'm no giant.

*The icicles from the tree slowly begin to melt. They look like tears  
Wipes melted ice onto HIS cheeks*

I'll cry your tears ... I'm no giant ... I'm tiny ... miniscule ... diminutive ... nothing but a *speck* of a man.

*Wipes more melted ice onto HIS cheeks*

I'm an infinitesimal demon. How dare I send you back to Paris to a dangerous man?

*Stands up, and walks towards the estate*

I will *always* be that half-beaten, half-literate, peasant boy who often ran barefoot in the snow ...

Whose to stop me from running barefoot now? (*removes HIS boots and socks*)

*HE begins walking in an unbearable amount of pain  
HE begins shivering. HE sits in the snow. HE begins mumbling and slurring HIS speech.**(feels HIS heart)* Still beating ... h ... hard to brr ...*HE gasps. Attempts to get up and falls. Attempts to get up again and falls.**(in a small voice)* Someone ... anyone ... help ...*Blackout*

Scene 6:

*Lights up on the estate. FESTE and PIGEON cover LOPAKHIN with heavy blankets. THEY bring HIM tea, and place HIS legs in buckets of warm water*

VARYA

What were you thinking?

LOPAKHIN

I wasn't thinking.

VARYA

Did you go out there to die? (to FESTE and PIGEON) Leave us alone, clowns. If you'd be so kind, we need our privacy?

*THE clowns exit*

LOPAKHIN

Why are you so polite to them?

VARYA

Why are you so mean?

LOPAKHIN

Let me see. They murdered Firs, and Pigeon threatened me with a dagger made of glass.

VARYA

Be nice to them. Get on their good side. I don't want any more of those "dagger" situations.

LOPAKHIN

Murderers. Plain and simple. I don't want them threatening me again. They need to leave as soon as possible.

VARYA

We need them to help around the estate. We need them to bury Firs and chop the orchard. Find a way where you can coexist with them, please?

LOPAKHIN

I am a well-to-do respected banker in this town. I don't need to answer to two fools.

VARYA

Actually, at the moment, you do. Now, tell me this. Did you go out to the orchard to die?

*LOPAKHIN doesn't respond*

VARYA (con't)

I need to know. No secrets.

LOPAKHIN

I went out there to think.

VARYA

What were you thinking about?

LOPAKHIN

All the mistakes I might have made ...

VARYA

Firs lived a long and happy life, and it's our home now.

LOPAKHIN

You don't feel the slightest bit guilty?

VARYA

At first I did. But, you tried to save them.

LOPAKHIN

I maybe should have tried harder.

*FESTE and PIGEON enter*

PIGEON

Do you need some more hot tea?

LOPAKHIN

As a matter of fact, yes.

VARYA

Perhaps another blanket or two, Pigeon. Then, kindly leave us alone to talk.

*FESTE and PIGEON exit, then quietly return with tea, then exit again*

Once you feel better, you and I are going to start fresh. We'll get some nice, new furniture. Some beautiful drapes and rugs. And, create a home. For us.

*LOPAKHIN nods*

It was the rumor that you always wanted to propose to me. I wanted you to, you know. Now, that dream is finally a reality.

*LOPAKHIN nods again*

VARYA (con't)

You don't appear very ... enthusiastic?

LOPAKHIN

I am. It's just that I'm recovering from ... everything.

VARYA

Why were you lying in the snow without any socks or boots?

LOPAKHIN

When I was a kid, I didn't have boots or warm socks. I used to put plastic bags on my feet.

VARYA

How awful.

LOPAKHIN

I guess I wanted to be that kid again.

VARYA

You're not that kid anymore. You could have died.

LOPAKHIN

I know. I'm sorry.

VARYA

My poor, poor Lopakhin. Why don't you lie down?

LOPAKHIN

Where Firs lied?

VARYA

Maybe it will make you feel close to him?

LOPAKHIN

Varya!

VARYA

I mean that in a nice way. I loved the nincompoop, too, you know.

*SHE kisses LOPAKHIN*

Feste! Pigeon! I think it's time you and Pigeon disposed of ... disposed of ... (*points to FIRS*) Lopakhin needs the divan to rest.

*FESTE and PIGEON enter*

PIGEON

How should we dispose of him?

VARYA

The snow melted. Dig a hole and bury him in the cherry orchard.

PIGEON

Would you like some sort of service? To honor his life?

VARYA

...

LOPAKHIN

Maybe. We'll discuss it at a later time.

VARYA

Please use the back door.

*THE CLOWNS exit with the body of FIRS while VARYA dims the lights, tidies, and looks after LOPAKHIN*

Back so soon? Did you forget something? *(pause)* Oh God. It's you.

*LYUBOV, looking exhausted and sad with disheveled hair and make-up, slowly enters the estate.*

LYUBOV

I haven't slept in two days. Is that you, Varya?

VARYA

It's me, mother.

LYUBOV

I don't understand. Why are you here? I thought you were going to be the governess to the Ragulins ...

VARYA

I was. Until Lopakhin proposed to me on the train.

LYUBOV

Lopakhin proposed? He *betrayed* our family.

VARYA

I don't see it that way.

LYUBOV

He is an *evil* man. You can't marry him.

*LOPAKHIN slowly sits up and locks eyes with LYUBOV who nearly faints*

VARYA

We're getting married, mother.

LYUBOV

(*to LOPAKHIN*) Is it true?

LOPAKHIN

It's true. I ... I don't know what to say. I never thought I'd see you ... again. (*pause*) You don't look well, Lyubov. Why don't you sit down?

LYUBOV

I prefer to stand. In my own home. I was born here. I lived here my entire life with my mother, father, grandparents.

VARYA

It's actually our home now.

LYUBOV

(*to LOPAKHIN*) You've ruined my life.

VARYA

Please, don't speak to my fiancé in that manner.

LOPAKHIN

I know I ruined your life, Lyubov.

LYUBOV

Without my estate and orchard, I've lost my bearings.

LOPAKHIN

I actually understand.

VARYA

Why are you being so nice to her?

LOPAKHIN

Why are you being so cold? She is your mother.

VARYA

(to LYUBOV) Why are you here? You're supposed to be in Paris.

LYUBOV

I travelled to Paris. I took the train to Paris to return to a man who hits me and steals my money.

VARYA

You have no money.

LOPAKHIN

Let your mother speak.

LYUBOV

My great Aunt sent me some money. But, *if* I had chosen to stay with my husband, it would eventually be gone.

VARYA

You don't know that.

LOPAKHIN

Don't you *care* about your very own mother? She's telling us her husband beats her!

LYUBOV

Why do you care about my life all of a sudden? I returned to fight for what is rightfully mine.

LOPAKHIN

...

LYUBOV

I said I've returned to reclaim what is mine.

LOPAKHIN

You don't need to fight me, Lyobov. What's mine is yours.

VARYA

LOPAKHIN!

LOPAKHIN

She's correct about everything she says. I'm not betraying her twice.

VARYA

I see.

*Pause*

VARYA (con't)

Why betray her when you could betray your fiancé?

LYUBOV

I ... I can have my home back, Lopakhin?

LOPAKHIN

Yes. And, I'll find some way to help you out financially, too.

VARYA

I beg your pardon? Who's your future wife? Me or her?

LOPAKHIN

You are, Varya. I'm marrying you and this is still our home.

VARYA

The *three* of us will live here?

LOPAKHIN

I'll work out the details. But, it's a huge estate. The three of us will have to live here. At least temporarily.

LYUBOV

I ... I'm in shock. Bless you, Lopakhin.

VARYA

Does my opinion even matter?

LYUBOV

Why? It will be you, your husband, and your mother ...

VARYA

My *adopted* mother.

LOPAKHIN

Maybe once the summer cottages are finished, you and I can live there.

VARYA

They need to be built *immediately*. I don't want to share this estate with her.

LYUBOV

Why are you speaking to me as if I'm not even here?

VARYA

Because you spent your whole life ignoring me. Everyone knows you loved Anya the best/

LYUBOV  
That's simply not true/

VARYA  
It's time to start telling the truth, mother.

LOPAKHIN  
Let's all calm down ...

VARYA  
You always said, "Marry Lopakhin. He's a good and interesting person."

LYUBOV  
I meant that.

VARYA  
But, you have the potential to ruin everything. You somehow always make everything about you.

LYUBOV  
That's not fair.

LOPAKHIN  
Having Lyobov back at the estate feels good and right to me.

VARYA  
You're doing this to assuage your guilt?

LOPAKHIN  
So what if I am doing this to assuage my guilt? I never should have purchased this estate and forced her to leave the only home she's ever known.

LYUBOV  
You felt guilt after we left?

LOPAKHIN  
Unexpectedly, but yes.

LYUBOV  
Good.

VARYA  
Mother!

LOPAKHIN

I probably deserved that.

VARYA

How long are you going to be her whipping boy?

LOPAKHIN

...

VARYA

How long?

LYUBOV

I can learn to forgive you, Lopakhin. You've given me back my home.

*LOPAKHIN embraces LYUBOV*

VARYA

Shall I leave you two alone?

LYUBOV

Stop being so dramatic.

VARYA

Oh! The drama queen is asking me to stop being dramatic.

LOPAKHIN

I'm asking you to stop, too.

VARYA

No.

LOPAKHIN

Fine. We will reside upstairs, while your mother will reside downstairs. Once the summer cottages are built, you and I will move there. This matter is not up for debate.

LYUBOV

I can agree to those terms.

VARYA

Fine. One big, happy, *dysfunctional* family.

*FESTE and PIGEON return from burying FIRS*

LYUBOV

I haven't slept for two nights. Am I hallucinating or do I see two clowns?

FESTE

Pleased to make your acquaintance, Lady Lyubov.

*HE kisses HER hand*

*Blackout*

Scene 7

*Evening. Memorial for FIRS in the estate. Vodka, candles, and music.*

LYUBOV

Oh, Feste. Please tell me another one of your witticisms. Or, are they riddles? I don't care. Just make me laugh, Feste.

*VARYA sits alone, rolling HER eyes and frowning*

FESTE

I am just as enchanted by you, Lady, Lyubov, as I was by Countess Olivia.

LYUBOV

What an honor to be in the same company as a *Countess*.

VARYA

Shouldn't we be telling fond memories of Firs?

LYUBOV

Let Feste tell one more of his witty puns ...

*VARYA down more vodka*

FESTE

Once I said to Olivia, "Good Madonna, give me leave to prove you a fool." She asked, "Can you do it?" I replied, "Dexteriously, good Madonna."

*LYUBOV applauds, while VARYA and LOPAKHIN drink.*

LYUBOV

How you fill me with such glee, Feste! But, what does "dexteriously" mean?

VARYA

Showing or having skill, especially with the hands.

LOPAKHIN

My fiancé is one of the most intelligent women I know.

LYUBOV

“Skill with the hands!” You naughty, naughty fool!

*THEY playfully flirt with one another*

PIGEON

Varya’s right. I think it’s time we honor Firs now ...

LYUBOV

Just one more pun, Feste. Please?

FESTE

If you insist, Lady Lyubov

*HE kisses HER hand*

VARYA

Get a room.

LOPAKHIN

You’ve taken to Feste and Pigeon so well, Lyubov. (*drinks vodka*) How nice.

FESTE

After the Countess’ brother died, she remained in mourning far too long. So, I said, “The Lady bade take away the Fool. Therefore *I* say again, take *her* away.”

*LYUBOV laughs uproariously then stops*

LYUBOV

I don’t get it.

FESTE

She called me a Fool, and I called her a Fool in return!

LYUBOV

And she wasn’t angry?

FESTE

Perhaps. But, it was my duty to be clever and amusing. If they were offended, so be it.

VARYA

I'm beginning to be offended/

LOPAKHIN

I think it's time we remember Firs. Would you like me to lead everyone in prayer?

LYUBOV

Prayer? Isn't that rather bleak and depressing?

LOPAKHIN

I'd like to honor his life.

LYUBOV

Firs would want us to be happy. He would want his life to be celebrated. Perhaps Feste could sing us a song?

FESTE

I'd love that, Lady Lyubov.

LOPAKHIN

What kind of song? A hymn?

LYUBOV

Don't be ridiculous. Feste can sing us a joyful tune. We've all been through so much ...

VARYA

You know, some people actually turn to prayer when they've been through a hard time ...

FESTE

If the Lady of the Estate desires a song, who am I to say no?

*LOPAKHIN and VARYA roll THEIR eyes, and drink more vodka while FESTE plays the guitar and sings*

When that I was and a little tiny boy,  
 With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
 A foolish thing was but a toy,  
 For the rain it raineth every day.

But when I came to man's estate,  
 With hey, ho, the wind and the rain ...

LYUBOV

This is far too sad, Feste. Sing us something to make us feel cheerful.

PIGEON

Would Firs really want us to be cheerful right now?

LYUBOV

I don't see why not.

*LOPAKHIN and VARYA roll THEIR eyes, and drink more vodka while FESTE sings*

FESTE

Let me sing a different song.

Under the greenwood tree  
Who loves to lie with me  
And turn his merry note  
Unto the sweet bird's throat,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither ...

*LOPAKHIN and VARYA clap to cut HIM off*

But, I wasn't finished.

LYUBOV

To Firs!

EVERYONE

*(raises their glasses)* To Firs!

*EVERYONE drinks (some more heavily than others)*

LOPAKHIN

Alright. Party's over. Everyone to bed except Feste and Pigeon.

FESTE

But, why end the celebration of Firs' life so soon?

LYUBOV

The night is so young.

LOPAKHIN

It's late. It's time for bed. But, I need to speak with Feste and Pigeon. Alone.

*FESTE and PIGEON look visibly nervous*

LYUBOV

Don't keep them awake too long. They need their rest, too. Goodnight, everyone. (*exits to bedroom*)

VARYA

Sleep sounds great, actually. (*exits to HER bedroom*)

FESTE

Make this quick. What is it you want, Lopakhin?

LOPAKHIN

Starting tomorrow, I need you and Pigeon to begin chopping the cherry orchard and begin building a summer cottage.

FESTE

What if we don't feel like it? That's a lot of work for just two people.

LOPAKHIN

I need you to do this for me or I'll turn you over to the Police.

PIGEON

You're giving us an ultimatum. I'd hate to bring back ROMAN Pigeon.

LOPAKHIN

I am an admired and respected banker in this town. The law officials would side with me because of my prestige and impeccable reputation.

FESTE

You left him. Years ago.

LOPAKHIN

Stop it. The Police would never believe you over me. Is that clear? I need you to do as I say.

PIGEON

We'll do as you say, Lopakhin. It's not a terrible idea, Feste. We get to live in this beautiful estate and be with Lady Lyubov.

FESTE

Isn't she fabulous?

PIGEON

Yes, and she's really taken a liking to you, Feste.

LOPAKHIN

Enough about Lyubov. Do I have your word you'll begin your work tomorrow.

VARYA (off-stage)

Lopakhin. Are you coming to bed?

LOPAKHIN

Give me five minutes, dear.

VARYA (off-stage)

Hurry, sweetheart.

FESTE

It sounds like Varya is requesting you. You better get up there.

LOPAKHIN

I need your word first.

PIGEON

You have our word. Goodnight, Lopakhin.

*THE CLOWNS start to exit*

LYUBOV (off-stage)

Lopakhin. Could you help me with something?

FESTE

(to *PIGEON*) Who's he going to choose?

LOPAKHIN

Goodnight, clowns.

*THE CLOWNS start to exit again*

LOPAKHIN (con't)

I'm coming, Lyubov.

*LOPAKHIN exits to LYUBOV'S room*

FESTE

Keep a close eye on him.

*THE CLOWNS exit*

*Lights up on the bedroom of VARYA and LOPAKHIN*

VARYA

Lopakhin. Is that you coming up the stairs?

*FESTE and PIGEON knock on HER door*

FESTE

It's actually Feste and Pigeon. Do you need anything?

VARYA

I need my fiancé back. Can you come in? I'm decent.

*FESTE and PIGEON enter HER bedroom*

Come. Sit with me on the bed. I'm in desperate need of someone to talk to.

PIGEON

What's wrong?

VARYA

I'm sad and confused. I've always loved Lopakhin.

PIGEON

Don't worry. He loves you, too.

VARYA

Firs was right. Rumor was he wanted to propose, but he never had the courage. I had to act like I was fine with that, but inside I was devastated. I'm tired of having to act strong all the time. I've been overlooked and disregarded my entire life. Lyubov adopted me, but her biological child was Anya. She doted on her. She was always treated like a princess while I was treated like the hired help.

FESTE

That's terrible, Varya.

VARYA

So, when Lopakhin and I shared a train to Kharkov, I felt like the luckiest woman in the world when he proposed. He thought I was beautiful, funny, intelligent. For the first time in my life, I felt treasured. I felt ecstatic about starting a life with him here.

PIGEON

But, you're still engaged. He still loves you.

VARYA

Does the house seem smaller to you?

FESTE

Well, there's five people in it now ...

VARYA

It feels claustrophobic, cramped ...

PIGEON

Like the walls are slowly caving in on us ...

VARYA

Exactly. *(pause)* Why won't Lopakhin come to bed?

PIGEON

Lady Lyubov wanted to talk to him. In private.

VARYA

In private? Where are they?

PIGEON

They're in her bedroom/

VARYA

Oh my God. They're alone in her bedroom. I knew she was going to sweep in here and ruin everything for me.

*Begins to run downstairs, but FESTE holds HER back*

FESTE

I'm sure it's fine. I'm sure it's completely innocent.

*LYUBOV releases HERSELF from HIS grip*

VARYA

You don't know my mother. I'm going downstairs to see exactly what's going on.

*FESTE blocks the stairwell*

FESTE

Let's not jump to conclusions.

VARYA

I don't trust her. I need to know what's happening.

PIGEON

We promise to keep an eye on them for you.

VARYA

I want to go downstairs and see what's happening for myself.

PIGEON

But, you seem quite emotional and fragile right now.

VARYA

So what if I am?

FESTE

Ever since we stepped into this estate, it's been one drama after the next. Let's just rest, and pray everything will be fine in the morning.

VARYA

If I caught them in there, doing something romantic, I don't think I could take it.

FESTE

We're more than happy to keep a watchful eye on them. But, if this Firs thing comes up again, you have to promise to defend us.

VARYA

I will.

FESTE

Are you sure? You'd be going against your fiancé.

VARYA

As long as you're my eyes and ears, I would never turn you in. *(pause)* Now, can you stay with me until I fall asleep. If Lopakhin isn't back within the hour, promise me you'll go downstairs to see what's going on.

PIGEON

We promise.

*Blackout on VARYA's bedroom. Lights up on LYUBOV's bedroom*

LYUBOV

You genuinely felt guilty about purchasing this estate and throwing us out?

LOPAKHIN

I didn't at first.

LYUBOV

When did you start feeling badly?

LOPAKHIN

When I realized I left Firs behind. Then, the floodgates opened. I felt selfish, braggadocios. I had to escape to the cherry orchard.

LYUBOV

During the blizzard?

LOPAKHIN

I know it sounds crazy, but I needed to escape. (*pause*) And, then I saw this little, white tree hunched over. The icicles on the tree started melting. I felt your presence so strongly. I felt you crying.

LYUBOV

I cried the entire way to Paris.

LOPAKHIN

Somehow I knew that. Then, you returned and I saw the pain and anger in your face ...

LYUBOV

You looked like a frightened little boy when you saw me ...

LOPAKHIN

You tend to bring out the frightened little boy in me. I also never thought I'd see you again.

LYUBOV

I never expected to see you, and when Varya told me you were engaged/

LOPAKHIN

I knew in that moment that I had the chance to make things right by you. I'm glad you're here. I'm thankful you're not with that abusive man in Paris.

LYUBOV

Thank you for your generosity. Although, Varya seems so upset with me.

LOPAKHIN

I'll talk to her. We've all been through so much.

LYUBOV

My own daughter hates me, and I don't know why.

LOPAKHIN

I don't want you to worry about a thing. Let me talk to her. Before I go to bed ...

LYUBOV

Yes?

LOPAKHIN

Remember when I was talking about my banking career, and being privy to other people's money ...

LYUBOV

What about it?

LOPAKHIN

I witnessed corruption and dishonesty firsthand. I was lamenting the fact there are only a few people decent in the world. (*mind wanders to far off place*) Lord, you've given us huge forests, infinite fields, and endless horizons, and we, living here, ought really to be giants ...

LYUBOV

Giants only exist in fairy-tales, Lopakhin.

LOPAKHIN

I want to be a decent man. I always strove to be civilized and well-mannered. Then I hurt you and left Firs ...

LYUBOV

Don't cry. Life hasn't passed us by. Perhaps it's time for a new beginning?

LOPAKHIN

New beginnings. Fresh starts. You sound just like Varya.

LYUBOV

She envisions a new beginning with you?

LOPAKHIN

She does. And, I don't want to let her down.

LYUBOV

I see.

LOPAKHIN

...

LYUBOV

I need a new beginning, too. And, you're giving me that.

*SHE hugs HIM. SHE pulls HIM tighter. HE willingly allows HIMSELF to be held.*

LYUBOV (con't)

I forgive you, Lopakhin.

LOPAKHIN

You do?

LYUBOV

I've known you my whole life, Lopakhin. Of course I forgive you.

LOPAKHIN

You don't know how relieved I am to here you say that.

*SHE pulls HIM even closer*

But ... I need to get back to Varya. Sleep well, Lyubov.

*HE exits. SHE stares at HIM until HE'S upstairs.  
Blackout*

### Scene 8

*The next morning. THE CLOWNS are heard off-stage chopping down the cherry orchard.  
VARYA enters. LYUBOV is fretting, and drinking coffee*

LYUBOV

I need them to stop immediately. (*bangs on window to get THEM to stop*)

VARYA

Lopakhin intends to make summer cottages. Including one for the two of us. You're well aware that the orchard must be demolished.

LYUBOV

Demolished. What a hateful word. Where is Lopakhin?

VARYA

He's in Kharkov working at the bank.

LYUBOV

Please, talk him out of cutting down the *entire* orchard.

VARYA

No. It must *all* be cut. You don't get to make decisions anymore.

LYUBOV

(*goes to cupboards to look for Arsenic*) I'm in despair. I could scream right now.

VARYA

*(calmly finds the arsenic and places it in HER pocket)* I'll hold onto this. And, if you must scream, then scream.

LYUBOV

Why are you being so cold to me? Anya understood what the orchard meant to me.

VARYA

Your "beloved child." Of course she did. Well, now she's back at school. She's not here to protect you.

LYUBOV

I remember how she begged me not to cry. She told me that my life "remains ahead of me."

VARYA

What about my life, mother? For two long years I pined for Lopakhin. Everyone knew it, including Lopakhin. I waited for him to propose, but he was always busy with work. He somehow never had time for me. And, as soon as we were away from the estate and all of you, he finally proposed!

LYUBOV

He proposed that quickly?

VARYA

Yes.

LYUBOV

Oh, I can't stand the sound of their axes!

VARYA

The cherry orchard will soon be a thing of the past.

LYUBOV

Don't say that.

VARYA

And, Lopakhin is my future. Don't ruin it.

LYUBOV

How you talk. I'm through with Paris and I intend to live here whether you like it or not.

VARYA

*(looks out window)* That summer cottage cannot be built fast enough.

LYUBOV

When does Lopakhin usually come home?

VARYA

You don't remember? Late. Usually around 8pm. I'll prepare dinner. You know me. I prefer to keep busy.

LYUBOV

You like to be doing something every minute.

VARYA

Staying busy makes the time go faster. I'm thankful for that because I miss Lopakhin when he's not here.

LYUBOV

Is that so?

VARYA

Yes, when two people are in love they miss one another. Or, have you forgotten that aspect of romantic love?

LYUBOV

How can you be so insensitive? You know my first husband died and my second husband abused me. Lopakhin would be disappointed if he knew you continued to say such hurtful things to me ...

VARYA

Perhaps I went too far with that statement.

LYUBOV

You definitely went too far.

VARYA

Lopakhin loves me. He would take my side over yours.

LYUBOV

Is that so?

VARYA

You infuriate me. Here. (*hands bottle of Arsenic back to HER*) Do what you must with it.

LYUBOV

You're not inferring what I think you're inferring ...

VARYA

It's hardly anything new. You've always threatened to harm yourself/

LYUBOV

*(returns Arsenic to cupboard)* I'm fine. I plan on living life to the fullest. Now, if you'll excuse me I'm going to nap. I tossed and turned all night last night.

VARYA

Lopakhin and I slept like babies.

LYUBOV

Slept. Poor Lopakhin.

VARYA

*(grabs LYUBOV's coffee cup and throws it against the wall)* Get out of my sight. What we do behind closed doors is none of your business. But, maybe what *you* do behind closed doors needs to be my business.

LYUBOV

I have no idea what you mean. Is Lopakhin aware he's marrying such a temperamental woman?

VARYA

Yes, and he loves me just the same.

*LYUBOV exits to HER room to cry while the CLOWNS are heard chopping the orchard. LYUBOV bangs on the window once more. Blackout.*

### Scene 9

*Lights up. Two hours later. LYUBOV is lounging on the divan. LOPAKHIN arrives home.*

LYUBOV

Why are you home so soon? It's not eight o'clock.

LOPAKHIN

Varya called me very upset and asked me to come home early.

LYUBOV

Upset? You're marrying a fragile woman Lopakhin.

LOPAKHIN

What happened?

LYUBOV

Sit down, and I'll tell you.

LOPAKHIN

I'd like to hear it from Varya.

LYUBOV

Just sit down.

LOPAKHIN

Where's Varya? I'd prefer to speak with her.

LYUBOV

You really ought to know the real Varya ... before you get married ...

LOPAKHIN

*(sits down)* What are you talking about?

LYUBOV

This morning she insulted the fact that I am single.

LOPAKHIN

Perhaps you misunderstood her ...

LYUBOV

She grabbed my coffee cup and threw it against the wall.

LOPAKHIN

That doesn't sound like Varya. She's very level-headed.

LYUBOV

She handed me a bottle of Arsenic and said, "Do what you must with it."

LOPAKHIN

What?

LYUBOV

Yes. She did that knowing my first husband died, my second husband beat me, my little boy, Grisha, drowned ...

LOPAKHIN

Why would she say such a thing?

LYUBOV

I don't think your fiancé cares whether I live or die ...

*VARYA enters*

VARYA

Why are you sitting with her? You ought to be consoling me.

LOPAKHIN

Varya, we need to talk.

VARYA

You look angry. What did she say to you?

LOPAKHIN

We need to talk in private.

VARYA

No. Say what you need to say in front of the two of us.

LOPAKHIN

You handed your mother a bottle of Arsenic and said, "do what you must with it?"

VARYA

She's not telling you the full story.

LYUBOV

Oh, really? What part did I leave out?

VARYA

She couldn't stand the fact that Feste and Pigeon were chopping the cherry orchard. She started frantically looking in the cupboards for the Arsenic. I grabbed it from her, and put it in my pocket.

LOPAKHIN

Is that true, Lyobov?

LYUBOV

The cherry orchard is my life.

VARYA

... *was* your life ...

LOPAKHIN

Maybe we could keep half of it intact if it means so much to you.

VARYA

You've got to be kidding.

LOPAKHIN

It seems like a reasonable compromise to me/

VARYA

When is she going to realize that she's no longer a part of the Aristocracy? When is she going to accept the fact that she's broke? Mother, you are no longer the "Lady" of this estate. The world is changing ...

LYUBOV

See how she treats me.

VARYA

No. See how she treats me.

LOPAKHIN

Stop it. The two of you. I'll tell Feste and Pigeon to leave half of the cherry orchard intact. I'll give them a strict deadline as to when I want the summer cottage to be built. The sooner the better.

VARYA

This summer cottage is too close to this estate. I want to live further away from her.

LOPAKHIN

My decision is final. I think it's a perfectly rational compromise. And, you should never have returned the bottle of Arsenic to your mother. I'm disturbed by what you said to her.

LYUBOV

I am, too.

LOPAKHIN

This conversation is *over*. I'm going to change my clothes, and then all of us are going to have dinner.

*FESTE and PIGEON enter from working in the orchard*

Only chop half the orchard. The number one priority is building a summer cottage for me and Varya. Immediately.

*FESTE and PIGEON nod*

VARYA

I feel as though this house is caving in on us. (*pause*) I don't have an appetite. Have dinner without me.

*SHE exits*

LYUBOV

You have quite the erratic woman on your hands, Lopakhin.

LOPAKHIN

*(looks around the estate)* The walls are definitely caving in on us. I need fresh air.

LYUBOV

Where are you going?

LOPAKHIN

To the cherry orchard.

LYUBOV

Would you like me to accompany you?

LOPAKHIN

That's kind of you, but I really need to be alone at the moment.

LYUBOV

Is something wrong?

LOPAKHIN

Just trying to figure things out. *(exits)*

*Blackout*

Scene 9

*Early evening in The Cherry Orchard*

LOPAKHIN

The moon is rising ... Happiness, too, is rising ... getting nearer and nearer. I need *answers*. I need a *sign*. I feel closer to God when I'm out here. I always did. Look ... the little white tree. You're finally free from the heaviness of the snow. You're standing straighter. You're no longer hunched.

*Examines the tree, touches it*

What did Grisha's tutor always say when we took our walks out here? He was always too scholarly for my taste, but sometimes he said things that made me pause and reflect. Right now, it is *imperative* that I stand in the quiet and *think*. He said, "Don't you see that from every cherry tree, human beings are peering out at you?"

*HE walks around the trees as if HE'S in a maze looking for "beings"*

LOPAKHIN (con't)

I don't see *any* humans peering out at me. I look and look and can't find one single soul. The souls have vanished ... they are part of the past ...

*Runs to white tree*

Perhaps it's time to embrace who I've become ... maybe it's time to share myself with Lyubov. (*stares at tree*) And, yet, I've loved Varya for years. There's no doubt in my mind that she would make an exceptional wife. But, if I really stop to ponder everything, Lyubov was always there for me. But, I somehow never felt worthy of her affection ... until now. Happiness is rising ... getting nearer and nearer. (*exits to estate*)

*Blackout*

Scene 10

*Lights up on the Living Room of the Estate. LOPAKHIN enters. LYUBOV is on the divan*

LYUBOV

You're finally back. I was getting worried.

LOPAKHIN

Where are the others?

LYUBOV

Upstairs. Talking. They're completely ignoring me.

LOPAKHIN

Remember when my father gave me a bloody nose when I was a little boy?

LYUBOV

Yes. He was a drunkard.

LOPAKHIN

You took me to the washstand in this estate/

LYUBOV

Do you remember what I said?

LOPAKHIN

Of course I do. I think about it every day. You said ...

LYUBOV

Don't cry little peasant, you'll heal before you marry.

LOPAKHIN

And now I'm wealthy. I wear fancy suits. I work at a prestigious bank. I prance around this town as if I'm somebody when I feel like a nobody.

LYUBOV

You're no longer that little boy with a bloody nose. Your inebriated father is dead. I'm free from a brutal man who mistreated me, too. (*SHE embraces LOPAKHIN*) Thanks to you.

*LOPAKHIN clings tightly to LYUBOV*

I can feel you crying. What's happened to you?

*A pause*

LOPAKHIN

I'm rich now. But, if you think about it ...

LYUBOV

What?

LOPAKHIN

A peasant might always be a peasant.

LYUBOV

(*SHE wipes HIS tears onto HER face*) Let me cry your tears ...

LOPAKHIN

Like the little, hunched, white tree in the snow ...

LYUBOV

Don't cry, little Lopakhin. You'll heal before/

LOPAKHIN

...I marry ...

*THEY share a long kiss. PIGEON and FESTE step out of VARYA's room, and witness them kissing. THEY watch THEM briefly, and return to VARYA's room*

LOPAKHIN

Do I love you? Have I always loved you?

LYUBOV

Only you know the answer to that.

*A pause  
SHE kisses HIM again*

LOPAKHIN  
*(breaks away)* We could get caught.

LYUBOV  
 Then, take me to bed.

LOPAKHIN  
 I want to. But, Varya ...

LYUBOV  
 She's a strong girl. She'll eventually get over us.

LOPAKHIN  
 You love me, Lyobov?

LYUBOV  
 ...

LOPAKHIN  
 I need to know.

LYUBOV  
 Actions speak louder than words ...

LOPAKHIN  
 I need to hear you *say* it.

LYUBOV  
 We just kissed one another.

LOPAKHIN  
 If I am to call off my engagement to Varya ...

LYUBOV  
*(smiles)* Varya is a good girl, but she's ordinary. Plain. You need to be with the *Lady* of the Estate/

LOPAKHIN  
 But, I truly love Varya. At least I thought I did ...

LYUBOV  
 You can't marry a woman who tells her very own mother, "Do what you want with it."  
*(retrieves bottle of Arsenic from HER pocket, and shows it to LOPAKHIN)*

LOPAKHIN  
 Give that to me.

*LYUBOV plays with HIM. SHE acts as though SHE'LL give HIM the Arsenic, but doesn't*

LOPAKHIN (con't)

I don't want you to do anything stupid.

LYUBOV

I won't. You give me a reason to live.

*Pause*

LOPAKHIN

Do you honestly mean that?

LYUBOV

*(hands HIM Arsenic)* Would I be doing this if I didn't mean it?

LOPAKHIN

*I give you a reason to live?*

LYUBOV

Yes.

LOPAKHIN

Is that your roundabout way of telling me you love me?

LYUBOV

Maybe it is.

*THEY kiss*

LOPAKHIN

*(pulls away)* I can't have Varya catching us. It will break her heart.

*LYUBOV suggestively points to HER bedroom*

I need to talk to her face to face. She deserves that much.

LYUBOV

You handle this as you see fit.

LOPAKHIN

Maybe we should both speak to her.

*LYUBOV walks to HER bedroom*

LYUBOV

You worry too much, Lopakhin. I'm going to turn in early tonight. If you need me, you know where to find me. (*exits to bedroom*)

*LOPAKHIN buries HIS head in HIS hands. HE looks to LYUBOV's room. HE looks to VARYA's room. HE lies down on the divan like a child, and wraps HIMSELF in a blanket.*  
*Blackout*

Scene 11

*The middle of the night. FESTE and PIGEON awaken a sleeping LOPAKHIN on the divan*

FESTE

Wake up.

LOPAKHIN

What time is it?

PIGEON

3am.

LOPAKHIN

I don't need to wake up for another two hours. What the Hell do you want at 3am?

FESTE

Varya waited up for you. She's extremely emotional. When she saw you fell asleep on the sofa, she chose not to bother you and let you sleep.

PIGEON

That's how much she loves you, Lopakhin.

LOPAKHIN

Then, why won't *you* let me sleep?

FESTE

We saw you.

*LOPAKHIN immediately sits up*

LOPAKHIN

Exactly what did you see?

PIGEON

We saw you kissing Lyubov.

LOPAKHIN

How could you see anything? It's dark.

FESTE

We saw it plain as day.

LOPAKHIN

You didn't see anything. I was comforting her because she was distraught.

PIGEON

That's not how I comfort *my* friends.

LOPAKHIN

Lyubov is confused. I kissed her on the cheek. Then, she kissed me on the lips, but I pulled away.

FESTE

The two of you were engaged in a passionate kiss, then you said, "We could get caught."

LOPAKHIN

I never said that. (*pause*) I said, "I'm sorry you fought." Lyubov doesn't understand why Varya's been so unkind to her.

PIGEON

Maybe it's because her suspicions are correct. Her mother is seducing her fiancé.

LOPAKHIN

What you witnessed will probably never happen again.

FESTE

Probably? Do you love Varya?

LOPAKHIN

In what sense?

FESTE

If you have to ask that, then you don't love Varya.

LOPAKHIN

Look. I never intended to betray her.

PIGEON

Do you love Lyubov?

LOPAKHIN

...

PIGEON

Answer me. Do you love Lyubov?

LOPAKHIN

Everything is so muddled. I need time to think things through ... Could it be that I love two women?

FESTE

It's possible, but you don't have the luxury of time. Varya is hurting. She feels distant from you. She is terrified her very own mother will take you from her, and guess what? Her biggest fear is coming to fruition.

PIGEON

You're not offering her the life you promised her.

LOPAKHIN

I know.

FESTE

She loves you.

PIGEON

And, she has a right to know the truth so she can move forward without you.

LOPAKHIN

Do not say a word to her. Please.

FESTE

As much as we like Lyubov, we *love* Varya. And, right now, she would believe her two new friends over her fiancé who constantly ignores her.

LOPAKHIN

I just need a moment to think ...

FESTE

If you love two women, Varya can't marry you.

LOPAKHIN

Give me a day or two. Until then (*pulls out a large quantity of cash from HIS wallet*) do not tell Varya what you saw.

FESTE

*(grabs money)* Just how wealthy are you?

PIGEON

I've never seen so much cash. Let me hold it. Can I hold it, please?

*FESTE hands the cash to PIGEON*

LOPAKHIN

I hope this persuades you to keep quiet.

*Pause*

LOPAKHIN (con't)

I'm going upstairs to be with Varya until I need to wake up for work. *(exits)*

FESTE

We allow him one day.

PIGEON

One day?

FESTE

If he doesn't break things off with Lady Lyubov in 24 hours, we have to tell Varya

PIGEON

What about chopping the orchard and building a summer cottage?

FESTE

*(points to money)* I'd say our days of doing manual labor and odd jobs are over. I say we leave this dismal estate and depart for Illyria.

PIGEON

I never even heard of Illyria.

FESTE

It's my home. And, it's magical.

PIGEON

Could I come with you?

FESTE

Of course!

PIGEON

Illyria. I even love the sound of it. Illyria. Illyria. Illyria.

Scene 12

*Early morning. The bedroom of LOPAKHIN and VARYA*

VARYA

I hate the morning.

LOPAKHIN

No, you don't. My Varya has always been a morning person.

VARYA

Close the shades.

LOPAKHIN

But, it's a beautiful sunny day.

VARYA

Close the shades.

*LOPAKHIN closes them partway*

Further.

*LOPAKHIN obliges.*

LOPAKHIN

I need to get ready for work.

VARYA

I have questions for you.

LOPAKHIN

Varya. I have to leave soon.

VARYA

Why did you fall asleep on the divan?

LOPAKHIN

I was reading, got tired, and fell asleep/

VARYA

I didn't see you with a book.

LOPAKHIN

It probably got lodged in the cushions or something ...

VARYA

Were you with my mother?

LOPAKHIN

... no ...

VARYA

You paused before you said no.

LOPAKHIN

We talked a bit before she went to bed/

VARYA

So, you *were* with my mother/

LOPAKHIN

We chatted briefly, then she went to her room, and I fell asleep on the divan reading a book.

VARYA

What were you chatting about?

LOPAKHIN

I am going to be late for work.

VARYA

Do you love my mother?

LOPAKHIN

I beg your pardon? I've always been *fond* of you mother.

VARYA

No. Do you love my mother in the romantic sense?

LOPAKHIN

Don't ask such silly questions. I love you.

VARYA

Then, why don't you come to bed with *me*? Why do you ignore *me*? Why do you only pay attention to *her*?

LOPAKHIN

I don't only pay attention to her/

VARYA

You're always with her/

LOPAKHIN

You're being ridiculous.

VARYA

When there's a conflict, and there's *always* a conflict nowadays, you continuously take her side.

LOPAKHIN

She's a fragile woman. So much has transpired in the last few days. Once she settles, I won't need to reassure her as much.

VARYA

You're under her spell. Everyone falls under her spell. Especially *men*.

LOPAKHIN

I don't know what you mean ...

VARYA

She's the damsel in distress ... the consummate victim ... and, she thrives on drama.

LOPAKHIN

Life has been hard on her.

VARYA

I understand that. But, she's charming, flirtatious, the life of the party. She has this spark about her that men love.

LOPAKHIN

I'm not in love with your mother.

VARYA

Her charming nature coupled with her damsel-in-distress persona make men fall head over heels. She traps them.

LOPAKHIN

But, she's actually been through some horribly distressing times.

VARYA

You tried time and time again to save her from bankruptcy, Lopakhin. And, she never took you seriously. She brought her financial troubles onto herself. You are *not* her savior.

LOPAKHIN

I hate the way you speak about your mother. You should listen to yourself/

VARYA

There you go again. Taking *her* side/

LOPAKHIN

I don't have time for this. I'm going downstairs, eating breakfast, then leaving for/

VARYA

YOU MAKE NO SENSE.

*The sound of axes are distinctly heard*

LOPAKHIN

Keep it down.

VARYA

If you're so enamored with her and under her spell, why did you send her away to Paris?

LOPAKHIN

I don't have time for this.

VARYA

You could have bought the estate, let her and her family stay here, but insist she get a job.

LOPAKHIN

Lyubov has never worked a day in her life. I had no choice but to send her back to Paris, and hope and pray her husband stopped beating her.

VARYA

...

LOPAKHIN

I prayed for her all the time. And when she returned, I felt relieved. She was safe. She was out of harm's way.

*VARYA kisses LOPAKHIN passionately*

VARYA

You are a good and decent man. You have goodness in you. But ...

*LOPAKHIN kisses VARYA*

LOPAKHIN

But, what?

VARYA

You can be a good man without feeling like you have to be my mother's savior. You can care about her well-being, but care more about me.

*VARYA kisses LOPAKHIN. The sound of the axes break THEIR kiss*

No summer cottage for us or for my mother. I need to be much further away from this estate. She can stay here. You can help her with finances. But, we need to move to another town.

LOPAKHIN

I don't know if I can do that.

*Silence*

VARYA

I don't know what she did, or how she did it, but she's trapped you.

*The sound of the axes becomes louder*

Those are my conditions. If you can't abide by them ...

LOPAKHIN

*I refuse* to abide by them.

VARYA

If we can't get out of this estate and have a place of our very own then/

LOPAKHIN

Then, *what?*

VARYA

Then, I can't marry you.

LOPAKHIN

How dare you drop a bombshell on me right before I have to leave for work?

VARYA

I would happily drop a bombshell at a more *suitable* time, but I never *see* you.

LOPAKHIN

You're exaggerating.

VARYA

You're no longer the sweet and loving man who proposed to me on the train. You've changed.

LOPAKHIN

Don't think *you* haven't changed.

VARYA

Exactly how have I changed?

LOPAKHIN

You're callous with your mother. You've befriended those ridiculous clowns. And, you're giving the man who loves you ultimatums.

VARYA

You love me?

LOPAKHIN

I would never have proposed marriage to you if I didn't love you.

VARYA

But, that was days ago.

LOPAKHIN

Exactly. It was only a few days ago.

VARYA

It seems like a million years ago.

LOPAKHIN

You're tired. You're not thinking clearly.

VARYA

*(lays down in bed)* Go to work.

LOPAKHIN

*(kisses HER forehead)* Rest. Take the day off.

VARYA

This goddamn sun. Hand me my sleep mask.

*LOPAKHIN does what HE is told, then leaves. VARYA puts HER hands over HER ears so not to hear the sound of the axes.  
Blackout*

Scene 13

*The same evening. LYUBOV is in the kitchen, happy, humming to HERSELF, fixing dinner, while FESTE and PIGEON are in the bedroom of LOPAKHIN and VARYA*

LOPAKHIN

*(coming home from work)* Varya. That smells wonderful. What did you make?

LYUBOV

How was work?

LOPAKHIN

Oh. It's you. *You* made dinner? *(looks around and sneaks a kiss)*

LYUBOV

Beef Stroganoff. It's one of my favorite dishes.

LOPAKHIN

It smells delicious. I never knew you could cook.

LYUBOV

There's so much more to learn about me.

*LOPAKHIN kisses HER on the cheek*

LYUBOV

You make me feel like a young schoolgirl.

LOPAKHIN

You're such a bright spot in my life.

LYUBOV

What about Varya?

LOPAKHIN

*(quietly)* I honestly thought she was. I honestly thought she was for a very long time. But, maybe the woman I've always loved is you? When you returned, I just started to experience these feelings ... emotions for you. *(pause)* But, Varya is a good and decent girl. I ought to check on her. Was everything okay between the two of you today?

LYUBOV

She's been upstairs in the bedroom all day. *Someone* had to make a nice home-cooked meal.

LOPAKHIN

I need to let her down gently. As much as it will break her heart, she deserves the truth. I do care about her feelings.

LYUBOV

Handle this as you see fit ...

LOPAKHIN

Are Feste and Pigeon finished with work for the day?

LYUBOV

I haven't heard the axes for at least one hour. I think they're with/

LOPAKHIN

Varya?

LYUBOV

Yes. It seems they've become quite ... close.

LOPAKHIN

I'll be back. (*walks towards THEIR bedroom and opens the door*)

*VARYA is still in bed. THE CLOWNS are trying to console HER.*

You've really been in bed *all day*?

*VARYA nods*

PIGEON

We've been offering her tea, water, snacks. She won't take a bite.

FESTE

She's just been lying in her bed. We're trying to keep her company, but she's not in the mood to talk.

LOPAKHIN

Why don't the two of you go downstairs and join Lyubov for dinner? We'll be down shortly.

*FESTE and PIGEON shrug, then exit*

Varya. What can I do?

VARYA

I'm not sure you can do anything, Lopakhin.

LOPAKHIN

Then, what can I do to make this less painful?

VARYA

Move us far away from this estate.

*Silence*

You can have contact with my mother, but it can *only* concern financial matters.

*Silence*

You must strongly encourage her to seek employment of her *own*.

*Silence*

She's venomous. I'm cutting her out of my life completely. (*pause*) Why aren't you responding to any of my requests?

LOPAKHIN

Obviously the clowns have told you what's been going on.

VARYA

(*sits up*) Told me what? They see I'm hurting, and they've been my friends.

LOPAKHIN

They haven't said anything else?

VARYA

No. What are *you* not telling me?

LOPAKHIN

Varya ...

VARYA

What are you keeping from me?

LOPAKHIN

...

VARYA

Say something. Now.

LOPAKHIN

... I'm not keeping anything from/

VARYA

Liar.

LOPAKHIN

It's nothing ...

VARYA

No, it's *something*. And, I have words for you, *too*. I'm through with the cherry orchard. I have no interest in sharing a stupid summer cottage with you.

LOPAKHIN

You've made *that* abundantly clear.

VARYA

Now, you need to make things abundantly clear to me.

LYUBOV (off-stage)

Lopakhin! Dinner is getting cold!

LOPAKHIN

I'll be right down.

VARYA

(*yelling*) Am I allowed to have dinner, too, mother? Or, are you *only* inviting Lopakhin?

LYUBOV (off-stage)

If you want dinner then come downstairs.

LOPAKHIN

She made a beef stroganoff.

VARYA

Oh, Isn't that lovely? My mother. The domestic goddess. Making delicious meals for *you*.

LOPAKHIN

She made it for everyone.

VARYA

No. She wants to play the role of the dutiful *woman* in your life.

LOPAKHIN

So, Feste and Pigeon *did* tell you.

VARYA

Tell me what, Lopakhin?

*Silence*

What's the big secret? Feste! Pigeon! Come upstairs immediately.

LYUBOV (off-stage)

But, they just settled down to dinner/

VARYA

Shut up, mother.

LYUBOV (off-stage)

How very lady-like.

*FESTE and PIGEON run upstairs and enter the bedroom*

PIGEON

You called for us?

VARYA

Yes. Lopakhin said you told me something. Something very important, I assume.

LOPAKHIN

Go back downstairs/

VARYA

Will someone tell me *exactly* what is going on?

LOPAKHIN

Go finish your dinner. We can handle this ourselves/

FESTE

Not *this* again.

VARYA

Not *what* again?

FESTE

The last time we told the truth because we thought it was the *ethical* thing to do, Lopakhin threatened to take us to the Police.

PIGEON

Right. (*points to LOPAKHIN*) I don't trust him. (*pause*) And, I don't think you should trust him either, Varya.

LOPAKHIN

You're just lowly clowns. No one takes you seriously/

PIGEON

There's only one lowly person in this room, and it's *not* me, Feste, or Varya.

*LYUBOV runs upstairs*

LOPAKHIN

Don't you dare call me lowly.

VARYA

Feste and Pigeon are my friends. I trust them over you, Lopakhin.

*LYUBOV enters*

LYUBOV

If you don't trust your own fiancé, perhaps you should call off the wedding.

LOPAKHIN

Lyubov.

VARYA

Why are you intent on stealing him away from me?

LOPAKHIN

You don't need to answer her.

VARYA

She *does* need to answer me.

LYUBOV

Lopakhin has prestige. Rank. He can't be marrying a governess.

VARYA

What a hateful thing to say.

LYUBOV

It's the truth.

VARYA

No, it isn't. What's the *real* reason you want Lopakhin?

LOPAKHIN

Varya, darling. It's because she loves me.

*Silence*

VARYA

My mother only loves herself. She's a self-indulgent, manipulative seductress. She doesn't love you.

LOPAKHIN

We never meant to hurt you. We never meant to betray you. It just ... happened.

PIGEON

And, we saw it happen firsthand.

FESTE

We saw them kissing.

*VARYA throws pillows, blankets, brushes, hand mirrors, whatever SHE can find at  
LOPAKHIN and LYUBOV*

VARYA

Why didn't you tell me?

FESTE

We wanted to give him time to change his mind and marry you.

PIGEON

We thought there was still a chance he'd choose you, Varya.

LOPAKHIN

I'm so sorry.

*VARYA spits on LOPAKHIN*

LYUBOV

You're behaving like an animal.

VARYA

You overlooked and disregarded me your entire life, mother.

LYUBOV

I just felt more of a bond to your sister.

VARYA

You ignored me just like you ignored Firs and *all* the “little peasants.”

LYUBOV

I never *ignored* you or Firs/

VARYA

He was left behind! Did Lopakhin bother to tell you that? He sent you, me, and Anya away, and *abandoned* Firs in the estate.

LYUBOV

Is that true? I was under the impression someone took him to the hospital, and he died in the hospital.

LOPAKHIN

I made a hideous mistake, Lyubov. I feel awful for it. Please, don't think less of me. *Please.*

VARYA

(*to LOPAKHIN*) It's so painfully obvious to me now. You don't care. You don't feel the least bit guilty.

LYUBOV

Firs was old. He didn't have many years ahead of him. (*to LOPAKHIN*) I don't think less of you.

VARYA

The two of you are loathsome. Despicable. I could vomit right now.

*LYUBOV makes a face of disgust*

LYUBOV

You're an unrefined governess. That's all you are, and all you'll ever be.

LOPAKHIN

Don't be so hard on her ...

VARYA

(*to LOPAKHIN*) I loved you. I *always* loved you.

LOPAKHIN

I know. I know. I loved you, too. I just didn't realize I always loved Lyubov, too.

LOPAKHIN (con't)

I've denied it for years. I tried my best to push those feelings aside. *(to LYUBOV)* Why do you think I sent you to Paris? But, then I went to the cherry orchard in the snow, and I felt your presence ...

PIGEON

*(to VARYA)* Sweetheart, you deserve so much better.

FESTE

Maybe it's best you find out now before walking down the aisle.

VARYA

*(to LOPAKHIN)* You are going to get what you deserve. *(points to LYUBOV)* I know her a Hell of a lot better than you do. You're an *idiot* if you think she loves you.

LOPAKHIN

I'm not an idiot.

VARYA

You are an idiot. It's not love she's after. It's financial security. She wants to be a kept woman.

LOPAKHIN

Don't say that.

VARYA

You don't see her disagreeing, do you?

LYUBOV

Well, I'm certainly not *agreeing* ...

VARYA

You'll find the truth in what she *doesn't* say.

*LOPAKHIN looks at LYUBOV who has a blank expression*

Come on, clowns.

FESTE

Where are we going?

VARYA

It's time to set a torch to the cherry orchard.

*Blackout*

Scene 14

*Later that night in the cherry orchard. FESTE, PIGEON, and VARYA are laughing.*

PIGEON  
Their faces.

FESTE  
Their jaws just dropped.

VARYA  
They went completely pale.

FESTE  
*(imitating VARYA)* It's time to set a torch to the cherry orchard.

PIGEON  
Can we set a torch to the cherry orchard? I want to do it. Can we do it?

VARYA  
No, I just wanted to scare them.

PIGEON  
Can we act as if we're setting fire to the cherry orchard?

FESTE  
How cathartic.

*THEY run through the cherry orchard, acting as if THEY have matches*

PIGEON  
Goodbye, Cherry Orchard!

FESTE  
Burn, burn, BURN!

VARYA  
Goodbye the dreary past.

PIGEON  
Goodbye to lies and deception.

FESTE

Goodbye to scandalous secrets.

VARYA

Goodbye to prejudice. (*imitating LYUBOV*) You can't marry a *governess*.

PIGEON

(*imitating LOPAKHIN*) You're just a lowly clown.

FESTE

Goodbye intolerance, chauvinism, and arrogance.

VARYA

No more treating people like non-entities.

PIGEON

Burn, cherry orchard, burn.

*THEY fall down and laugh*

FESTE

(*points to estate*) They know absolutely *nothing* about humanity and decency.

VARYA

Explain what you mean, my wise companion.

FESTE

I am Feste "the fool" until the end of time. The "fool" title denotes that I was employed by a noble family to play music and engage in witty banter.

PIGEON

And, I'm the dim-witted, dumb "clown" who is almost always written out of *Titus*. There's a distinct difference between fools and clowns, you know?

FESTE

Wealthy, poor ...

PIGEON

Refined, uncivilized ...

FESTE

But, when I look at Pigeon, I don't see any of that.

PIGEON

And, to me, Feste isn't defined by his rank.

We're just friends. PIGEON  
  
 We're equals. FESTE  
  
*VARYA grabs their hands*  
 And, I love you both. Where do we go from here, my faithful friends? VARYA  
  
 Illyria. FESTE  
  
 What's Illyria? VARYA  
  
 My home. It's an exotic island on the Adriatic Sea. FESTE  
  
 It sounds beautiful. VARYA  
  
 It's dreamlike. It embraces the unusual. FESTE  
  
 How far is it from here? PIGEON  
  
 It's roughly 6,000 miles from here. It's a 62 hour train ride from the Moscow station. There is a stop in Budapest. FESTE  
  
 I've always wanted to see Budapest. PIGEON  
  
 A train ride to a magical place with my two best friends. It's sounds perfect. If only we have the money. VARYA  
  
 Ready for a bit of magic? FESTE  
  
 Yes. VARYA

FESTE

Abracadabra. Alakazam. They money to travel, appear in my hand. (*reaches into HIS pocket and pulls out hush money*)

VARYA

Is it real?

FESTE

Yes.

VARYA

Where did you get it?

FESTE

It's a mystery.

VARYA

Is it enough to travel to Illyria?

FESTE

It's *more* than enough.

VARYA

We'll leave in the morning. O, brave new world!

*Blackout*

### Scene 15

*The next morning. The living room*

LYUBOV

I never even heard of Illyria. It sounds uncivilized.

*The sound of FESTE, PIGEON, and VARYA laughing and packing*

LOPAKHIN

They certainly seem happy about going there.

LYUBOV

How are they affording all of this?

LOPAKHIN

Well. Um. Feste is a Court Jester. He probably has money. Plus, the money I paid them for all their labor.

LYUBOV

I see.

LOPAKHIN

*(walks towards HER)* But, we're finally free to be lovers.

*THEY kiss briefly*

LYUBOV

You're my strong, handsome, smart, accomplished man.

LOPAKHIN

I'm so glad that a man like *me* finally gets to call a woman like *you* his wife.

LYUBOV

Wife?

LOPAKHIN

I'll buy you a ring. I don't have one yet. But, I intend to propose to you.

LYUBOV

I'm so flattered. But, maybe we can wait a little while to become man and wife?

LOPAKHIN

But, I want to be your husband.

LYUBOV

Lopakhin. You're mine. You belong to me. But, there's no need to purchase a ring ... just yet.

LOPAKHIN

Why wait?

LYUBOV

It will happen. But, let's just be lovers. For now.

LOPAKHIN

I suppose I can live with that.

LYUBOV

I swear I'm yours. I'm nobody else's. But, let's not rush to get married. Let's live in the moment instead.

LOPAKHIN

Live in the moment.

LYUBOV

Our lives will be filled with love, adventure, and romance.

LOPAKHIN

I'm so thankful you made your way back.

LYUBOV

I am, too, Lopakhin.

*FESTE, PIGEON, and VARYA with suitcases enter*

PIGEON

Goodbye, Lyubov and Lopakhin.

FESTE

Have a wonderful life together.

VARYA

*(approaches LOPAKHIN)* I'm genuinely sorry it came to this, Lopakhin. I meant it when I said I loved you.

LOPAKHIN

I wish you the best, Varya.

VARYA

But, my mother managed to trap you. *(pause)* I'm just disappointed you fell for it. I thought you were better than that.

LOPAKHIN

I never intended to cause you pain.

VARYA

I'm moving forward with me life. Good-bye.

*FESTE, PIGEON, VARYA exit*

LOPAKHIN

We're free.

LYUBOV  
Free?

LOPAKHIN  
It's only us. Finally.

*HE kisses LYUBOV, but SHE doesn't quite return the kiss*

We can finally show our affection openly.

*HE kisses HER again until SHE gently pulls away*

LYUBOV  
I'm very fond of you, and I have the utmost respect for you.

LOPAKHIN  
Fond? Respect? That's not exactly romantic.

*The carriages are heard leaving. It becomes quiet and still. A pause, then ...*

LYUBOV  
We will be the best of companions, Lopakhin.

LOPAKHIN  
But, we kissed. Multiple times. I told you my innermost feelings.

LYUBOV  
We'll be the best of companions who sometimes show affection for one another.

LOPAKHIN  
But, you forgave me for all my past mistakes. You never judged me. Didn't you do that out of love?

LYUBOV  
There are many forms of love, Lopakhin. We can still live with one another and be happy.

LOPAKHIN  
You invited me to your bedroom a few evenings ago.

LYUBOV  
We can do that on occasion ...

LOPAKHIN  
But, I want to commit myself to you. I thought you wanted the exact same thing.

LYUBOV  
I'm sorry if I've given you the wrong impression.

LOPAKHIN  
Was she right?

LYUBOV  
What are you talking about?

LOPAKHIN  
Was Varya right about you?

LYUBOV  
I don't quite know what you mean/

LOPAKHIN  
Did you seduce me because you wanted to be a "kept" woman? Did you tell me you loved me just for my financial support?

LYUBOV  
I never said I loved you.

LOPAKHIN  
Yes, you did!

LYUBOV  
...

LOPAKHIN  
You lied to me.

LYUBOV  
It wasn't a lie. I merely allowed you to believe what you wanted to believe.

LOPAKHIN  
Why on Earth did you seduce me if you didn't love me?

LYUBOV  
I'm actually a very intelligent woman. I'm not stupid like everyone thinks I am.

LOPAKHIN  
Why did you take me away from Varya?

LYUBOV  
You made your own choices, Lopakhin.

LOPAKHIN

You calculating succubus. You're nothing but a loathsome creature in a pretty dress.

LYUBOV

Are you through calling me names?

LOPAKHIN

I fell in love with a whore.

LYUBOV

I'm *not* a whore. I was a desperate, destitute woman when I walked through that door. I felt Varya's hatred of me immediately. All of a sudden, I was *powerless*. My little, adopted, governess daughter had the power to convince you to ignore me ... abandon me ...

LOPAKHIN

Varya was right all along ...

LYUBOV

I needed to get her out of the picture. It's not like I *killed* her.

LOPAKHIN

But, you had to break us up to ensure you had my money.

LYUBOV

What's the expression? Desperate times call for desperate measures.

LOPAKHIN

You've destroyed me life, Lyubov.

LYUBOV

We can be companions and occasional lovers. We can cohabit and have a pleasant life together.

LOPAKHIN

You've ruined my life. It's gone. Nothing's left.

*LOPAKHIN runs to the door in a last ditch effort to catch up with VARYA. LYUBOV blocks the door, then kisses HIM.*

LYUBOV

Even if you were to catch up with her, it's doubtful she'd take you back.

LOPAKHIN

What have I done?

LYUBOV

Take a little rest, Lopakhin. I'll even make us dinner. We'll find a way to make this situation ... work.

LOPAKHIN

No. We'll never find a way to make this work.

LYUBOV

Take a little rest. *(she kisses HIM on the cheek, then exits to bedroom)*

LOPAKHIN

They left.... *(Sits on the divan)* Forgot about me...It's nothing...I'll sit here awhile. Life has passed by as if it were never lived...*(Lies down)* I'll lie down awhile...You don't have your strength now, do you? Nothing's left, nothing...

*A distant sound is heard, as if coming from the sky – the sound of a snapping string, dying away, sad. The silence descends and LOPAKHIN drifts off to sleep*

*Blackout. End of Play.*