

Fiddler on the Roof

Audition Sides

Pick **one** for your audition. We may ask you to read more.

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. 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.

OR

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.

OR

That was quite a dowry you gave my daughter Tzeitel at her wedding. Was that necessary? ... 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?

GOLDE

It's an evil spirit! May it fall into the river; may it sink into the earth. Such a dark and horrible dream! And to think it was brought on by that butcher. If my grandmother Tzeitel, may she rest in peace, took the trouble to come all the way from the other world to tell us about the tailor, all we can say is that it is all for the best, and it couldn't possibly be any better. Amen.

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.

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...

TZEITEL & MOTEL

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?

ZEITEL

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.

HODEL & PERCHIK

HODEL

That was a very interesting lesson, Perchik.

PERCHIK

Do you think so?

HODEL

Although I don't know if the Rabbi would agree with your interpretation.

PERCHIK

And neither, I suppose, would the Rabbi's son.

HODEL

(Looking at CHA VA, who is churning butter nearby)

My little sisters have big tongues.

(CHA VA exits with stool and churn, left)

PERCHIK

And what do you know about him, except that he is the Rabbi's son? Would you be interested in him if he were the shoemaker's son, or the tinsmith's son?

HODEL

At least I know this he does not have any strange ideas about turning the world upside down.

PERCHIK

Certainly. Any new idea would be strange to you. Remember, the Lord said, "Let there be light."

HODEL

Yes, but He was not talking to you personally.

PERCHIK

You have spirit. Even a little intelligence, perhaps.

HODEL

Thank you.

PERCHIK

But what good is your brain? Without curiosity it is a rusty tool. Good day Hodel.

HODEL

We have an old custom here. A boy acts respectfully to a girl. But, of course, that is too traditional for an advanced thinker like you.

PERCHIK

Our traditions! Nothing must change! Everything is perfect exactly the way it is!

HODEL

We like our ways.

PERCHIK

Our ways are changing all over but here. Here men and women must keep apart. Men study, women in the kitchen. Boys and girls must not touch, should not even look at each other.

HODEL

I am looking at you!

PERCHIK

You are very brave! Do you know that in the city boys and girls can be affectionate without permission of a matchmaker? They hold hands together, they even dance together...

FYEDKA & CHAVA

CHAVA

Is there something you want?

FYEDKA

Yes. I'd like to talk to you.

CHAVA

I'd rather not.

(SHE hesitates)

FYEDKA

I've often noticed you at the bookseller's. Not many girls in this village like to read ...

(Sudden thought...extends book HE is holding)

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 Heinrich 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 a while, then we'll talk about life, how we feel about things, and it can all turn out quite pleasant.

CONSTABLE

CONSTABLE

Oh, 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 unofficial 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.