

CHERRY BIZARRE

An homage to Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*

by WALTER WYKES

CHARACTERS

LOPAHIN

EPIHODOV

GAEV

FIRS

SETTING

A small country store

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CHERRY BIZARRE

[A small country store. LOPAHIN, a merchant, rests on a stool behind the counter. FIRS, an old man, mumbles incoherently to himself as he sweeps up. There are crates of cherries everywhere and a sign which reads "Cherries for Sale...CHEAP!"]

LOPAHIN

You're a good worker Firs, old man. I don't know how I ever got along without you. You've been quite helpful this past year. Very helpful indeed. You've missed a spot. Very good. Thank you, Firs.

[FIRS says something, but not a word can be distinguished.]

I remember when I was a lad of fifteen, I used to sweep up for my father—he kept a little shop in those days. One day, I missed a spot. Father was furious. I'll never forget that day. He took a broom and shoved it up my ass. Right up my ass! I remember quite clearly.

[Enter GAEV. He rushes to the counter.]

GAEV

Lopahin! I must speak with you! It's urgent!

LOPAHIN

Not now—I'm in the middle of a story.

GAEV

But it's urgent!

LOPAHIN

Where was I?

[FIRS mumbles.]

That's right—the broom!

GAEV

[Spots an empty bookcase.]

Ah! There you are!

[Rushes to the bookcase.]

Oh! Beloved friend! Don't worry, I'll get you out of here! Lopahin, how much do you want for this bookcase?

LOPAHIN

In a moment.

GAEV

Name your price!

LOPAHIN

Where was I? It's so hard to remember after one is interrupted! Oh, yes!

GAEV

[To the bookcase.]

Are you well, my friend? Oh, dearest bookcase! Faithful companion! How I've missed you! You mustn't hate me for leaving. I always intended to come back for you! You must believe that!

[A large pile of cherry crates crashes to the floor as EPIHODOV Enters. Cherries fly everywhere. FIRS mumbles something and begins sweeping them up.]

EPIHODOV

Sorry, everyone! Sorry! Don't mind me. Every day some misfortune befalls me. I don't complain. I'm used to it, and I wear a smiling face!

LOPAHIN

Ah! Good Epihodov! I remember, when I was fifteen I once knocked over a crate of cherries in my father's store. I remember quite vividly. He took the crate and shoved it up my ass. Right up my ass! I was shitting splinters for weeks!

[EPIHODOV trips over his own feet and crashes into the counter, splitting his head open.]

EPIHODOV

There! There, you see! I've split my head open! How do you like that?!

LOPAHIN

The usual?

EPIHODOV

Yes, and a few extra bandages this week if you don't mind.

LOPAHIN

Certainly, my friend!

GAEV

[To the bookshelf.]

Friend? Friend?! Hah! They know nothing of friendship! You and I—we know of friendship! Always true! Never faltering! No, no ... don't cry. Hush now, little bookcase. *[Sotto voce.]* Don't worry ... I have a plan to get you out of here! Shhh! They'll hear you!

[LOPAHIN hands EPIHODOV a box of bandages.]

LOPAHIN

Bandages, there you go. Anything else?

EPIHODOV

Perhaps a little extra gauze? And some kind of disinfectant for minor cuts and bruises?

LOPAHIN

Of course.

[LOPAHIN hands EPIHODOV a long strip of wrapping gauze.]

Cut off what you need. I'll look for the alcohol ... or perhaps some Neosporin Ointment!

EPIHODOV

Whatever you think best, dear friend.

[LOPAHIN rummages through his shelves. EPIHODOV measures out a length of wrapping gauze and picks up an axe to cut it. GAEV begins to fondle the bookcase.]

LOPAHIN

Hydrogen peroxide? I seem to be out of alcohol. You cleaned me out last week.

[EPIHODOV raises the axe and cuts off his hand.]

EPIHODOV

There! You see! I've cut off my hand! It's really quite remarkable! One thing after another!

[FIRS mumbles something and sweeps up EPIHODOV'S hand. He begins wiping up the blood.]

LOPAHIN

Thank you, Firs.

[LOPAHIN pours hydrogen peroxide on EPIHODOV'S hand.]

EPIHODOV

Ooh! It bubbles!

GAEV

[To the bookshelf.]

Now listen carefully. Don't be alarmed, but...

[GAEV lifts his shirt to reveal a small pistol.]

I won't use it unless I have to, so ... remain calm. If you act suspicious, they'll know something's up, and then we'll have to come out shooting! Take a deep breath. Deep breath. Deep breath! You're going to give us away!

LOPAHIN

What's going on over there?

GAEV

Stay back! Stay back or I'll shoot!

[GAEV points the gun at LOPAHIN and EPIHODOV. FIRS begins dusting the bookcase.]

I'll use this if I have to! Now...we're going to walk out of here nice and easy. Nice and easy, understand!

[GAEV lifts the bookcase and moves towards the door. FIRS dusts it as they go, mumbling to himself. As he reaches the door, GAEV slips, and the gun goes off—shooting EPIHODOV several times in the chest.]

EPIHODOV: You see! Didn't I tell you?! One thing after another! But I don't complain. I'm used to it!

[EPIHODOV falls to the ground, dead—blood spurting from his chest. GAEV shields the bookcase from this bloody scene.]

GAEV

Don't look! Please! You don't want to see ... Oh, don't be angry with me. I couldn't stand it if you were angry with me. They drove me to it! Try to understand!

LOPAHIN

You killed him.

GAEV

Yes! I didn't mean to, but I must save this dear bookcase! It has been with me since I was a small child! It is my only true friend! Isn't that right, dear bookcase.

LOPAHIN

Oh, dear Leonid Andreyevitch. What a tragedy! This particular bookcase is not your bookcase at all! Why, I know the bookcase you speak of—it was sold to a traveling salesman the same week your dear boring sister left us!

GAEV

No!

LOPAHIN

Yes.

[Pause.]

GAEV

Then ... this isn't my bookcase?

LOPAHIN

Not at all. I purchased this bookcase from three sisters who claimed to be moving to Moscow ... although I don't think they were really moving anywhere. They talked of nothing else, but it seemed a lot of empty gibberish to me.

GAEV

[To the bookcase.]

You fraud! You led me on! You're not my bookcase!

[He blasts the bookcase to pieces.]

I believe a man should always be prepared to kill himself. That's why I carry a gun.

[GAEV shoots himself in the head.]

LOPAHIN

What a bloody circus.

[Pause. FIRS begins to clean up the mess.]

I remember when I was fifteen, the circus came to town. I wanted to see the circus, but my father thought it frivolous. I remember quite vividly. He took the whole circus and shoved it up my ass. Right up my ass!

[FIRS continues to clean, mumbling to himself incoherently, as the lights fade to black.]

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