

Sorochintsy Fair

Modest Mussorgsky (completed Vissarion Shelabin)

Libretto by the composer, from a short story by Gogol

Characters:

Cherevik, an old peasant (CH)

Parasya, his daughter (P)

Khivria, his wife (KH)

Gritzko, a young peasant (GR)

Afanassi Ivanovitch, son of the parish priest, (AI)

Cherevik's Godfather (GF)

The Gypsy (GY)

The action takes place in the 1830s, in Sorochintsy, now in Ukraine, then in Imperial Russia.

Introduction: A hot summer's day in Ukraine

ACT I

A Fair

Stalls, booths, carts, many different wares exposed for sale. Male and female merchants, peasants, peddlers, gypsies, Jews, young men and women. General excitement and hubbub. A hot and sunny day. Towards the end of the act evening falls.

Choir

Wheels! Horseshoes! Look at these pots! Melons, aubergines, watermelons! Bonnets! Buy me a bonnet! Over here, boys! Crosses, ribbons! Seals, holy water sprinklers! I have imported pumpkins! Who wants sacks? Look, red ribbons! Buy hoops! Wheat flour and meal! Earrings, with precious stones, necklaces! Come on, buy here! Watermelons! Seals! Bonnets! Rolling pins! Hey boys, over here! Melons and watermelons, pumpkins, aubergines! Beautiful ribbons! Come quickly, gentlemen, and buy!

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Two Tenors (to the gypsies)

Come inside our booth, gentlemen. Here we have the finest wines, and anything you could want. Is there anything we can get for you?

The Gypsies

You can go to hell! Unless you were going to give it to us for nothing.

Two Tenors

What? Help, help!

The Gypsies

Like this!

(They steal from the booths. Cossacks and young men arrive)

Choir

Hey, here come the boys! here come the brave lads! You gallop across the steppes, so strong!

The Gypsies

Nails, horseshoe nails, hoops! Horseshoes! You won't find better! They come straight from Poltava!

Cossacks and Young Men

Hey, here come the boys! Here come the Cossacks!

Choir

And look at these bandouras, resonant, singing! Buy them!

(Parasya enters, accompanied by her father, and admires the ribbons and necklaces)

P

Oh father, look at these ribbons, they are magnificent! I'd love to put them in my plaits and look beautiful! And those bright blue ones, how wonderful! Buy them for me, Daddy! And this necklace, so fine, as though it was made for a great lady! Oh father, how beautiful it is!

CH

You'll have to wait until I've sold my wheat and the mare.

Girls

Come on girls, come on doves. Together we'll go and see the boys and speak to them! Oh you boys, you handsome young men! Be generous, buy presents for us; they sell beautiful ribbons and pretty head-scarves over there.

Boys

Oh you girls, you're making so much noise!

Girls

Don't be mean, buy them for us! And in return we'll make beautiful white jackets for you. Come on Cossacks, damn your meanness. Ribbons, scarves? All right?

Boys

Teases! Hoydens! All right, you'll have them.

GY (entering)

Welcome, my fine fellows! Greetings you girls! I wish you great happiness. But we cannot do any business here, as this place is cursed. The forces of evil will harass good Christian folk here, sow discord and create suffering. Do you want to know the truth? Over there, in that old barn, as soon as evening approaches, pigs' snouts are seen, and woe to whoever approaches. Because that spot is haunted by the Red Jacket!

CH and GF

The Red Jacket?

GY

That devil sways people to dishonesty and theft; it steals from them their horses and their cattle and hides them away. At night, it scares people and woe betide whoever meets the Red Jacket. Those who do become a demon like him.

A Young Man (Gritzko) (to Parasya)

Listen to me, beautiful.

P

What are you thinking?

GR

I am being sincere with you.

P

Don't look at me like that. The sparkle in your eyes makes me frightened. Be quiet wicked youth. Let me guard my father's wheat peacefully. Do you understand?

GR

Oh, do I make you that frightened? I love you my dove! I would give anything for a kiss from you. (He embraces Parasya)

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P
Get away, get away!

GR
I would give anything for you, my darling.

CH
Stop that, stop that. That's not right? How dare you treat my daughter that way? I've never seen anything like it!

GR
Oh, it's Solopy himself! Hello my friend, my dear Cherevik!

CH
Well, that may be, but how do you know my name is Solopy?

GR
Haven't you recognised me? I am the son of the Cossack Okhrim Golopoupenko.

CH
Really, the son of Okhrim?

GR
Who else, the Devil perhaps?

CH
To tell you the truth I have seen so many rogues of so many different kinds, in my life, that even the Devil wouldn't surprise me.

GR
You know, Solopy, your daughter and I are so in love with each other that we are ready to live together for the rest of our lives.

CH
Well, Parasya, really, well perhaps, why not, perhaps we could all eat out the same dish, as they say. Shake on it.

GR
Shaken!

CH
Ah, my son-in-law? We'll have to drink to that!

GR
Let's go.

(They head off to the tavern).

Choir

Wheels! Look at the pots! Melons, watermelons, aubergines! Bonnets! Oh, buy them, make the boys come over here! Crosses, ribbons! Liquor in bottles and flasks! I have imported pumpkins! Who needs sacks? Red ribbons, red ribbons! Hoops! Buy them! Wheatflour and wheat meal! Earrings with precious stones! Melons! Seals! Bonnets! Hey boys, over here! Melons and watermelons, pumpkins and aubergines! Ribbons, fine ribbons! Magnificent bonnets! Seals! Bonnets! Rolling-pins! Hurry up! It's getting late, the evening is coming! Soon we'll have to pack everything up into our wagons and go to sleep. Buy now, now everything is at a discount! Evening is falling, soon everyone will go to the taverns.

(The people disperse. Late in the evening Cherevik and his Godfather come out of the tavern, and wander in the semi-darkness, constantly bumping into different things.)

CH

Ah, Cherevik, poor peddler. Above all don't repeat what they said about you, Khivria might hear of it.

GF

Across the endless steppes a Cossack rode to Poltava.

CH

Ah, peddler, where's your pack? It was definitely the Devil who led me on. What a disaster, Lord! He played me a bad trick.

GF

But he did not reach the end of his journey, a woman lay in wait for him along the way.

CH

Come on, peddler, get a hold of yourself. If you've met with the Devil, exorcise him! What a disaster, Lord! He played me a bad trick.

(They gain the road)

Dou-dou, rou-dou-dou. What a woman I married! In her oven the straw burns, in her pot the water bubbles, her house all in ruins, the Cossack had a sad face. Oy, dou-dou, rou-dou-dou, Oy.

(Khivria appears)

Hey wife, I have found our daughter a husband.

Modest Mussorgksy

KH

Bah, it's good of you to look for husbands. Fool. Have you ever heard of an honest man running after husbands? You'd have been better to try to sell your wheat. He better be good, this husband! I bet he's the worst drunk of all these beggars.

CH

Not at all, if only you had seen this lad. He has a jacket worth more than your green woollen jacket and your red shoes. And how well he can drink vodka!

KH

I'm sure of that, I know that if he's a drunk and a thief, then he's your man. I swear that he'll be the same lout who confronted us on the bridge. Pity I didn't lay a hand on him, he would have found out what stuff I'm made of.

CH

But even if it is him, Khivria, why describe him as a lout?

KH

Moron! Were you listening to me? (Confronting him).

Why describe him as a lout? Where were you looking when we passed close by the mills? Someone could insult your wife right under your tobacco-stained nose, and you wouldn't turn a hair!

(Gritzko appears at the back of the stage and listens to the conversation)

CH

And I still don't see what's the matter with him. All he did was to throw a handful of mud in your face.

KH

Ah, will you never let me speak! Oh, idiot! And you've been trailing around the taverns without having sold your wheat. You drunken good for nothing! (She beats him)

There, take that, and that and that. Get back to the house you old devil! (He falls on the ground. She looks at him, hands on hips.)

CH

Ah, the marriage is finished. We have to refuse a handsome young man for no reason. We have to refuse him.

(Gritzko disappears, Khivria picks up Cherevik and walks him across the stage. Cherevik walks very unsteadily)

CH

Ah, peddler, where's your pack? It was definitely the Devil who led me on. What a disaster, Lord! He played me a bad trick. Oy, roudou-dou, rou-dou-dou. What a woman I married! Oy, roudou-dou, rou-dou-dou.

(Gritzko comes slowly on to the stage)

GR

Ah Cherevik, Cherevik! If I was a great man, I would first of all hang all the idiots who let themselves be dominated by their wives. (He goes slowly towards his wagon)

Oh my heart, you groan and cry? How can I console you, poor heart? It must be that fate does not want us to live happily. So be quiet, heart, sadness, begone. All that my heart desires is the love of Parasya. Oh Parasya, my sweet, my dove. Wicked Khivria will make us die. My heart only wants the love of Parasya. Oh my heart, you groan and cry? How can I console you?

(The Gypsy enters and taps him on the shoulder. Gritzko looks at him absently).

GY

What is it that is making you so sad, Gritzko? Will you sell me your bullocks for twenty roubles?

GR

You're only thinking of bullocks! You and the other gypsies only think of business.

GY

Rubbish! You seem very preoccupied! Are you regretting being saddled with a fiancée?

GR

No, I'm keeping my side of the bargain. It's that old greybeard Cherevik who is not keeping his – he promised me, but now he's backing out. We can't be too hard on him, but he is a blockhead and that's certain. It's all the fault of that old shrew, the one my friends and I exchanged a few pleasantries with today.

GY

Will you sell me the bullocks for twenty roubles if I make Cherevik give Parasya to you?

GR

You can have them for fifteen, if you don't deceive me.

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GY

Fifteen? That's wonderful, don't forget, fifteen! Look, I'll pay you in advance.

GR

All right, but if you trick me?

GY

If I do, you keep the money.

GR

All right, shake on it.

GY

Shaken!

(They shake hands and dance).

ACT II

Cherevik's Godfather's House

Cherevik sleeps, Khivria is cooking.

KH (looking at Cherevik)

He hasn't woken up yet, that wretched dormouse! What a beggar! You could say that the Devil has given him a good kick up the backside. What a disgrace! (She continues to cook)

This oven of Godfather's is weird, you put in a fritter and all that comes out is a few lumps of dough.

(She approaches Cherevik) He's sleeping. What a face! Oh, I chose a wonderful husband. As for the other, my little darling, so fair-skinned, so neat and clean, when he speaks it's like he's singing you a song.

CH (in his sleep)

Oh peddler where's your pack? It's the Devil led you on.

KH

Ugh, see how he's started to sing. It's like he's perfectly happy. (Aside) Son of the Devil, just you wait!

(To Cherevik) Have you sold the mare?

CH
I don't know.

KH
Why don't you know?

CH
It was like this, a young man came and asked me 'What are you selling my friend?' I said to him 'wheat and a mare'. Then he asked me the name of the mare. I told him that everyone knows that my mare's name is Khivria.

KH
Stupid dog! Does anyone ever give names to their animals?

CH
What do you mean? You know, Khivria, that the provincial governor has a horse he called Stephen by mistake.

KH (Impatiently) Well, and what did the lad say?

CH
He said, 'Everyone knows that Khivria isn't a mare, she's a rabbit!'

KH
Rabbit yourself! And your wife is a rabbit doe? (Aside) What am I saying? And you, you have rabbit eyes, a rabbit nose, and everything about you is rabbity.

CH
Oh really, everything?

KH
Rabbit, rabbit, rabbit!

CH
You can insult me all you like, but why are you so hard on those poor rabbits?

KH
Venom tongue! Human monster! Poisonous animal! And why are you sitting there like that?

CH
I've had enough of lying down, now I'm sitting.

Modest Mussorgksy

KH (addressing the audience) Have pity on me, good people, I can't put up with this disaster any longer. (To Cherevik) Ah, you won't do as I say, and you want to defy me. Do ordinary men usually defy their wives' wishes sitting in front of them like great lords?

CH

Stop getting angry Khivria, you will spoil your blood. I know you better than you know yourself. Who are you making the fritters for? Are you making them for me?

KH

Who else would I be making them for? But why are you arguing with me? Get up and go out quickly about your business, or you'll see!

CH

Very well, wife, I don't know why you are persecuting me, but I see it's time to leave here. I don't see how anyone can do anything right when you're so spiteful.

KH

What are you saying now, idiot? Hurry up and go, I order you. Go and guard the wheat, go and guard the mare, and stay all night under the cart.

CH

What about the Red Jacket?

KH

All night! Under the cart!

CH

What about the Red Jacket?

KH (with a menacing gesture)

All night! Under the cart!

CH

I'm going, I'm going. Oh you! (On the way to the door) Dear God, why do you make us poor sinners submit like this? There is so much wickedness in the world, and then you created women! (He goes out)

KH (alone)

Come quickly my little darling, my sweet, so neat, come and console me. Oh, my bonnet fell off. (She arranges the bonnet)

I am making you delicious and refined dishes, because I love you. (She takes items out of the oven)

See these pies, these varenikis, and the fritters, known for being tender and exquisite. (She curtsies as though the guest she is waiting for was already at the table). Eat Afanassi Ivanovitch, eat as much as you want.

(She puts her dress right) And my dress is all crooked, and my slippers are full of dust. (She adjusts them and tidivates herself)

Like that, that's better. And now I'll put a little powder on. And see me at once more beautiful and distinguished. Ah, Khivria, aren't you the young beauty?

(She sings) Beautiful young girl charming but proud,
You are deaf to my prayers.

CH (in the wings)
Oh peddler, where is your pack? It's definitely the Devil who led you astray. But where are you going to now, peddler, where will your heart lead you?

KH
Oh, who was that? Oh, I know, it's my Cherevik. The old devil! Has anyone seen the like? No, tell me good people, is it possible? He doesn't sell his wheat, he traipses round the taverns, he pledges friendships with rascals and wants them to marry his daughter. You deserve to have vodka burn your throat and for the Devil to strangle you with his tail. But perhaps you can reform. You could take example from Khivria, who is so economical and discrete. But why hasn't my friend arrived? The pies are getting cold, and the fritters are congealing. Ah, my little darling has tricked me, he is not coming.

(She sits down by the window)

I've worn out my shoes, my shoes,
In going to sell my bread, my bread.
I went to sell it at the market, the market,
But the Cossacks took it from me, took it from me.

(She moves away from the window)
No, I'm not going to look any more. He won't come. Perhaps the Devil has made him go courting another? You will get used to it, Khivria, it will punish you cruelly, you will beg his pardon. But don't worry yourself, Khivria, be happy and sing a song.

I've worn out my shoes since I met Broudéous.
All because of you Broudéous!
See how I kiss him in spite of myself, my Broudéous.
Broudéous wears a nobleman's cape and new flame-red boots.

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Is that really you, Broudéous?

In spite of myself I love him, Broudéous.
Broudéous is a brave Cossack, but he'd rather smoke his pipe,
And slouch near the stove all day.
Go on, get on the move Broudéous!

In spite of myself I'm in love with him, Broudéous.
They sent him to war, but he said: 'I don't mind resting in a grave
But I don't want to hear the whistle of bullets.'
What, aren't you ashamed, Broudéous?

In spite of me he's gone missing, Broudéous.
In the evening, behind the raspberry canes,
Broudéous chuckles to a young girl
'My beauty don't be frightened, be proud to be with Broudéous.'

Then go away Broudéous, all at once
I say goodbye to Broudéous, yes I say goodbye to him!

AI (in the wings)
Hello, hello.

KH (pricking an ear)
Who's that then?

AI
Hello, hello.

KH
We'll see! (She takes a waterjug and prepares to use it as a weapon). Ah,
it's you Afanassi Ivanovitch. (She hides the jug).

AI
Good evening, my dear, good evening.

KH
Good evening, Afanassi Ivanovitch, welcome.

AI
Will you let me come close to you, will you grant me that happiness?

KH (looking through the window)
Yes, but be careful, there are nettles, don't fall. Oh

AI
Ow!

KH

You fell, and right into the nettles! Oh, disaster!
(She puts the jug quickly back in its place and, adjusting her clothes, she moves towards the door and lets Afanassi Ivanovitch in. He is still disoriented by his fall)
Are you hurt? Please God, you haven't broken your neck?

AI (with bravado)

Oh it's nothing at all, dear Khavronia Nikiforovna.

KH

Thank heavens.

AI

If you except a little injury caused by the nettles, that serpent of plants, as the late father Archpriest used to call it.

KH

Come inside then. Don't worry, there is no-one here except us two. My foolish husband has gone to spend the night under the wagons with his godfather, to make sure that those Muscovites don't steal anything.

AI

Divine, incomparable Khavronia Nikiforovna.

KH

And I was worried that you were taken ill with something, as you didn't come.

AI

You are wonderful, without equal!

KH

How is life with you? I heard that your father the Priest has received a very poor amount of tithes recently.

AI

Three times nothing, Khavronia Nikiforovna, three times nothing. During the whole of Lent he barely received 15 sacks of wheat, 4 sacks of millet, a hundred cakes and less than 50 chickens. And as for the eggs, they were mostly rotten.

KH

Afanassi Ivanovitch, you are gorgeous, but you are too proud!

Modest Mussorgksy

AI

But in reality I don't expect to receive delicacies from anyone but you, dear Khavronia Nikiforovna!

KH

Well, here they are, these offerings, look: pies, varenikis, friands, and also fritters, fresh and delicious. Eat, Afanassi Ivanovitch, eat as much as you want!

(Afanassi Ivanovitch eats with gusto and evident satisfaction)

KH

More pies and varenikis, perhaps? Take them, Afanassi Ivanovitch.

AI (eating)

Nom, nom, nom.

KH

And the friands, they're good, aren't they? Take some! But the real delicacy is the fritters.

AI (eating rapidly and greedily)

Nom, nom, nom.

(Getting up)

I'll be damned if these weren't made by the handiest daughter of Eve!
(tenderly, to Khivria)

But, Khavronia Nikiforovna, I was hoping for yet more delicious offerings from you than pies and fritters.

KH (feigning innocence)

Oh, I really don't know what dishes more I can offer you, Afanassi Ivanovitch.

AI (taking a pie in one hand and trying to embrace Khivria with the other arm)

I mean your love, incomparable Khavronia Nikiforovna.

KH

Goodness, what will you say next, Afanassi Ivanovitch?

AI

Beautiful (swallowing the pie).

KH

I suppose next you want to kiss me?

AI

As for that, that is exactly what I want, from the time I was at the seminary, I remember it like it was today, I only had to see a female shape approaching and felt my soul invaded with a delicious emotion and an ineffable desire.

(He kisses her on the lips)

(Cherevik and Godfather, in the wings, knock on the door)

KH

Someone knocking, who is it? (She looks out of the window)

Oh my God! (She hurries out of the house)

AI (fearfully)

Lord, pardon my sins, because it wasn't my doing, it was that wicked woman who tempted me, Lord!

KH (re-entering running)

Oh Afanassi Ivanovitch, we are ruined! There's a whole crowd at the door and I hear the voice of Godfather!

(She searches for somewhere to hide Afanassi Ivanovitch)

AI (completely defeated)

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

(He remains frozen. Khivria grabs him by the skirts of his clothing and drags him towards a bed behind the stove)

KH

Go on, crawl behind it! Go on, for God's sake!

AI

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

(Khivria runs to open the door. Godfather and Cherevik enter, followed by their guests and Khivria)

Choir

Hey? What? What's up?

CH

Well, what's happening?

GF

Did you hear that?

Modest Mussorgksy

Choir

Someone groaned. Ah, ah.

GF

Well gossip? Why are you trembling?

KH

Oh, I don't feel well.

GF

Go and get my flask from the cart. We'll drink a round with all these fine fellows. These cursed old wives are so highly strung it's a shame. (Khivria goes out looking around her in tears)

GF

What's Khivria frightened of?

CH

Khivria? What do you think?

GF

Did you see how she was trembling?

CH

Khivria? But she'd make the Devil beg for mercy!

Guests

Ah!

GF

But she was pale and trembling!

CH

She trembling? Really godfather! If the Devil himself is frightened of her, why would she tremble at the Red Jacket?

Guests

Ah!

GF

But...

CH

But what?

GF

The Red Jacket

Guests

Where is that devil? We seemed to see it, but only seemed, thank God.
(Khivria re-enters with the flask).

KH

Here's the flask.

GF

We'll spin it on the table and perhaps it will stop pointing directly at someone!

(He drinks) But really I have to ask why we have come back here.

(He drinks) I'll bet my fur hat it was those old wives who wanted to play a trick on us. And also it was Satan himself, spit and drive him out! (More frightened than will admit). May he go immediately! Sit down, in front of me. May I be the worst son of a dog if I don't ding him on the nose.

CH

Why have you become so pale all of a sudden?

GF

Pale, me, no, never, you're dreaming!

Guests (looking at each other)

He's dreaming, no more!

CH

Rou-dou, rou-dou-dou!
What a woman I married!
In her oven the straw burns,
In her pot the water bubbles.
Roudoudou, rou-dou-dou!
If Ganka costs me a rouble,
Maroussia will cost me two.
Rou-dou-dou, rou-dou-dou!
Ivan will come to visit us,
He will give us pennies.
Roudoudou....

(Afanassi Ivanovitch causes a cooking pot to fall)

KH

What an idea to sing a song like that. Roudoudou, roudoudou. Your roudoudous have made the pots fall down.

Modest Mussorgksy

Guests, GF
The pots?

CH
Isn't it the Red Jacket?

KH
No idiot! It's a cooking pot that crashed down.

Guests
Yes, that's right, it crashed down.

KH
As for this devil, it can only groan.

Guest
Lord have mercy on us!

CH
Wait a minute, have we searched everywhere inside? Godfather, hey, godfather.

GF
What?

CH
I'm frightened!

GF
You're frightened.

CH
Yes, I'm frightened! Khivria! Khivria!

KH
Yes, what?

CH
Come closer my dear Khivria.

KH (coming closer)
Yes?

CH
We have to close that.

KH
What do we have to close?

CH
That thing there.

KH
The window?

CH
That's it, the window, please.

KH (closing the window) Yes, and now?

CH
And now... welcome the Red Jacket!

Guests, GF
What are you saying Cherevik? You're inviting evil. You're summoning the Devil? As if he would ever come into this house to do good. How can we escape? What an idea to make us frightened and to invite the Devil in; now that night has fallen! We're lost, we're already in the clutches of the Devil. Our souls will be damned and he will drag us to Hell! Make the Devil go away Cherevik! Make him go away!

CH
Avaunt, avaunt!

Guests, GF
Avaunt!

CH (quietly)
About this devil... (approaching Godfather) Tell me, godfather, please, it's been a long time since I asked you to tell me the story of this cursed Red Jacket.

GF
Well, Cherevik, it would be better not to tell it tonight! But if it's to please you, and these good people who, I see, are very impatient to hear this curious story. (With a mysterious voice) Listen! One day, a devil was chased out of Hell, I don't know why...

CH
What are you saying, Godfather? How can a devil be chased out of Hell?

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GF

I'm just telling the story, my friend. They chased him, as you chase a dog out of doors. And this poor devil got terribly bored. What could he do? Naturally he turned to drink, and in order to drink he sold everything he had with him. The old landlord of the inn at Sorochintsy would not give him any more credit. So the devil was forced to leave his red jacket as a pledge for credit of a third of its value. But on leaving it he said to the landlord: 'Look out, grandpa, in exactly a year I will come back to get my jacket. Guard it well!' Only the landlord thought a year was too long. He hesitated then sold it to a passing nobleman for nearly five pieces of gold. Then one day a stranger appeared. 'Come on, grandpa, give me back my jacket.' The old man pretended never to have heard of it. 'What jacket? I don't know anything about your jacket.' So the devil left empty-handed. But that night, scarcely had the old man gone to bed than he heard noises. He saw pigs' snouts at all the windows.

CH

What?

GF

Nothing

Guests

What? You said nothing... who is that groaning?

KH

Ah, you're worse than old wives. And you pretend to be Cossacks and brave husbands! Perhaps, God pardon me, one of you... or you made your bench squeak on the floor, and everyone panics.

GF

The old man lay there petrified. But the pigs entered by the window and quickly got him up with blows of a horsewhip. Then he fell to his knees and confessed everything. And after this the pig-faced devil comes every year to the fair to look for his jacket.

It's annoying that the provincial governor has once more....

(The window opens with an enormous noise. The panes fly into shards. A terrifying pig snout appears. Everyone is frozen with horror, then a general panic. One of the guests bumps into the head of the bed on which Afanassi Ivanovitch is hiding. He falls off with a loud noise. Cherevik, grabbing a pot instead of his hat, runs towards the door, followed by Godfather and some of the guests. They throng in front of the door crying out. The other guests run madly from one side of the stage to the other.)

Everyone
The Devil! Ah, the Devil! Help!

ACT III

First Scene

A street in Sorochintsy

Evening. Cherevik with a pot on his head, exhausted; behind him Godfather. They are pursued by a group of youths, the Gypsy at their head. They pile on top of one another in the middle of the scene.

Choir
Hold them! Catch them, those cursed thieves. Where are they? There!
Bind them!

(They seize Cherevik and Godfather)

GY
Bind them!

CH
Why are you arresting us? Why do you want to bind us?

GY
Because you have stolen Cherevik's mare; he only just arrived in the village.

CH
Are you mad, lads? How can a man steal from himself?

GY
Don't give me that! Why were you running so fast you ran out of breath, as though the Devil was after you?

GF
We had reason to, the Red Jacket...

GY
More rubbish! The mayor will teach you to spread fear amongst people with stories of the Devil!

(The Gypsy leaves with some of the boys. Cherevik and Godfather

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remain guarded by a few of the boys).

CH
Did you steal anything, godfather?

GF
Oh, you too? May my arms wither if I have ever stolen anything, except some varenikis with cream from my mother when I was ten.

CH
So why this disaster, friend? You too they accuse of having stolen something from someone, just like me, I'm supposed to have stolen my own mare. You have to think that misfortunes are predestined!

GF
Poor us! (They weep. Gritzko enters, with the Gypsy)

GR
What's happened, Solopy? Why have they tied you up like this?

CH
Ah, Golopoupenko, Golopoupenko! Look godfather, the lad I spoke to you about. Ah, old boy! God damn me if he didn't drink in one gulp a glass as big as my head without pulling a face!

GF
But why didn't you want this fine lad as a son-in-law?

CH (to Gritzko)
You see, I was dishonest with you! But what could I do, it was my old girl, who is possessed by the Devil!

GR
I don't bear a grudge, Solopy. If you like I can set you free. (He signals to the lads who guard Cherevik and Godfather, who let them go) But now you have to organise the marriage properly; with celebrations where your legs ache for a year, after dancing the hopak so much.

CH
That's no problem! No time to waste! The marriage can be tomorrow, and that'll be that!

GR
Don't forget, Solopy. Tomorrow morning I'll be at your house! Go back there now, because people are waiting there to buy your wheat and the mare.

CH
What! They found the horse?

GR
Yes indeed.

GF
Good news, old boy, let's go!

GY (evilly)
Now Gritzko, haven't all things been arranged well? (Laughs). The bullocks are mine now?

GR
Yes, they're yours!

(The Gypsy disappears. Gritzko remains behind alone)

(Thoughtfully) I'm tired

(He rests under a tree) I'll sleep a little. Ah Parasya, Parasya, tomorrow morning I will see you, my dove!

(He sleeps)

Gritzko's Dream: A remote spot amongst the hills.

A Choir of infernal spirits is heard approaching underground.

Choir
Sagana, sagana, Behemoth, Astaroth! Sagana, sagana, aksafat, sabatan!
Tenemos, tenemos, allegremos! Sagana, sagana, go! Go! Sagana! Go!
Sagana, sagana, sagana, Go! Go! Go! Sagana, sagana, Behemoth,
Astaroth, Sagana, sagana, aksafat, sabatan! Tenemos, tenemos,
allegremos! Sagana, sagana, sagana, Go! Go! Go!

Handsome lad, you're a happy lover! Handsome lad, you sleep soundly.
Handsome lad, who stirred you up so much? Handsome lad, why did
you drink so much? Handsome lad, come and join with us! Handsome
lad, we dance like madmen. Tsop, tsop, kopotsam, tsop, trop, kopotsam!
Go! Sagana! Go! Sagana!

See him lying there, the poor boy! It's more drink than tiredness. Tsop,
Tsop, kopotsam, tsop, tsop, kopotsam! Sagana! Go! Sagana! Go! Go!
Sagana, sagana!

(Snakes of fire appear on the hillside. They herald the entrance of

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Chemobog, the Black God) Aksafat, astaroth, Go! Go!

(Chemobog appears, coming out of the darkness of the soil. Behind him a skeleton, Famine, Plague and all the rest of his followers) Sagana! Sagana!

[In some productions Chemobog is sung by the same singer as the Gypsy]

Chemobog (mounted on an infernal tripod) Go! Go! After languishing in Hell it is good to breathe fresh air! Sagana! Go! The vault of heaven is good to see! This night belongs to us until dawn! To work my children!

Choir

Sagana, sagana, Satan, Satan, sagana! Go!

(Adoration of Chemobog)

Tsop, tsop kopotsam, trop, tso-po-tso-po-tso, kopotsam! Sagana, Sagana, Tchour, tchour! Sagana! Tsop, trop, kopotsam ! Houtz Tenemos allegremos! Sabath, Astaroth, sabatan, aksafat, sagana!

Tsop, trop sagana!

(They bow down to the ground)

Chemobog

Go on, children, amuse yourselves. Enough of glory and praises! This night belongs to you until dawn! Rejoice!

Choir

Sagana! Sabat, Satan, Astaroth, Go! Go! Kopotsam, kopotsam, trop, trop, kopotsam! Sabat, sabat, sagana!

(Satan and his troop disappear. The stage is covered in clouds. Matins sounds)

Choir (distantly)

Chemobog, help us! Satan, curses!

Choir of Men (in the wings)

Holy is our God amongst all the saints. Our God is in our hearts.

Choir of Demons

Satan, Satan, help us! Curses! Satan, Satan, help us!

(Gritzko wakes up and rises, stretching and looking about him fearfully. The stage is illuminated by the rising sun)

GR

Lord! What devilish sights have I dreamt!

Second Scene

(Morning, Parasya goes out on to the porch of Godfather's house.)

P
What's the good of lamenting, my beloved? Lamenting won't make misfortune go away. And besides, Parasya isn't the only girl in the world! But I was so happy when I heard him say 'Parasya my beauty, my dove!' And he looked at me so tenderly, and under his black eyebrows his eyes were burning like a falcon's eyes.

(She comes down from the porch to the garden)
See how I make myself sad. But why really? Must I become old, am I not still young and beautiful?

(She looks at herself in a little pocket-mirror)

(Gaily)
Come on then!
Under the branches of the greenwood,
Come on my love, kiss me.
Tchob, tchob, tchobototchki,
Come on my love, kiss me.
And don't make me sulk,
You'll come back this evening to see me.
Tchob, tchob, tchobototchki,
You'll come back to see me.
(Cheverik appears, and looking at his daughter with admiration, he begin to dance the hopak)

Hop, Hop, hopaka!
Coming back from the fair
Tchob, tchob, tchobotok,
We'll dance and sing
Tchob, tchob, tchobotok!
What a day at the fair!
Hop, Hop, hopaka!
All the friends went there!
Hop, Hop, hopaka!
They'll come again next year!
Hey!

(Godfather arrives with Gritzko)

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GF

Look at this! The father and the daughter are already celebrating the marriage! Come Parasya, come and greet your fiancé.

P

Gritzko! Gritzko! My beloved, my Gritzko and once again he sees Parasya, his dove! I am happy my beloved, my darling! Your eyes shine so brightly under your brows. I feel so good with you!

GR

Parasya, is it really you there? My joy, my dove! We will live together, Parasya, my beloved! I will give everything for you! Now.

(Young men and women arrive)

Young Women

Gather together, friends! Gather together, doves! Welcome the bride and groom!

Choir

A willow growing over a stream
Has seven hundred branches;
Every lad take one for himself.
Only Gritzko hasn't a branch,
Because Gritzko has his Parasya!
Hey!

CH

Well, Parasya! Khivria, very happy I sold the mare, has run off to buy clothes and jewels for herself. We will all be finished before she returns.

(Joining the hands of Parasya and Gritzko)

Lord, bless them! May they live together and be inseparable.

(Khivria runs in, out of breath)

KH

I will die before I agree to this.

(She runs towards Cherevik)

GY (appearing suddenly and grabbing her by the arms)

Stop! Hold her lads, and tightly! Then she can't stop these fine people getting married.

CH (solemnly, seeing that Khivria is securely held)
Useless to get angry, wife! What is done is done. I don't like to go back
on my word.

KH
No, no! This must not happen! Vipers! Monsters! Ah! Ah! (The lads seize
Khivria and carry her out to shouts of laughter. Khivria shouts and
remonstrates)

CH
May they live together and be inseparable.

GY
And now, lads and lasses, don't spare your legs and dance the hopak.

Choir
The hopak, the hopak!
On the bank of a clear stream
In which a fish was playing,
A girl was washing her apron.
Look, the poor girl has fallen in the water!
And there's no one to pull her out!
She is beautiful, the girl, with rosy cheeks,
Black eyebrows, red lips,
White hands and very little feet.
Hey! Hey!
She's as pretty as a little fish,
Slender as a branch.

Be careful, young girl,
Don't sit down on the water's side,
If you fall you won't get out!
But I, I will come to help you.
I will risk danger for your beauty,
And in the evening, my little heart, come to see me!
Hey! Hey!

The End

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