

CHERRY ORCHARD

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS BY
ANTON CHEKHOV

TRANSLATED BY
CURT COLUMBUS



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

CHERRY ORCHARD
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The world premiere of CHERRY ORCHARD was produced by Steppenwolf Theater Company (Martha Lavey, Artistic Director; David Hawkanson, Executive Director) in Chicago, Illinois, on November 4, 2004. It was directed by Tina Landau; the scenic design was by Riccardo Hernandez; the costume design was by Jennifer Roberts; the lighting design was by Scott Zielinski; the sound design was by Rob Milburn and Michael Bodeen; and the stage manager was Malcolm Ewen. The cast was as follows:

LOVEY RANEVSKAYA	Amy Morton
ANYA	Chaon Cross
VARYA	Elizabeth Rich
LEONID GAEV	Francis Guinan
YERMOLAI LOPAKIN	Yasen Peyankov
PETER TROFIMOV	Ned Noyes
BORIS SEMYONOV-PISCHIK, PASSERBY	Robert Breuler
CHARLOTTA	Rondi Reed
SEMYON YEPIHODOV	Guy Adkins
DUNYASHA	Anne Adams
FIRS	Leonard J. Kraft
YASHA	Ben Vicellio
GUESTS, OTHER SERVANTS	Chris Yonan, Julian Martinez

CHERRY ORCHARD was subsequently produced by Trinity Repertory Company (Curt Columbus, Artistic Director; Edgar Dobie, Executive Director) in Providence, Rhode Island, on September 20, 2006. It was directed by Curt Columbus; the set design was by Eugene Lee; the costume design was by William Lane; the lighting design was by Deb Sullivan; the sound design was by Peter Sasha Hurowitz; and the production stage manager was Alden Vasquez. The cast was as follows:

LOVEY RANEVSKAYA Phyllis Kay
ANYA Emily Young
VARYA Crystal Finn
LEONID GAEV Brian McEleney
YERMOLAI LOPAKIN Joe Wilson Jr.
PETER TROFIMOV Stephen Thorne
BORIS SEMYONOV-PISCHIK, PASSERBY ... Fred Sullivan Jr.
CHARLOTTA Anne Scurria
SEMYON YEPIHODOV Stephen Berenson
DUNYASHA Angela Brazil
FIRS Barbara Meek
YASHA Mauro Hantman
GUESTS, OTHER SERVANTS Nicholas Few, Jason Hart

CHARACTERS

LOVEY RANEVSKAYA, a landowner

ANYA, her daughter, 17

VARYA, her adopted daughter, 24

LEONID GAEV, her brother

YERMOLAI LOPAKIN, a merchant

PETER TROFIMOV, a student

BORIS SEMYONOV-PISCHIK, a neighboring landowner

CHARLOTTA, a governess

SEMYON YEPIHODOV, a bookkeeper

DUNYASHA, a maid

FIRS, a servant, an old man of 87 years

YASHA, a young servant

A PASSERBY

THE STATIONMASTER

THE POSTMAN

GUESTS, OTHER SERVANTS

PLACE

The action takes place on Mme. Ranevskaya's estate.

CHERRY ORCHARD

ACT ONE

A room, which is still referred to as "the play room." Early dawn, just before sunrise. It is already May, and the cherry trees are in bloom, but there is a morning frost in the garden.

Dunyasha enters with a candle, and Lopakin enters carrying a book.

LOPAKIN. The train's come in, thank God. What time is it?

DUNYASHA. Almost two. *(Blows out the candle.)* It's light out.

LOPAKIN. How late was that train anyway? An hour or two, at least. And I'm some kind of an idiot. I came over here just so I could go meet them at the station, and all of a sudden, I fall asleep... Sitting up. Too bad... Why didn't you wake me up?

DUNYASHA. I thought you'd left. *(Listens.)* They're here already, I think.

LOPAKIN. *(Listens.)* No. They have to get their luggage, and then, you know... *(Pause.)* Miss Lovey's been abroad for five years now, I can't imagine what she's like anymore... She's a good person. A sweet, simple person. I remember once, when I was fifteen, my father, rest his soul, he was still a servant around these parts then. And he'd punched me in the face with his fist, the blood was running out of my nose... We'd come out in the yard together for some reason, and he was completely drunk. Miss Lovey, I'm just remembering, she was so young, so thin, took me over to that wash basin over there, in this very room, the play room. She says, "Don't cry, you poor little country boy, you'll live to see your wedding day..." *(Pause.)* Little country boy... Now my father really was a hick, but here I am, in my white waistcoat and my cream shoes. A silk purse out of a sow's ear...

Look at me, rich, lots of money, but I can't stop worrying about people saying, "Once a little country boy, always..." (*Thumbs through his book.*) I read this book, didn't understand a word. Read it, fell asleep. (*Pause.*)

DUNYASHA. The dogs didn't sleep all night long, they can sense their mistress is coming.

LOPAKIN. Come on, that's ridiculous...

DUNYASHA. My hands are shaking. I'm going to faint.

LOPAKIN. You're so dainty, Dunyasha. All dressed up like a lady. And that hairdo. It's not right. You need to remember your place. (*Yepihodov enters with flowers. He is wearing a jacket and spit-polished boots, which squeak loudly. As he enters, he drops the flowers.*)

YEPIHODOV. (*Picking up the flowers.*) The gardener sent these over, he recommended that you put them on a table. (*Gives them to Dunyasha.*)

LOPAKIN. And bring me some beer while you're at it.

DUNYASHA. Yes. Sir. (*Exits.*)

YEPIHODOV. There's a frost, it's below the point of freezing outside, and yet the cherry trees are all in blossom. I cannot say that I approve of our climate. (*Sighs.*) I cannot. At the same time, one cannot assist the climate in any way. And, sir, allow me to say in addition, that it has been three days since I bought these boots and they, let me tell you, squeak with utter abandon. Can you tell me what I might lubricate them with?

LOPAKIN. Shut up. You're boring.

YEPIHODOV. Something unfortunate befalls me daily. But I don't complain, I'm inured to it, it even causes me to smile. (*Dunyasha enters and gives Lopakin his beer.*) I better go. (*He bumps into a chair and knocks it over.*) See, you'll pardon the expression, but that's the kind of circumstance, by the by... It's actually quite remarkable. (*Exits.*)

DUNYASHA. Guess what? He proposed to me!

LOPAKIN. Ah!

DUNYASHA. I don't know how to... He's a sweet little man, but then he opens his mouth, and you can't understand a word he says. It sounds normal, he really means what he's saying, it just doesn't make any sense. I even sort of like him. And he's out of his head in love with me. He's really unlucky, every day, it's something else. We tease him behind his back, we say, "There goes Trouble..."

LOPAKIN. (*Listens.*) Wait, I think I hear them coming.

DUNYASHA. They're coming! What's wrong with me, all of a

sudden I'm cold.

LOPAKIN. It's them, they're coming. Let's go meet them. Is she going to recognize me? We haven't seen each other for five years.

DUNYASHA. (*Excited.*) I'm really going to faint, I'm just going to faint! (*Lopakin and Dunyasha quickly exit. The stage is empty. Noise comes from the next room. Firs enters, leaning heavily on his cane, and hurries across the stage. He seems to be talking to himself, but it's impossible to make anything out. The noise in the next room gets louder. Someone says, "Let's go through here." Enter Lovey, Anya, Charlotta with a little dog on a leash, all dressed for travel. Enter Varya, Gaev, Semyonov-Pischik, Lopakin, Dunyasha, servants with the baggage. They all pass through the room.*)

ANYA. Let's go through here. Mama, do you remember this room?

LOVEY. (*Happily, through tears.*) The play room!

VARYA. It's so cold, I can't feel my hands. (*To Lovey.*) Your rooms, the white one and the violet one, are exactly like you left them, Mama.

LOVEY. The play room, my sweet, beautiful room... I used to sleep here, when I was little... (*Cries.*) And I feel so little again... (*Kisses her brother, Varya, then her brother again.*) Varya hasn't changed at all, you still look like a nun. And I knew Dunyasha right away... (*Kisses Dunyasha.*)

GAEV. That train was two hours late. What is that? Is that standard procedure?

CHARLOTTA. (*To Pischik.*) My dog eats nuts.

PISCHIK. Can you imagine! (*They all exit, except Anya and Dunyasha.*)

DUNYASHA. We almost gave up waiting for you...

ANYA. I didn't sleep for the last four nights on the way home... now I'm freezing.

DUNYASHA. When you left before Lent, there was snow, and everything was frozen, and look at it now. Sweetheart! I'd almost given up waiting for you, my sweetheart, darling... I have so much to tell you, I can't stand it another minute...

ANYA. (*Fading.*) Always something...

DUNYASHA. The bookkeeper, Yepihodov, he proposed to me the day after Easter.

ANYA. It's always the same thing with you. (*Fixes her hair.*) All my hairpins fell out... (*She seems to be near collapse with fatigue.*)

DUNYASHA. I don't even know what to think. He loves me, so much!

ANYA. My room, my window, it's like I never left. I'm home!

Tomorrow morning I'll get up and run through the orchard... If only I could fall asleep! I didn't sleep the whole way, I was worn out worrying.

DUNYASHA. And guess who came three days ago—Peter Trofimov.

ANYA. Peter!

DUNYASHA. He's been sleeping out in the shed, living out there. They say he's afraid, of getting in the way. I should go wake him up, but Varya won't let me. "You," she says. "Let him sleep." (*Enter Varya, with a large key ring on her belt.*)

VARYA. Dunyasha, go make coffee, now... Mama is asking for some.

DUNYASHA. Right away. (*Exits.*)

VARYA. Well, thank God, you all made it. And you're home. My little baby is back. My beautiful girl is back!!

ANYA. I went through so much.

VARYA. I can only imagine.

ANYA. We left the week of Lent, when it was so cold. Charlotta talked the whole way, kept doing her magic tricks. Why did you have to shackle her to me?

VARYA. You couldn't go by yourself, my baby. You're only seventeen!

ANYA. We made it to Paris, it was cold there, too, snowing. My French is terrible. Mama was living on the sixth floor, we went up, there are all of these French people there, men, women, an old priest with some book, it's smoky, it's crowded. Suddenly I felt so bad for Mama, so bad, I held her so tight, I squeezed her hands, I couldn't let go. Mama just melted, she started to cry...

VARYA. (*Through tears.*) Don't tell me, please don't tell me...

ANYA. Her house near Menton, she'd already sold it by then, she had nothing left, nothing. I didn't have a single kopeck either, I barely made it there. And Mama doesn't get it! We're sitting in the station, having dinner, and she orders the most expensive things, then tips the waiters a whole ruble. Charlotta, too. Yasha demands his own cut, it's just awful. You know she has her servant, that Yasha, we brought him back with us.

VARYA. I saw him, that hooligan.

ANYA. So? Have they paid the interest?

VARYA. With what?

ANYA. Oh my God.

VARYA. In August they're going to auction off the estate.

ANYA. My God.

LOPAKIN. (*Sticks his head in the door and bleats.*) Baaaa-a! (*Exits.*)

VARYA. (*Through tears.*) I am going to beat that one... (*Shakes her fist at him.*)

ANYA. (*Hugs her, softly.*) Varya, did he propose? (*Varya shakes her head no.*) It's obvious he's in love with you... Why haven't the two of you talked, what are you both waiting for?

VARYA. I think about it, but nothing ever happens. He's so busy, we just never... he doesn't pay attention to me anyway. God help me, it's even hard for me to look at him... Everyone keeps talking about our wedding, they keep congratulating me, when in fact there's nothing to it, it's like a nightmare... (*In a different tone.*) Your pretty pin looks like a little bee.

ANYA. Mama bought it. But in Paris, I got to ride in a balloon!

VARYA. My little baby's back! My beautiful girl is back! (*Dunyasha returns and begins to prepare the coffee.*) I work all day long, baby, and all I do is dream. I want to find you a rich husband, then I can rest easy, wander off by myself into the wilderness, go to Kiev, to Moscow, make pilgrimages to all the holy places... Just walk and walk. So beautiful!

ANYA. The birds are singing. What time is it?

VARYA. It must be three. Time for you to go to bed, baby. (*Leads Anya into her room.*) So beautiful! (*They exit. Enter Yasha with a travelling blanket and suitcase.*)

YASHA. (*Crossing.*) May I pass through?

DUNYASHA. I didn't recognize you, Yasha. Look at what being abroad has done to you.

YASHA. Hm... And you are?

DUNYASHA. When you left, I was this tall... (*She shows him with her hand.*) Dunyasha, Kosoyedov's daughter. Don't you remember!

YASHA. Hm... you little peach! (*Looks around and grabs her. She screams and drops a saucer. Yasha quickly exits.*)

VARYA. (*Appears at the door.*) What is it now?

DUNYASHA. (*Through tears.*) A saucer broke.

VARYA. That's good luck.

ANYA. (*Entering from her room.*) We should tell Mama that Peter is here.

VARYA. I told them not to wake him up.

ANYA. It was six whole years ago that Father died, then a month later, our little Grisha drowns in the river. He was such a pretty little boy, was he seven? Mama couldn't take it, she left, left and

CHERRY ORCHARD

by Anton Chekhov
translated by Curt Columbus

6M, 6W (doubling, flexible casting)

An aristocratic Russian family tries to hold on in challenging economic times, hoping to preserve a way of life amidst the inevitable pressures of “progress.” When presented with options to fend off impending foreclosure, can the family rise to the challenge? A new translation of Chekhov’s funny, sensual classic about change, loss, renewal, and moving forward.

“Curt Columbus’ new translation [is] a clear, distinct and unfussy rendition that avoids anachronistic language without overplaying the dignity card... it shows us the aristocrats’ greed as well as their sense of loss. ... fair-minded and right-headed.”
—**Variety**

“Columbus’ translation triumphs through its clarity and consistent use of the active voice...”
—**Chicago Reader**

“CHERRY ORCHARD, as conceived by Columbus, moves quickly and has a wealth of humor. It is approachable and accessible, without being ‘dumbed down.’ Columbus’ translation makes Chekhov quotable. It plays the tragedy for what it is; not a capital ‘T’ tragedy, but a tragedy of indecision, immovability and human frailty.”
—**BroadwayWorld.com**

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