

INNKEEPER

May the authorities start itching in places that they can't reach.

ALL

Amen.

PERCHIK

Why do you curse them? What good does your cursing do? You stand around and curse and chatter and don't do anything. You'll all chatter your way into the, grave.

MENDEL

Excuse me, You're not from this village.

PERCHIK

No.

MENDEL

And where are you from?

PERCHIK

Kiev. I was a student in the University there.

INNKEEPER

Aha! The University. Is that where you learned to criticize your elders?

PERCHIK

That's where I learned that there is more to life than talk. You should know what's going on in the outside world.

INNKEEPER

Why should I break my head about the outside world? Let them break their own heads.

TEVYE

He's right. As the good book says, if you spit in the air, it lands in your face.

PERCHIK

That's nonsense. You can't close your eyes to what's happening in the world.

TEVYE

He's right.

AVRAM

He's right and he's right? How can they both be right?

TEVYE

You know, you are also right.

INNKEEPER

He's right! He's still wet behind the ears! Good Sabbath, Tevye.

AVRAM & OTHERS

Good Sabbath, Tevye.

(THEY take their orders and leave. MENDEL remains)

MENDEL

Tevye, the Rabbi's order. My cheese!

TEVYE

Of course. So you're from Kiev, Reb ...

PERCHIK

Perchik.

TEVYE

Perchik. So, you're a newcomer here.

As Abraham said, "I am a stranger in a strange land."

MENDEL

Moses said that.

TEVYE

Forgive me. As King David put it, "I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

MENDEL

That was also Moses.

TEVYE

For a man with a slow tongue, he talked a lot.

MENDEL

And the cheese!

(TEVYE notices that PERCHIK is eyeing the cheese hungrily)

TEVYE

Here, have a piece.

PERCHIK

I have no money. And I am not a beggar.

TEVYE

Here ... It's a blessing for me to give.

PERCHIK

Very well... for your sake!

(HE takes the cheese and devours it)

TEVYE

Thank you ... you know, it's no crime to be poor.

PERCHIK

In this world, it's the rich who are the criminals. Someday their wealth will be ours.

TEVYE

That would be nice. If they would agree, I would agree.

MENDEL

And who will make this miracle come to pass?

PERCHIK

People. Ordinary people.

MENDEL

Like you?

PERCHIK

Like me?

MENDEL

Nonsense!

TEVYE

... And until your golden day comes, Reb Perchik, how will you live?

PERCHIK

By giving lessons to children ... Do you have children?

TEVYE

I have five daughters.

PERCHIK

Five?

TEVYE

Daughters.

PERCHIK

Girls should learn too. Girls are people.

MENDEL

A radical!

PERCHIK

I would be willing to teach them. Open their minds to great thoughts.

TEVYE

What great thoughts?

PERCHIK

Well, the Bible has many lessons for our times.

TEVYE

I am a very poor man. Food for lessons? Good.

(PERCHIK nods)

Stay with us for the Sabbath. Of course, we don't eat like kings, but we don't starve either. As the good book says, when a poor man eats a chicken, one of them is sick.

MENDEL

Where does the book say that?

TEVYE

Well, it doesn't exactly say that, but someplace it has something about a chicken. Good Sabbath.

#4a – End of Scene 2

(Orchestra)

MENDEL

Good Sabbath.

PERCHIK

Good Sabbath.

(THEY exit as TEVYE and PERCHIK enter house)

ACT 1 Scene 3

(Interior of TEVYE's house. TEVYE and PERCHIK enter)

TEVYE

Good Sabbath, children.

CHILDREN

(Running to him)

Good Sabbath, Papa.

TEVYE

Children!

(THEY all stop)

... This is Perchik. Perchik, this is my oldest daughter.

PERCHIK

Good Sabbath.

TZEITEL

Good Sabbath.

PERCHIK

You have a pleasant daughter.