

## VANDERGELDER/DOLLY

VANDERGELDER

Excuse me, girlie....Dolly! Dolly Gallagher! What are you doing in that get up? And you're a half hour late! And I demand an explanation of....

MRS. LEVI

Ernestina!

VANDERGELDER

Exactly!

MRS. LEVI

Ernestina whom I trusted!

VANDERGELDER

She wanted to do the hootchy kootchy!

MRS. LEVI

Well, she always was artistic! Horace, I'm going to have our table moved down front. There's someone in the dance competition I particular want you to see.

MRS. LEVI

Now don't lets say another word about it I'm as shocked as you are I-can't-eat-a-thing-what-have-you-ordered?

VANDERGLEDER

What you wanted....a chicken! Now see here, Mrs. Levi, about that hootchy kootchy girl....

MRS. LEVI

Did you say a chicken,  
(Rises and Xes SR)  
oh I don't think I could face a chicken, not a chicken,  
not today, not after what's happened.

VANDERGELDER

Good! Then cancel the chicken!

MRS. LEVI

(To RUDOLPH)  
And bring a turkey!

(RUDOLPH exits US. DOLLY parts  
curtains and peers into SR alcove)

VANDERGELDER

What are you doing now?

MRS. LEVI

(SHE laughs)

Nothing. Just looking the place over. Getting acquainted with the surroundings.

(Xing to SL alcove)

VANDERGELDER

That's the trouble with you, Dolly. Always wanting to know everything! Always putting your nose into other people's affairs. Anybody who married you would get as nervous as a cat.

MRS. LEVI

What? What's that you're saying?

VANDERGELDER

I said anybody who married you would....

MRS. LEVI

(Xing to table, and sitting)

Horace Vandergelder, get that idea right out of your head this minute. I'm surprised that you even mentioned such a thing. Understand once and for all that I have no intention of marrying you!

VANDERGELDER

I didn't mean that!

MRS. LEVI

Well I certainly do hope not! Horace Vandergelder, you go your way, and I'll go mine. I'm not some Irene Molloy whose head can be turned by a few chocolate covered peanuts...unshelled! Why, the idea of you even suggesting such a thing!

VANDERGELDER

Mrs. Levi, you misunderstood me!

MRS. LEVI

Well I certainly do hope not! But if I had any intention of marrying again it would be to a far more pleasure loving man than you.

(RUDOLPH and WAITERS enter with food and wine)

However we won't discuss it any more....Here's the waiter with our food....I'll serve Mr. Vandergelder, Rudolph.

(As SHE starts serving HIM)

Here's some white meat for you...and dumplings, lighter than air they are, and some giblets, very tender and very

MRS. LEVI (Continued)  
good for you. No, as I said before, you go your way, and I'll go mine.

(RUDOLPH begins pouring wines,  
VANDERGELDER first)  
Start right in on the wine. I think you'll feel better at once....However, since you brought the matter up, there's one more thing I think I ought to say.

VANDERGELDER  
I didn't bring the matter up at all.

MRS. LEVI  
(As SHE calmly starts to eat.  
SHE pantomimes eating steadily and heartily throughout rest of scene even though SHE never stops talking so SHE can't really eat)  
One more thing I ought to say before we forget all about it. It's true I'm a woman who likes to know everything that's going on; who likes to manage things; but I wouldn't like to manage anything as out of control as your household. You'll have to do that yourself, God helping you.

VANDERGELDER  
It's not out of control.

MRS. LEVI  
Very well, let's not say another word about it. Have some beets, Horace, they're good.

VANDERGELDER  
I don't like beets!

MRS. LEVI  
(Serving beets anyway)  
That's good! No, Horace, a complaining, quarrelsome, friendless soul like you is no sort of companion for me. You salt your beets....  
(SHE salts HER own)  
And I'll salt mine....  
(SHE salts HIS. RUDOLPH exits)

VANDERGELDER  
Will you stop saying that!

MRS. LEVI  
I won't say another word.

VANDERGELDER  
Good!

MRS. LEVI  
Except this. At your age, Horace, you should enjoy hearing the honest truth.

VANDERGELDER

My age! My age! You're always talking about my age!

MRS. LEVI

Well, I don't know what your age is, but I do know that up in Yonkers with bad food and bad temper you'll double it in six months. Have some more beets! They're good!

(Serving HIM beets)

VANDERGELDER

I don't like beets! I hate beets!

MRS. LEVI

That's nice. Now dig right in. Yes, the pity of it is you could be a perfectly charming, witty, amiable man if you wanted to.

VANDERGELDER

(Rises)

I don't want to be charming!

MRS. LEVI

But you are. Look at you now. You can't hide it. Now sit down, Horace, and let's talk of something else. But before we change the subject there's one more thing I am going to say.

VANDERGELDER

I don't want to hear it! And you're wasting your time, Dolly Levi! I won't ask you to marry me!

MRS. LEVI

I suppose that means you want me to ask you. Well I'm sorry, Horace, I'm turning you down.

VANDERGELDER

How can you turn me down when I haven't asked you anything?

MRS. LEVI

It's no use arguing. I've made up your mind. Here, let me cut your wings....

(SHE cuts turkey on HIS plate)

VANDERGELDER

I've got a headache, I'm going back to my hotel.

MRS. LEVI (As lights begin to dim)

You can't go now. The competition's about to begin....  
(Music stars)

VANDERGELDER

(Taking out BARNABY's wallet)

....Here's the money to pay for the dinner. Here's twenty dollars....Wait a minute. There's nothing in here but a dollar, three dimes, five pennies and a button! This isn't my purse! I've lost my purse!