

ACT 1 Prologue

#1 - Prologue - Tradition (Tevye, Golde, Sons, Daughters, Chorus)

TEVYE

A fiddler on the roof. Sounds crazy, no? But in our little village of Anatevka, you might say every one of us is a fiddler on the roof, trying to scratch out a pleasant, simple tune without breaking his neck. It isn't easy. You may ask, why do we stay up there if it's so dangerous? We stay because Anatevka is our home. ... And how do we keep our balance? That I can tell you in a word ... Tradition.

Tevye

CHORUS

~~TRADITION, TRADITION ... TRADITION~~~~TRADITION, TRADITION ... TRADITION~~

TEVYE

Because of our traditions, we've kept our balance for many, many years. Here in Anatevka we have traditions for everything ... how to eat, how to sleep, how to wear clothes. For instance, we always keep our heads covered and always wear a little prayer shawl ... This shows our constant devotion to God. You may ask how did this tradition start. I'll tell you - I don't know. But it's a tradition ... Because of our traditions, everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do.

TEVYE & PAPAS

STOP

(Sing)

WHO DAY AND NIGHT
MUST SCRAMBLE FOR A LIVING
FEED A WIFE AND CHILDREN
SAY HIS DAILY PRAYERS
AND WHO HAS THE RIGHT
AS MASTER OF THE HOUSE
TO HAVE THE FINAL WORD AT HOME.

ALL

THE PAPA, THE PAPA ... TRADITION
THE PAPA, THE PAPA ... TRADITION

GOLDE & MAMAS

WHO MUST KNOW THE WAY TO MAKE A PROPER HOME
A QUIET HOME, A KOSHER HOME.
WHO MUST RAISE A FAMILY AND RUN THE HOME
SO PAPA'S FREE TO READ THE HOLY BOOK.

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.

yente

STOP

~~PERCHIK~~~~I see very well.~~Tevye /
Tzeitel

TEVYE

Well, Tzeitel, my child, why are you so silent? Aren't you happy with this blessing?

TZEITEL

(Bursts into tears)

Oh, Papa, Papa ...

TEVYE

What is it? Tell me?

TZEITEL

Papa, I don't want to marry him. I can't marry him. I can't ...

TEVYE

What do you mean, you can't? If I say you will, you will.

TZEITEL

Papa, if it's a matter of money, I'll do anything. I'll hire myself out as a servant. I'll dig ditches, I'll haul rocks, only don't make me marry him, Papa, please.

TEVYE

What's wrong with Lazar? He likes you.

TZEITEL

Papa, I will be unhappy with him. All my life will be unhappy. I'll dig ditches, I'll haul rocks.

TEVYE

But we made an agreement. With us an agreement is an agreement.

TZEITEL

Is that more important than I am, Papa? Papa, don't force me. I'll be unhappy all my days.

TEVYE

All right, I won't force you.

TZEITEL

Oh, thank you, Papa.

~~TEVYE~~

STOP

~~It seems it was not ordained that you should have all the comforts of life, or that we should have a little joy in our old age after all our hard work.~~

MOTEL

~~*(Furtive, breathless)*~~~~Reb Tevye, may I speak to you?~~

TEVYE

Talk about what? He wants my new milk cow!

(Prays)

GOLDE

Talk to him!

TEVYE

All right. After the Sabbath, I'll talk to him.

(HE and GOLDE exit - HE is still praying. MOTEL, TZEITEL and CHAVA bring the table into the house. CHAVA exits)

TZEITEL

Motel, Yente was here.

MOTEL

I saw her.

TZEITEL

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.

TZEITEL

But Motel, a few weeks may be too late.

MOTEL

But what else can we do?

TZEITEL

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

MOTEL

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

TZEITEL

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.

TZEITEL

Motel!

MOTEL

I'm just a poor tailor.



TZEITEL

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

MOTEL

That's true.

TZEITEL

Will you talk to him? Will you talk to him?

MOTEL

All right, I'll talk to him.

TEVYE

(Entering)

It's late! Where is everybody? Late.

MOTEL

Reb Tevye ...

TEVYE

Come in, children, we're lighting the candles.

MOTEL

Reb Tevye ...

(Repeats, summoning courage)

TEVYE

Yes? What is it?

(Loudly)

Well, Motel, what is it?

MOTEL

Good Sabbath, Reb Tevye.

TEVYE

Good Sabbath, Good Sabbath ... Come children, come.

(FAMILY, PERCHIK, MOTEL gather around table. GOLDE lights candles, says prayer under her breath)

stop

Reb Tevye, may I speak to you?

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF

Tevye! Motel

TEVYE

Later, Motel. Later.

Please, don't

MOTEL

I would like to speak to you.

All right. Wt

TEVYE

Not now, Motel, I have problems.

Who is it?

MOTEL

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

Who is it?

TEVYE

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

Who is it?

TZEITEL

At least listen to him, Papa.

Who is it?

TEVYE

All right. You have a tongue, talk.

It's me ... my

MOTEL

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

(Stares at hi

TEVYE

He also has ears.

Him? Himself

(To MOTEL

MOTEL

I have a match for Tzeitel.

Either you're

(To audience

TEVYE

What kind of match?

He must be cr

(To MOTEL

MOTEL

A perfect fit.

Arranging a m

matchmaker, t

ceremony

TEVYE

A perfect fit.

(To MOTEL

MOTEL

Like a glove.

You must be c

TEVYE

Like a glove.

Please don't sh

a little unusual

MOTEL

This match was made exactly to measure.

Unusual? It's c

TEVYE

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

Times are chan

other our pledg



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)~~

~~Am I myself?~~

(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, every thing? 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.

STOP

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