

VANDERGELDER. What? What?

MRS. LEVI. Congratulations, Mr. Vandergelder! All New York is buzzing with the news that you've practically proposed to Irene Molloy. The streets are lined with eligible young ladies prostrate with grief. All my congratulations and sympathy—

VANDERGELDER. Sympathy?

MRS. LEVI. Did I say that? A slip of the tongue, that's all. No I'm delighted with the happy news, after all she wasn't easy to unload — by that I mean you know what people said although I for one never believed the rumors, no I didn't ...
(Sits on steps at stage right)

VANDERGELDER. Rumors? What rumors?

MRS. LEVI. Nothing to get upset about, Mr. Vandergelder. I mean according to all known facts her first husband passed on quite naturally. It's just that he went so sudden. A few spoons of chowder she made special for him and pfft! But, it could happen to anyone. No there's no truth in it. Just one word of advice, Mr. Vandergelder. Eat out!

HORACE sits down on a stool by DOLLY.

VANDERGELDER. Now hold on, Mrs. Levi, you mean to say that Mrs. Molloy—

MRS. LEVI. I mean to say nothing, Mr. Vandergelder. Just friendly advice. Keep away from the chowder. By the way, she's ordered her wedding gown, beautiful; you should see it — black! (Rises, crosses to center) Well, as I said before, Mr. Vandergelder, congratulations on your forthcoming nuptials and may you rest in ... I mean, may guardian angels watch over you both. Particularly at dinner.

*****START*****

VANDERGELDER. (Crossing to DOLLY) Look here, Mrs. Levi, you introduced me to Mrs. Molloy and rumors or not I intend calling on her this afternoon ... as arranged!

MRS. LEVI. (Crossing toward the door) Very well, Mr. Vandergelder, then there's nothing more for me to do but go back to New York and tell the other girl, the heiress, not to wait ...

VANDERGELDER. (Crossing to DOLLY) What did you say?

MRS. LEVI. Nothing, a word, heiress.

VANDERGELDER. Particulars, Mrs. Levi, I demand particulars — her name!

MRS. LEVI. Her name? Er, um, blah ... Money? Ernestina Money.

VANDERGELDER. What a lovely lovely name.

MRS. LEVI. Picture if you will, hair as shiny as a newly minted dime ... eyes as big round as silver dollars ... skin as soft and mossy as an old greenback—

VANDERGELDER. I can feel her now.

MRS. LEVI. Age nineteen; weight, a hundred and two; waist, forty seven—

VANDERGELDER. Waist forty seven?

MRS. LEVI. That's with the money belt. Now I could arrange for you to meet this Ernestina this very afternoon.

VANDERGELDER. I ain't got time, Mrs. Levi. I got to bring my niece Ermengarde to New York this afternoon until she forgets a certain Ambrose Kemper!

MRS. LEVI. I could do that for you, Mr. Vandergelder. I know just how to handle such things.

VANDERGELDER. (*Crossing to DOLLY*) Then I'm marching in the Fourteenth Street Parade!

MRS. LEVI. What an amazing coincidence! Guess who's been chosen to ride on the main float — the Spirit of Fourteenth Street — Miss Money! (*Aside*) Her mother was a Cash, you know.

VANDERGELDER. All right, Mrs. Levi, I'll meet Miss Money at the parade, but I still intend paying another call on Ms. Molloy first!

MRS. LEVI. Oh dear, what races you make me run! Very well, Mr. Vandergelder, I'll meet you on that bench in front of Mrs. Molloy's hat shop at two thirty as usual.

VANDERGELDER. One more thing, Mrs. Levi! Suppose I decide against Mrs. Molloy and I don't like Miss Money neither?

MRS. LEVI. Well, then I happen to have one more name on my list, Mr. Vandergelder, a name I know as well as my own but let's not go into that now. It'll come up by itself all in good time, don't you worry about it! (*DOLLY gets HORACE'S coat*) Oh, but wait'll you see Ernestina, Horace! (*Music in*) A vision! A dream!

*****END*****

DOLLY sings as she puts on HORACE'S coat and hands him his hat.

No. 3a

It Takes A Woman (Reprise)

See p. 68

(Horace & Dolly)

VANDERGELDER.

It takes a woman, all powered and pink,
To joyously clean out the drain in the sink.
And it takes an angel with long golden lashes
And soft Dresden fingers
For dumping the ashes.

HORACE exits through the door and then crosses right humming.