

#1

Constable / Tevye

CONSTABLE

~~It's just as well.~~ What I have to say is for their ears also. Tevye, how much time do you need to sell your house and all your household goods? *(There is a gasp from the VILLAGERS. They are stunned. They look to TEVYE.)*

TEVYE

Why should I sell my house? Is it in anybody's way?

CONSTABLE

I came here to tell you that you are going to have to leave Anatevka.

TEVYE

And how did I come to deserve such an honor?

CONSTABLE

Not just you, of course, but all of you. At first I thought you might be spared, Tevye, because of your daughter Chava, who married —

TEVYE

My daughter is dead!

CONSTABLE

I understand. At any rate, it affects all of you. You have to leave.

TEVYE

But this corner of the world has always been our home. Why should we leave?

CONSTABLE

(Irritated)

I don't know why. There's trouble in the world. Troublemakers.

TEVYE

(Ironically)

Like us!

CONSTABLE

You aren't the only ones. Your people must leave all the villages — Zolodin, Rabalevka. The whole district must be emptied. ~~*(Horried and amazed exclamations from the VILLAGERS.)*~~ I have an order here, and it says that you must sell your homes and be out of here in three days.

VILLAGERS

Three days! . . . Out in three days!

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TEVYE

And you who have known us all your life, you'd carry out this order?

CONSTABLE

I have nothing to do with it, don't you understand?

TEVYE

(Bitterly)

END We understand.

FIRST MAN

And what if we refuse to go?

CONSTABLE

You will be forced out.

LAZAR

We will defend ourselves.

VILLAGERS

Stay in our homes . . . Refuse to leave . . . Keep our land.

SECOND MAN

Fight!

CONSTABLE

Against our army? I wouldn't advise it!

TEVYE

I have some advice for you. Get off my land! (*The VILLAGERS crowd toward the CONSTABLE and his MEN.*) This is still my home, my land. Get off my land! (*The CONSTABLE and his men start to go. The CONSTABLE turns.*)

CONSTABLE

You have three days! (*Exits.*)

FIRST MAN

After a lifetime, a piece of paper and get thee out.

MORDCHA

We should get together with the people of Zolodin. Maybe they have a plan.

FIRST MAN

We should defend ourselves. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

TEVYE

Very good. And that way, the whole world will be blind and toothless.