

(ALL dance)

TEVYE

Then, there are others in our village. They have a much bigger circle.

(PRIEST, CONSTABLE, OTHER RUSSIANS CROSS ...

THE GROUPS nod to each other)

His Honor the Constable, His Honor the Priest, and His Honor ... many others. We don't bother them and so far they don't bother us ... And among ourselves we get along perfectly well. Of course, there was the time when he sold him a horse and he delivered a mule, but that's all settled now. Now we live in simple peace and harmony and ...

(The TWO MEN begin an argument, Mule vs. Horse, which is taken up by the entire group)

1ST MAN

It was a horse.

2ND MAN

It was a mule.

CHORUS

HORSE!

CHORUS

MULE!

(Repeated)

TEVYE

(Quieting them)

Tradition. Without our traditions, our lives would be as shaky as ... as a fiddler on the roof!

ACT 1 Scene 1

#2 - Act 1 - Opening

(Orchestra)

(Kitchen of TEVYE's house. GOLDE, TZEITEL, and HODEL are preparing for the Sabbath. SHPRINTZE and BIELKE enter from outside, carrying logs)

Start

SHPRINTZE

Mama, where should we put these?

GOLDE

Put them on my head! By the stove, foolish girl Where is Chava?

HODEL

She's in the barn, milking.

BIELKE

When will Papa be home?

GOLDE

It's almost Sabbath and he worries a lot when he'll be home! All day long riding on top of his wagon like a prince.

TZEITEL

Mama, you know that Papa works hard.

GOLDE

His horse works harder! ... And you don't have to defend your Papa to me. I know him longer than you. ... He could drive a person crazy ... He should only live and be well ... Shprintze, bring me some more potatoes.

(CHAVA enters, carrying a basket, with a book under her apron)

Chava, did you finish milking?

CHAVA

Yes, Mama.

(SHE drops the book)

GOLDE

You were reading again? Why does a girl have to read? Will it get her a better husband? Here.

(Hands CHAVA the book. CHAVA exits into the house. SHPRINTZE enters with basket of potatoes)

SHPRINTZE

Mama, Yente's coming. She's down the road.

HODEL

Maybe she's finally found a good match for you, Tzeitel.

GOLDE

From your mouth to God's ears.

TZEITEL

Why does she have to come now? It's almost Sabbath.

GOLDE

Go finish in the barn. I want to talk to Yente alone.

SHPRINTZE

Mama, can I go out and play?

GOLDE

You have feet? Go.

BIELKE

Can I go too?

GOLDE

Go too.

TZEITEL

But Mama, the men she finds. The last one was so old and he was bald. He had no hair.

GOLDE

A poor girl without a dowry can't be so particular. You want hair, marry a monkey.

TZEITEL

After all, Mama, I'm not yet twenty years old and ...

GOLDE

Shah!

(Spits between fingers)

Do you have to boast about your age? Do you want to tempt the Evil Eye? Inside.

(TZEITEL enters the house as YENTE enters from outside)

YENTE

~~Golde Darling, I had to see you because I have such news for you. And not just every day in the week news, once in a lifetime news. And where are your daughters? Outside, no? Good, such diamonds, such jewels. You'll see, Golde, I'll find every one of them a husband. But you shouldn't be so picky ... Even the worst husband, God forbid, is better than no husband, God forbid ... And who should know better than me? Ever since my husband died I've been a poor widow, alone, nobody to talk to, nothing to say to anyone. It's no life. All I do at night is think of him, and even thinking of him gives me no pleasure because, you know as well as I, he was not much of a person ... Never made a living, everything he touched turned to mud, but better than nothing.~~

MOTEL

(Entering from door L)

Good evening. Is Tzeitel in the house?

GOLDE

But she's busy. You can come back later.

MOTEL

There's something I'd like to tell her.

GOLDE

Later.

TZEITEL

Oh, Motel, I thought I heard you.

GOLDE

Finish what you were doing.

(To MOTEL)

I said later.

End

MOTEL

(Exiting L)

All right!

YENTE

What does that poor little tailor Motel want with Tzeitel?

GOLDE

They have been friends since they were babies together.
They talk, they play ...

YENTE

(Suspiciously)

They play? What do they play?

GOLDE

Who knows? They're just children ...

YENTE

From such children, come other children.

GOLDE

Motel he's a nothing. Yente, you said ...

YENTE

Ah, children, children! They are your blessing in your old age. But my Aaron couldn't give me children. Believe me, he was good as gold, never raised his voice to me, but otherwise he was not much of a man, so what good is it if he never raised his voice? But what's the use complaining, other women enjoy complaining, but not Yente. Not every woman in the world is a Yente. Well, I must prepare my poor Sabbath table, so goodbye, Golde, and it was a pleasure talking our hearts out to each other.

(SHE starts to exit)

GOLDE

Yente, you said you had news for me.