

# 1. YENTE and GOLDE

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.

And he 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.

YENTE: Oh, I'm losing my head. One day it will fall off altogether, and a horse will kick it into the mud and goodbye, Yente. Of course, the news. It's about Lazar Wolf, the butcher. A good man, a fine man. And I don't have to tell you that he's well off. But he's lonely, the poor man. You understand? Of course you do. To make it short, out of the whole town, he's cast his eye on Tzeitel.

GOLDE: My Tzeitel?

YENTE: No, the Tzar's Tzeitel! Of course your Tzeitel.

GOLDE: Such a match, for my Tzeitel. But Tevye wants a learned man, he doesn't like Lazar.

YENTE: Listen to me, Golde, send Tevye to him, don't tell him what it's about, let Lazar discuss it himself, he'll win him over, he's a good man, a wealthy man ... True? True. So

you'll tell me how it went, and you don' t have to thank me, Golde, because aside from my fee which anyway Lazar will pay, it gives me satisfaction to make people happy, what better satisfaction is there, So goodbye, Golde, and you're welcome. (she exits)

GOLDE: (to herself) My first born, a bride! May they grow old in fortune and honor .. not like Fruma-Sarah, that first wife of his . She was a bitter woman, may she rest in peace. Not like my Tzeitel. My Tzeitel, a bride!

## 2. TEVYE and GOLDE

TEVYE: Yes, I do have a pleasant daughter...I have *five* pleasant daughters! This is mine . . . this is mine ... this is mine . . . this is mine ... (MOTEL enters -TEVYE almost kisses him in sequence) This is not mine. Perchik, this is Motel Kamzoil and he is ...

GOLDE: So you did me a favor and came in.

TEVYE: This is also mine. Golde, this is Perchik, from Kiev, and he is staying the Sabbath with us. He is a teacher.

GOLDE: Of course, another blessing. Tzeitel, get the table. Shprintze, Bielke, got washed, Chava, Hodel, get the chairs. Hurry! Hurry! (once they have left) Tevye, I have something to say to you.

TEVYE: Why should today be different?

GOLDE: You could die from such a man. Tevye, I have to tell you ...

TEVYE: "I have to tell you, I have to tell you..."

GOLDE: Lazar Wolf wants to see you.

TEVYE: The butcher? About what?

GOLDE: I don' t know. Only that he says it is important.

TEVYE: What can be important? I have nothing for him to slaughter.

GOLDE: After the Sabbath, see him and talk to him.

TEVYE: Talk to him about what? If, he is thinking about buying my new milk cow ...he can forget it.

GOLDE: Tevye, don't be an ox. A man sends an important message, at least you can talk to him.

TEVYE: Talk about what? He wants my new milk cow!

GOLDE: Talk to him! Talk to him! Talk to him, Tevye!

TEVYE: All right, all right! After the Sabbath, I'll talk to him!

### 3. TZIETEL and MOTEL

TZIETEL: Motel, Yente was here.

MOTEL: I saw her.

TZIETEL: If they agree on someone there will be a match and then it will be too late for us.

MOTEL: Don' t worry Tzeitel. I have found someone who will sell me his used sewing machine, so in a few weeks I'll have saved up enough to buy it and then your Father will be impressed with me.

TZIETEL: But Motel, a few weeks may be too late.

MOTEL: But what else can we do?

TZIETEL: You could ask my father for my hand tonight. Now!

MOTEL: Why should he consider me now? I'm only a poor tailor?

TZIETEL: And I'm only the daughter of a poor milkman. Just talk to him.

MOTEL: Tzeitel, if your father says no, that's it, it's final ... He'll yell at me.

TZIETEL: Motel...

MOTEL: I'm just a poor tailor.

TZIETEL: Motel, even a poor tailor is entitled to some happiness.

MOTEL: That's true.

TZIETEL: Will you talk to him? Will you talk to him?

MOTEL: All right, I'll talk to him.

## 4. LAZAR WOLF & TEVYE

LAZAR: Ah, Tevye - sit down. Have a drink.

TEVYE: I won't insult you by saying no.

LAZAR: How goes it with you, Tevye?

TEVYE: How should it go?

LAZAR: You're right.

TEVYE: And you?

LAZAR: The same.

TEVYE: I'm sorry to hear that.

LAZAR: (pours drink) So. How's your brother-in-law in America?

TEVYE: I believe he is doing very well.

LAZAR: He wrote you?

TEVYE: Not lately.

LAZAR: Then how do you know?

TEVYE: If he was doing badly he would write. May I?

LAZAR: Tevye - I suppose you know why I wanted to see you.

TEVYE: (Drinks) Yes, I do, Reb Lazar, but there is no use talking about it.

LAZAR: (upset) Why not?

TEVYE: Why yes? Why should I get rid of her?

LAZAR: Well, you have a few more without her.

TEVYE: I see! Today you want one. Tomorrow you may want two.

LAZAR: Two? What would I do with two??

TEVYE: The same as you do with one!

LAZAR: Tevye, this is very important to me.

TEVYE: Why is it so important to you?

LAZAR: Frankly ... because I am lonesome.

TEVYE: Lonesome? What are you talking about?

LAZAR: You don't know?

TEVYE: We're talking about my now milk cow. The one you want to buy from me.

LAZAR: (Stares at TEVYE, then bursts into laughter) A milk cow! So I won't be lonesome! (HE howls with laughter. TEVYE stares at him)

TEVYE: What's so funny?

LAZAR: I was talking about your daughter. Your daughter Tzeitel!

TEVYE: My daughter Tzeitel?

LAZAR: Of course, your daughter, Tzeitel! I see her in my butcher shop every Thursday. She's made a good impression on me I like her ... And as for me, Tevye ... as you know, I'm pretty well off. I have my own house, a good store, a servant ... Look, Tevye, why do we have to try to impress each other? Let's shake hands and call it a match. And you won't need a dowry for her. And maybe you'll find something in your own purse, too ...

TEVYE: (Shouts) Shame on you! Shame! (Hiccup) What do you mean my purse? My Tzeitel is not the sort that I would sell for money!

LAZAR: All right! Just as you say. We won't talk about money. The main thing is, let's get it done with. And I will be good to her, Tevye. (Slightly embarrassed) I like her ... What do you think?

TEVYE: (To audience) What do I think? What do I think? I never liked him! Why should I? You can have a fine conversation with him if you talk about kidneys and livers ... On the other hand, not everybody has to be a scholar? If you're wealthy enough, no one will call you stupid ... And with a butcher, my daughter will surely never know hunger. Of course, he has a problem - he's much older than her. That's her problem. But she's younger. That's his problem. I always thought of him as a butcher, but I misjudged him. He is a good man, he likes her, he will try to make her happy. (Turns to LAZAR) What do I think? It's a match.

LAZAR: (Delighted) You agree?

TEVYE: I agree.

LAZAR: Oh, Tevye, that's wonderful. Let's drink on it.

TEVYE: Why not? To you.

LAZAR: No, my friend, to you. And to our agreement!

## 5. TEVYE & THE CONSTABLE

CONSTABLE: May I offer my congratulations, Tevye.

TEVYE: Thank you, your honor.

CONSTABLE: Tevye, I have a piece of news that I think I should tell you, as a friend.

TEVYE: Yes, your honor.

CONSTABLE: And I'm giving you this news because I like you. You are a decent, honest person, even though you are a Jewish dog.

TEVYE: Thank you, your honor. How often does a man get a compliment like that? And your news?

CONSTABLE: We have received orders that sometime soon this district is to have a little unofficial demonstration.

TEVYE: A pogrom? Here ?

CONSTABLE: No, just a little demonstration.

TEVYE : How little ?

CONSTABLE : Not too serious - just some mischief, so that if an inspector comes through, he will see that we have done our duty. Personally, I don't know why there has to be this trouble between people, but I thought I should tell you and you can tell the others.

TEVYE: Thank you, your honor. You're a good man. If I may say so, it's too bad you're not a Jew.

CONSTABLE: That's what I like about you, Tevye. Always joking. And congratulations again, for your daughter.

TEVYE : Thank you, your honor. (After he exits, to Heaven.) Dear God, why did you have to send me news like that, today of all days? It's true that we are the chosen people. But once in a while can't you choose someone else? ... Anyway, thank you for sending a husband for my Tzeitel ... L'Chaim.



## 6. TEVYE and MOTEL

**MOTEL: (Enters, breathless) Reb Tevye, may I speak to you?**

TEVYE: Later, Motel. Later.

MOTEL: I would like to speak to you.

TEVYE: Not now, Motel, I have problems.

MOTEL: That's what I want to speak to you about. I think I can help.

TEVYE: Certainly. Like a bandage can help a corpse. Goodbye, Motel. Goodbye.

MOTEL: At least listen to me, Reb Tevye .

TEVYE: All right. You have a tongue, talk.

MOTEL: Reb Tevye, I hear you are arranging a match for Tzeitel.

TEVYE: He also has ears.

MOTEL: I have a match for Tzeitel.

TEVYE: What kind of match?

MOTEL: A perfect fit.

TEVYE: A perfect fit.

MOTEL: Like a glove.

TEVYE: Like a glove.

MOTEL: Like a glove.

TEVYE: A perfect fit. Made to measure. Stop talking like a tailor and tell me who is it!

MOTEL: Please, don't shout at me.

TEVYE: All right. Who is it?

MOTEL: Who is it?

TEVYE: Who is it?

MOTEL: Who is it?

TEVYE: Who is it?

MOTEL: It's me...myself.

TEVYE: (Stares at him, then to audience, startled and amused) Him? Himself? (To MOTEL) Either you're completely out of your mind or you're crazy. (To audience) He must be crazy. (To MOTEL) Arranging a match for yourself. What are you, everything? The bridegroom, the matchmaker, the guests all rolled into one? I suppose you'll even perform the ceremony. (To MOTEL) You must be crazy!

MOTEL: Please don't shout at me, Reb Tevye. As for being my own matchmaker - I know it's a little unusual.

TEVYE: Unusual? It's crazy.

MOTEL: Times are changing, Reb Tevye. The thing is, your daughter Tzeitel and I gave each other our pledge over than a year ago that we would marry.

TEVYE: (stunned) You gave each other a pledge? Do I still have something to say about my daughter, or doesn't anyone have to ask a father anymore?

MOTEL: I have wanted to ask you for some time, Reb Tevye, but first I wanted to save up for my own sewing machine.

TEVYE: Stop talking nonsense. You're just a poor tailor.

MOTEL: That's true, Reb Tevye, but even a poor tailor is entitled to some happiness. I promise you, Reb Tevye, your daughter will not starve.

TEVYE: (Impressed, turns to audience) He's beginning to talk like a man ... On the other hand what kind of match would that be, with a poor tailor? ... On the other hand, he is an honest, hard worker ... On the other hand, he has absolutely nothing ... On the other hand, things can not get worse for him, they can only get better ...

(Spoken) Tradition!

(To audience) Aaah?

(To children) Well, children, when shall we make the wedding?

MOTEL: Reb Tevye, you won't be sorry.

TEVYE: I won't be sorry? I'm sorry already.

MOTEL: Thank you Papa...

TEVYE: (watches them exit, then muttering to himself) Thank you, Papa ... They pledged their troth ... modern children.... Golde! What will I tell Golde? What am I going to do about Golde? (To Heaven) Help!

## 7. FYEDKA & CHAVA

FYEDKA: I'm sorry about them, and what they said. They mean no harm.

CHAVA: Don't they?

FYEDKA: They do not know.

CHAVA: Is there something you want?

FYEDKA: Yes. I'd like to talk to you.

CHAVA: I'd rather not.

FYEDKA: I've often noticed you at the bookseller's. Not many girls in this village like to read. Would you like to borrow this book? It's very good.

CHAVA: No thank you.

FYEDKA: Why? Because I'm not Jewish? Do you feel about us the way they feel about you. I didn't think you would.

CHAVA: What do you know about me?

FYEDKA: Let me tell you about myself. I'm a pleasant fellow, charming, honest, ambitious, quite bright, and very modest.

CHAVA: I don't think we should be talking this way.

FYEDKA: I often do things I shouldn't....Go ahead, take the book....it's by Heinriche Heine. Happens to be Jewish, I believe.

CHAVA: That doesn't matter.

FYEDKA: You're quite right. Good. After you return it, I'll ask you how you like it, and we'll talk about it for awhile, then we'll talk about life, how we feel about things, and it can all turn out quite pleasant. Go ahead, take the book. Good day, Chava.

CHAVA: Good day.

FYEDKA: Fyedka.

CHAVA: Good day, Fyedka.

## 8. INKEEPER's WEDDING MONOLOGUE

INKEEPER: (with great comic flair)

My friends, we are gathered here to share the joy of the newlyweds, Motel and Tzeitel, Amen!

May they live together in peace to a ripe old age, Amen!

And may our beloved Rabbi be with us for many, many years. Amen!

I want to announce, that the bride's parents are giving the newlyweds the following: a new featherbed ... a pair of pillows. Goose pillows! And candlesticks! Mazeltov!

But let us not in our joy tonight forget those who are no longer with us, our dear departed, who lived in pain and poverty and hardship and who died in pain and poverty and hardship.

(leads all to breaks into in tears, and then immediately stops)

But enough tears. Let's be merry and content, like our good friend, Lazar Wolf, who has everything in the world, except a bride.

But Lazar has no ill feelings. In fact, he has a gift for the newlyweds that he wants to announce himself. Come, Lazar Wolf. Everyone, quiet down, let's hear what Reb Lazar has to say!

## 9. TEVYE Monologue

TEVYE: (speaking to Heaven) That was quite a dowry you gave my daughter Tzeitel at her wedding. Was that necessary? (after a long sigh) Anyway, Tzeitel and Motel have been married almost two months now. They work very hard, they are as poor as synagogue mice .... But they are both so happy they don't know how miserable they are. Motel keeps talking about a sewing machine.

I know you're very busy God, - wars and revolutions, floods, plagues - all those little things that bring people to You - couldn't You take a second away from your catastrophes and get it for him? How much trouble would it be? ... Oh, and while You're in the neighborhood, my horse's left leg ... Am I bothering You too much? I'm sorry. As the good book says ... Why should I tell you what the good book says? (he breaks into laughter)

## 10. HODEL & PERCHIK

PERCHIK: Please don't be upset, Hodel.

HODEL: Why should I be upset? If you must leave, you must.

PERCHIK: I do have to. They expect me in Kiev tomorrow morning.

HODEL: So you told me. Then goodbye.

PERCHIK: Great changes are about to take place in this country. But they can't happen by themselves.

HODEL: So naturally you feel that you personally have to ...

PERCHIK: Not only me. Many people. Jews, Gentiles, many people hate what is going on. Don't you understand?

HODEL: I understand, of course. You want to leave. Then goodbye.

PERCHIK: Hodel, your father, the others here, think what happened at Tzeitel's wedding was a little cloudburst and it's over and everything will now be peaceful again. It won't ... Horrible things are happening all over ... pogroms, violence, villages being emptied of their people .... it's reaching everywhere, and it will reach here. You understand?

HODEL: Yes, I ... I suppose I do.

PERCHIK: I have work to do. The greatest work a man can do.

HODEL: Then goodbye, Perchik.

PERCHIK: Before I go, (HE hesitates, summons up courage) There is a certain question I wish to discuss with you.

HODEL: Yes

PERCHIK: A political question.

HODEL: What is it?

PERCHIK: The question of marriage.

HODEL: This is a political question?

PERCHIK: In a theoretical sense, yes. The relationship between a man and woman known as marriage is based on mutual beliefs, a common attitude and philosophy towards society ...

HODEL: And affection ...

PERCHIK: And affection ... This relationship has positive social values. It reflects a unity and solidarity ...

HODEL: And affection ...

PERCHIK: Yes, and I personally am in favor of it. Do you understand?

HODEL: Yes. I think you are asking me to marry you.

PERCHIK : In a theoretical sense, yes, I am.

HODEL: I was hoping you were.

PERCHIK: Then I take it you approve. And we can consider ourselves engaged, even though I am going away? (SHE nods) I am very happy, Hodel. Very happy.



# 11. TEVYE & HODEL

HODEL: You don't have to wait for the train, Papa. You'll be late for your customers.

TEVYE: Just a few more minutes .... Is he in bad trouble, that hero of yours? (SHE nods)  
Arrested? (She nods) And convicted?

HODEL: Yes, but he did nothing wrong. He cares nothing for himself, everything he does is for humanity.

TEVYE: But if he did nothing wrong, he wouldn't be in trouble.

HODEL: Papa, how can you say that? What wrongs did Joseph do, and Abraham, and Moses? And they had troubles.

TEVYE: But why won't you tell me where he is now, this Joseph of yours?

HODEL: It is far, Papa, terribly far ... He is in a settlement in Siberia.

TEVYE: Siberia! And he asks you to leave your father and mother and join him in that frozen wasteland, and marry him there?

HODEL: No, Papa, he did not ask me to go. I want to go. I don't want him to be alone. I want to help him in his work It is the greatest work a man can do, Papa.

TEVYE: But, Hodel, baby ... And who, my child, will there be to perform a marriage, there in the wilderness?

HODEL: Papa, I promise you, we will be married under a canopy.

TEVYE: No doubt a rabbi or two was also arrested. Well, give him my regards, this Moses of yours. I always thought he was a good man. Tell him I rely on his honor to treat my daughter well. Tell him that.

HODEL: Papa, God alone knows when we shall see each other again.

TEVYE: Then we will leave it in his hands. (He watches her leave, when SHE stops, looks back, then looks to Heaven) Take care of her. See that she dresses warm.

## 12.     TEVYE & CHAVA

TEVYE: What were you and he talking about?

CHAVA: Nothing, we were just talking. Papa, Fyedka and I have known each other for a long time now and ...

TEVYE: Chava, I would be much happier if you would remain friends from a distance. You must not forget who you are and who that man is.

CHAVA: He has a name, Papa.

TEVYE: Of course. All creatures on earth have a name.

CHAVA: Fyedka is not a creature, Papa. Fyedka is a man.

TEVYE: Who says that he isn't? It's just that he is a different kind of man. As the good book, says, "Each shall seek his own kind." Which, translated, means, a bird may love a fish, but where would they build a home together?

CHAVA: The world is changing, Papa.

TEVYE: No. Some things do not change for us. Some things will never change.

CHAVA: We don't feel that way.

TEVYE: We?

CHAVA: Fyedka and I ... We want to be married.

TEVYE: Are you out of your mind? Don't you know what this means, marrying outside of the faith?

CHAVA: But, Papa

TEVYE: No, Chava - I said no! Never talk about this again! Never mention his name again, never see him again. Never! Do you understand me?

CHAVA: Yes, Papa. I understand you.