

**Lopakhin** (*astonished, shrugging his shoulders*) Wake me up! . . . where did you get it from?

**Pischik** In a minute . . . I'm boiling over . . . extraordinary event occurred. Some Englishmen appeared at my house, dug up some white clay . . . (*To Lyubov Andreyevna.*) And four hundred for you . . . you bewitching, glorious . . . (*He gives her money.*) You'll get the rest in a few days. (*He drinks water.*) In the train, I heard a young man quoting some marvellous philosopher. His advice to the world is: 'Climb on to the roof, then jump off . . . Jump!' – he says, that's it! (*Astonished.*) Extraordinary! Water, water . . .

**Lopakhin** What Englishmen are these?

**Pischik** I sold them a lease on the land with the white clay for twenty-four years . . . However, forgive me, in a rush . . . must run along . . . off to Znoikov's . . . and Kardamonov's . . . I owe everyone money! (*He drinks.*) Good health to you all . . . I'll drop by on Thursday . . .

**Lyubov Andreyevna** We're about to go into town, tomorrow I'm leaving Russia . . .

**Pischik** You're what? (*Alarmed.*) Into town? What for? Oh. Furniture . . . suitcases . . . well, never mind . . . (*Through tears.*) Never mind . . . most extraordinary people I've ever met, those English . . . never mind . . . be happy . . . May God look after you . . . it doesn't matter . . . everything in the world comes to an end . . . (*He kisses Lyubov Andreyevna's hand.*) And if one day someone tells you my end has come, think of this old horse and say: 'Once upon a time there was a certain man . . . Simeonov-Pischik . . . may he rest in peace' . . . weather's looking up . . . extraordinary . . . (*He goes out very distressed, then comes back and speaks from the doorway.*) My Dashenka sends her best wishes! (*He goes.*)

**Lyubov Andreyevna** Now we can go. I'm leaving with two stones on my heart. The first is Firs, he's ill. (*She glances at her watch.*) We can stay, I think, five more minutes . . .

**Anya** Mother, Firs is at the hospital. Yasha sent him this morning.

**Lyubov Andreyevna** The other is Varya. Her life's been getting up at dawn, working right through the day. Now what will she do with herself? Have you noticed how thin she's become, and pale? And she's in tears all the time, poor thing . . . (*Pause. To Lopakhin.*) You know perfectly well my dream was that you and she would marry, there were times it seemed quite likely. (*She whispers to Anya who nods to Charlotta. They both go out.*) She adores you, you've shown signs of tenderness towards her, I don't know, I don't know, I think the two of you deliberately avoid each other. It's ridiculous!

**Lopakhin** I'll be honest with you, I don't understand it either. Everything about it's so strange . . . Is it too late? If not I'm prepared to . . . even right now, what do you think? . . . Why don't we do it and it's done. Once you've gone I'll never get round to it.

**Lyubov Andreyevna** Wonderful! How long can it take? Half a minute, that's all. I'll call her . . .

**Lopakhin** As it happens there's champagne. (*He looks at the glasses.*) Empty, someone's polished it off.

**Yasha** coughs.

**Lopakhin** Drunk it all, dirty dog . . .

**Lyubov Andreyevna** (*excitedly*) This is perfect! I'll leave you to it . . . Yasha, *allez!* I'll call her . . . (*In the doorway.*) Varya, put everything down and come here. Hurry up! (*She goes out with Yasha.*)

**Lopakhin** (*glances at his watch*) So . . .

*Pause.*

*From behind the door comes suppressed laughter, then whispering, then at last Varya comes on.*

**Varya** (*examines everything for a long time*) Odd, I've looked everywhere for . . .

**Lopakhin** What've you lost?

**Varya** I packed it myself, but can I find it?

*Pause.*

**Lopakhin** Where will you go?

**Varya** Me? To the Ragulins . . . I've said I'll look after things for them . . . be their housekeeper, more or less.

**Lopakhin** They're at Yashnevo, am I right? Not that far away. *(Pause.)* So, for this house it's over . . .

**Varya** Where is it? . . . Or did I put it in the trunk? . . . Yes, for this house, that's it . . . no more, never . . .

**Lopakhin** I'm off to Kharkov . . . taking the same train as . . . Lots to do. I'm leaving Yepikhodov in charge here . . . I've taken him on.

**Varya** You what?

**Lopakhin** This time last year – do you remember? – there was snow on the ground, today the sun's out, there's no wind. Though there is a nip in the air . . . and this morning there was frost.

**Varya** Was there? I didn't notice . . . *(Pause.)* Besides which, our thermometer's broken . . .

*Pause.*

*From outside, a voice calls: 'Lopakhin!'*

**Lopakhin** *(as though he's been waiting for this)* Coming! *(He goes out quickly.)*

**Varya** *sits on the floor, lays her head on a bundle of clothes and weeps softly. The door opens, Lyubov Andreyevna comes in warily.*

**Lyubov Andreyevna** And? *(Pause.)* Time to go.

**Varya** *(she has already stopped crying. She wipes her eyes)* Yes, it's time. I won't get to the Ragulins today if you miss your train . . .

**Lyubov Andreyevna** *(in the doorway)* Anya, get ready!

**Anya** *comes on, then Gaev and Charlotta. Gaev wears a warm overcoat with a hood. Servants and Drivers gather. Yepikhodov fusses with everything.*

**Lyubov Andreyevna** At last we're on our way.

**Anya** *(joyfully)* We're on our way!

**Gaev** My friends, dear, kind friends! As we depart from this house for the last time, I feel it incumbent to express the deep emotion that suffuses every inch of my . . .

**Anya** *(imploringly)* Uncle!

**Varya** Uncle, don't!

**Gaev** *(cast down)* The yellow into the corner pocket . . . My lips are sealed . . .

**Trofimov** *comes on, then Lopakhin.*

**Trofimov** Come on, everyone, time to go!

**Lopakhin** Yepikhodov, my coat!

**Lyubov Andreyevna** I want to sit for one tiny moment more. These walls, I feel I've never seen them, never taken them in, or the ceiling, I feel I could stare at them for ever, they seem so precious to me . . .

**Gaev** It comes back to me, I was six years old, Trinity Sunday, I sat at this window and watched my father setting off to church . . .

**Lyubov Andreyevna** Have we got everything?

**Lopakhin** I think so. *(To Yepikhodov, putting on his overcoat.)* I want you to follow my instructions to the letter.

**Yepikhodov** *(hoarse)* Don't worry, I will.

**Lopakhin** What's wrong with your voice?

**Yepikhodov** I drank some water, went down the wrong way.

**Yasha** *(with contempt)* Barbarians . . .!

**Lyubov Andreyevna** We'll be gone -- and not a soul will be here . . .

**Lopakhin** Until the spring.

**Varya** *pulls an umbrella out of a bundle, as though brandishing it.*

**Lopakhin** *makes a face as though he were afraid.*

**Varya** What . . . ? Did you think . . . ? No, I didn't mean to . . .

**Trofimov** Everyone, into the carriages . . . we must go! The train's about to arrive!

**Varya** Petya, they're here, your galoshes, by this suitcase. *(In tears.)* They're so dirty, so worn out . . .

**Trofimov** *(putting on his galoshes)* Everyone, let's go!

**Gaev** *(very upset, afraid of bursting into tears)* Train . . . railway station . . . sink the blue, white off the middle cushion . . .

**Lyubov Andreyevna** Let's go!

**Lopakhin** Is everyone here? We haven't left anyone behind? *(He locks the door on the left.)* I've put everything of value in there, it must be kept locked. Let's go!

**Anya** Goodbye, house! Goodbye, old life!

**Trofimov** Welcome, new life! *(He goes out with Anya.)*

**Varya** *looks round the room, then goes out in her own time.* **Yasha** and **Charlotta**, *holding her dog, go out.*

**Lopakhin** That's it till spring. Off we go, everybody . . . Farewell! *(He goes out.)*

**Lyubov Andreyevna** and **Gaev** *have been waiting for the moment when they are alone together. They throw themselves on each other's necks, sobbing gently so they won't be overheard.*

**Gaev** *(in despair)* My sister, my sister . . .

**Lyubov Andreyevna** Oh, my beautiful orchard! . . . My life, my childhood, my happiness, goodbye! . . . Goodbye! . . .

**Anya's voice** *(calling cheerfully)* Mother!

**Trofimov's voice** *(cheerful, excited)* Where are you . . . ?

**Lyubov Andreyevna** One last look . . . the walls, the windows . . . Mother loved to stroll round this room . . .

**Gaev** My sister, my sister . . . !

**Anya's voice** Mother . . . !

**Trofimov's voice** Where are you . . . ?

**Lyubov Andreyevna** We're coming! *(They go out.)*

*The stage is empty.*

*The sound of a key locking all the doors, then the carriages are heard driving away. It grows quiet.*

*Amid the silence, the dull thud of an axe against a tree rings out, desolate and sad.*

*Steps are heard. Through the door on the right, Firs comes on, dressed, as always, in a jacket, a white waistcoat and slippers. He is ill.*

**Firs** *(goes to the door and tries the handle)* Locked. They've gone . . . *(He sits on the divan.)* And me? They forgot . . . Never mind . . . I'll sit here a minute . . . I'll bet Leonid Andreyevich isn't wearing his fur coat, he'll have put on the cotton one . . . *(He sighs anxiously.)* I didn't have a chance to check . . . What do they know? Born yesterday . . . *(He mumbles inaudibly.)* Life begins, ends, when do you find time to live it . . . ? *(He lies down.)* I'll lie here a minute . . . No strength, none left, not a drop . . . Ach, you're useless. *(He lies still.)*

*From far away, a sound rings out. It's as though there came from the sky the sound of a string breaking, then dying away mournfully.*

*Silence.*

*Then the only thing that can be heard is an axe, far away in the orchard, thudding against a tree.*