

What significance do the title and character names have?

Arkadina:

- "Arcadia" feminine form of Arkady - a stage name
- derived ancient Greek name of harmony and peace
- a chosen stage name - a polished version of herself who she presents to the world

Trigorin:

- "Trigger" - he is indirectly responsible for the action of the play
 - treplev's suicide attempt
 - Nina's personal life turning to ruin

Konstanin:

- Constant
- He's constantly in a state of due to his emotionally complicated relationship with his mother, unrequited love from Nina and fear of not being a successful writer

Masha:

- mashenka: traditional Russian diminutive that also identifies a local schoolteacher's wife
- Marya: derives from Hebrew name Miriam, meaning sea of bitterness or rebellion, representing her pessimistic mindset and depressive outlook on the world
- Masha: a nickname

Dorn:

- "thorn" in Middle High German
- evgeny: masculine derivative of Greek word "eugenēs," meaning "well-born" or "noble"

Who are the protagonist and antagonist, creating the main action and counteraction through the play?

| | Protagonists | Antagonists |
|--|--|---|
| Arkandina and treplev: Mother and son | Treplev: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- His character is heavily connected to the theme of unrequited love through romantic love by Nina and maternal love by Arkadina- His struggles with mental health in the form of suicidal tendencies creates tension as we don't know if or when he will fulfill his thoughts | Arkadina: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- her success as an actress in her youth is reminiscent of the family in the cheery orchard as she holds onto her past fame as dignity and something to give her power as she grasps onto that for status now unable to let go of the past- Her need to always be the centre of attention makes her ignorant |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - nina's rejection of his love both times ultimately leads him to suicide - Represents the new modern era of art that is developing during this time period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Subject to change | <p>to other's emotions and feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Her constant emotional neglect creates extreme self doubt within treplev as he is constantly trying to win her approval - Represents the old "traditional" sense of art that has been reinforced for centuries before <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Not willing to change under the guise of preserving history and tradition but really wanting to hold onto power |
| Nina and trigorin Affair | <p>Nina:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sees trigorin as a role model as she wants to follow in trigorin's footsteps and become successful in the arts - Is linked to the theme of unfulfilled ambitions as she is full of hope and aspirations at the beginning of the play but this is shattered due to her faulty career and personal life scandal with trigorin - Becomes pregnant out of wedlock due to an affair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Very scandalous in this time period which probably led to being shunned in society | <p>Trigorin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the trigger for the downfall of nina's personal life as he partakes in the affair, then abandons her for arkadina - Indirectly responsible for treplev's suicide attempts as he becomes interested in nina and starts the affair - Is tied to the theme of disillusionment as he is a successful writer but never feels satisfied with his writing as his hunger for more eats at him |

What are the themes, and the possible main theme or Ruling Idea/Superobjective of the play?

- Themes: old world vs new world, unfulfilled ambitions, love, disillusionment, and the contrasts between art and life

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Old world vs new world | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The representation of old traditional values vs new changing work in art reflects the time period it was written in- Arkadina's traditional values don't meet eye to eye with treplev's new works- |
| unfulfilled ambitions | <p>masha, Nina, polina, treplev</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- where the hopes and dreams of what each character had for their futures did not become their reality- An exploration of how their the sadness effects them when the realisation of their respective realities arise |
| Unrequited love | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Masha - treplev - Nina -trigorin - arkadina- Masha and medvedenko, Polina and dorn- when feelings of lust and love are inconvenient, forbidden, or not shared it leads to a sense of longingness and yearning |
| Disillusionment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- |
| Ego | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The egotistical characteristics within each character no matter big or small limit everyone from connecting with each other on a deeper level as they all are wrapped up in their own worries and doubts |

Look at the style and form of the play and how they affect character and the action.

- 4 acts over the span of 2 years shows the passing of time for character development that grow with the changing circumstances in each character's lives
 - Even though good and bad things happen the earth keeps spinning
- naturalistic - character interactions and events are similar to mundane life
- Leans into observational comedy
 - Finding humour and meaning within the subtext - dark humour
 - Observing what is not being said - atmosphere, tension between characters, the effect of the time periods societal pressures

Historical Events

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1861: emancipation of Servs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 3rd of March 1861 Tsar Alexander signed the emancipation that freed 23 million Servs that were bound to their lands into free legal citizens- Servs were given land and freedom but their lands were of lower quality and large redemption payments were needed to buy back the land- It was a symbolic move towards modernising Russia but it brought new socio-economical and political challenges with it |
| Tsar Alexander II | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- reigned from 1851-1881- Alexander was responsible for the abolishment of the Servs in 1861, modernising court systems by establishing public trials and established government bodies called "zemstovs" to manage local affairs |
| Tsar Nicholas II | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the last emperor of Russia who reigned from 1894 until his abdication in 1917 adopted a strict autocratic rule despite the country's pressure to reform- Executed by the bolsheviks in 1917 |

Character specifics: Masha

- daughter of the estate manager, Shamrayev and Polina
- works on the estate - lower class, rank 2 - lowest status of the play
- ,in love with Kostya who is a higher class than her
- Marries menvedenko who is of the same class but in a higher position because of his profession and gender
- Low in status
- always in a state of sadness - disillusionment of life, even though she has a stable home life she feels that she is living a life bad enough to mourn

Art

photos and paintings (e.g. by Repin and 'The Wanderers'), and listen to music of the period (e.g. Borodin, Glazunov, Rimski-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky).

- the rise of social/critical realism in art became more prevalent from the mid century onwards as a response to the **social and political inequality** of the time
 - Desired to reform art's moral and civic purpose
- Depicted the harsh living conditions of the working class to rebel against idealised, classically focused Art
- spontaneous, critical movement often at odds with authorities
- Wanted to develop the authenticity of Russia's identity and culture by portraying everyday life, history, and cultural character rather than relying on the classical European themes promoted by the imperial academy.

The Wanderers (Peredvizhniki):

- a group of artists who formed from the Imperial Academy of Arts in 1863 to protest against the academic restrictions
- Their focus on social issues strayed from the traditional constructs of idealism or historical subjects
 - highlighting poverty, hardship, and injustices to common people after the emancipation of serfs in 1861 that toppled the socio-economic pyramid
- They pioneered new outlooks on art genres, encouraged progressive thinking and how it was sponsored, displayed, and purchased



Ilya Repin:

- Repin stated his art aimed to "criticize all the monstrosities of our vile society".
- was a leader of his movement using hyper realism to highlight ignored truths by stripping away glamour
- Was committed to depicting life with truthful realism to emphasise detail and psychological insight
 - Like how in chekhov the truth is in the subtext
- He strove to portray a wide range of human emotions and inner life to contribute to moral reflection and societal improvement as he used intense scenes from history and contemporary life to bring light to ethical and philosophical issues.



Vasily Perov was another key genre artist, known for his depictions of rural life and social problems. **Ivan Kramskoy** created incisive portraits and also engaged with social themes.