

Act I

Scene Seven

The **COMPANY** clears away the Mott Street things.
TZALEL enters from left with his cart and a sheaf of
wedding invitations.

TZALEL

(Crossing right, he hands the invitations to **BIELE**...)
Over a hundred invitations—

BIELE

(... who takes one and hands the invitations to **DAVID**...)
—printed in as luxurious a black and gold as ever came out of an Essex Street hand
press—

DAVID

(... who takes one and hands them to **NATHAN**...)
—were sent out for a date early in April.

... who takes one and hands them back to **TZALEL**, who tosses them into
his cart and loads in the rocking chair before he exits right, leaving the cart
down right. **GOLDY** enters at left and crosses to center. We are now in
her new apartment.

HEYMAN

Goldy and Nathan paid a month's rent in advance for three rooms—

GOLDY

—*three!*—

DAVID

—on the second floor of a Cherry Street tenement house.

BIELE

Goldy regarded the rent as unusually low—

HEYMAN

—and the apartments as the finest on the Lower East Side.

GOLDY

Oh, haven't I got lovely rooms!

(Approaching **BIELE**, eagerly.)

You ought to see my rooms! How much do you pay for yours?

DAVID

In her imagination, humanity was divided into two distinct groups—

HEYMAN

—those who were interested in the question of rooms, rent and furniture—

BIELE

—and those who were not!

BIELE exits right as **TZALEL** re-enters with a large wall clock wrapped in brown paper with a label. He crosses to his cart and puts it in.

TAMARA enters from left.

TAMARA

It was customary to send the bulkier wedding presents to a young couple's apartment a few days before they became man and wife—

DAVID

—the closer relatives and friends of the betrothed usually settling among themselves what piece of furniture each was to contribute.

GOLDY

(Drawing **TAMARA** into 'her rooms.')

I have made up my mind to have my parlor in the rear room. It is as light as the front one, anyhow, and I want that for a kitchen, you know. What do you say?

NATHAN

Accordingly, Goldy gave up her work a week in advance of the day set for the great event—

TZALEL

(Lifting the rocking chair from the cart and crossing to **GOLDY** with it.)

—in order that she might be on hand to receive the things when they arrived.

TZALEL places the rocking chair in **GOLDY**'s new rooms and returns to his cart at down right. **DAVID** and **HEYMAN** exit left as **NATHAN** enters.

TAMARA

She went to the empty little rooms, with her lunch, early in the morning—

TAMARA exits right.

REB TZALEL

—and kept anxious watch till after nightfall, when Nathan came to take her home.

TZALEL exits right as **NATHAN** crosses to center and calls up, to the window above.

NATHAN

Goldy!

GOLDY

(As if coming to a front window.)

The lady of the house!

(She sees him.)

Is that you, beloved? You'll disturb the neighbors. Come up, why don't you, to our new home?

NATHAN crosses into the apartment, looking around expectantly.

NATHAN

It's almost time for supper. So? A rocking chair?

GOLDY

A perfectly lovely chair in which to sit and rock—and to rock a child to sleep, if the Uppermost so blesses us.

NATHAN

(Crestfallen.)

You've been here all day?

GOLDY

I was here to receive this lovely chair! It's from the Lipmans.

NATHAN

The Lipmans—such dear friends.

GOLDY

Dear indeed—we had set them down for nothing less than a carpet or a parlor set. But a chair is a chair, is it not? And a chair is a start.

NATHAN

Yes—a chair is a start.

GOLDY

It arrived first-thing this morning as I sat by the sill and watched. So I have rocked and waited, and when I heard a sound in the hall, I jumped up and—met the neighbors!

NATHAN

Quite a day.

REB TZALEL removes the wrapped clock from the cart and crosses up them.

GOLDY

Oh, it is too early, anyway! I am a fool to be expecting anything so soon at all.

TZALEL

Delivery!

GOLDY

There! Did I not say it! We need only be patient, my love.

(She kisses him happily on the cheek. Calling back.)

The lady of the house!

NATHAN

Goldy—don't say it that way!

GOLDY

Second floor, if you please!

TZALEL crosses to the rooms.

GOLDY

There is plenty of time yet, after all; wedding presents *do* come a day or two before the ceremony.

NATHAN

Well, I suppose they do.

TZALEL

Delivery?

GOLDY

Bless you! Please—do bring it in. What is it?

TZALEL

(Handing the clock to **NATHAN**.)

It's heavy. Here.

GOLDY tears open the wrapping paper.

NATHAN

It's a clock.

GOLDY

Behold. A very fine clock. Look at it!

NATHAN

Who sent it?

GOLDY

(Checking the label on the paper.)

Your Aunt Hadass and your Uncle Isidore. Well.

NATHAN pays **TZALEL** for the delivery. **TZALEL** exits the rooms, crosses to his cart, and pulls it across the stage, exiting at left.

NATHAN

We had hoped for something more... substantial, yes?

GOLDY

A peer glass, perhaps. Or a bed. But not to worry, Nathan. We are orphans, after all, with no parents alive but the Uppermost to set us up in proper housekeeping. He will provide. And here is a nail just waiting for a clock, see? Come help me with hanging it, my heart.

They hang the clock, and **GOLDY** sets the pendulum swinging. A gentle ticking sound from the orchestra continues under throughout.

GOLDY

There! A clock, and a rocking chair—and our future home! It is not very bad for a start, is it? You know most people do send their wedding presents after the ceremony.

NATHAN

After?

GOLDY

Why, of course! It is the fashionable thing to do—see what the couple needs and then decide!

NATHAN

If you think so, then.

GOLDY

I think so. Do not be so quick to lose heart, dearest. We have invited a big crowd, and all people of no mean sort, thank God!

NATHAN

But Goldy—

GOLDY

And who ever heard of a lady or a gentleman attending a respectable wedding and having a grand wedding supper, and then cheating the bride and the bridegroom out of their present?

NATHAN

Well, I suppose that's right.

GOLDY

Of course it's right. Our friends are good people, Nathan, many who already are married—and they know what we will require and wish us well and want to see us, among their number, set up properly in life.

NATHAN

(Putting the trouble out of mind.)

Of course. And it's time for supper. I thought we might take a walk over to Orchard Street. Something special. There's a tavern there?

GOLDY

In the basement at number ninety-seven? I passed it by on my way this morning. But give me one hour more—it's not quite yet evening, and heaven forbid something come while we're out.

NATHAN

(Taking her in his arms.)

All right. But only an hour. Shall I come back then?

GOLDY

You go—have a beer and I'll be right over.

NATHAN

(Happily.)

It's only five more days until the wedding, Goldy.

GOLDY

Five days—and one hour! Now go. Think of it while you wait: all Cherry Street will come to know the fashionable new couple who have made their home here!

They exchange a quick kiss and **GOLDY** ushers **NATHAN** from the premises. He exits left as she looks around the nearly empty apartment. The ticking in the orchestra rises to accompany her.

WAITING FOR A CLOCK

GOLDY

A clock. A clock!
And a chair to sit and rock
While waiting for a knock on the door.
Well, that's what waiting's for.
All morning long, with my lunch on the shelf
I've sat and waited and amused myself,
And all day long, from morning to now
I've waited for a knock,
for a chair and a clock
and a carpet and a glass and an ice-box!

A chair, a clock—
And the only one who knocks
Is my beloved here to see me home.
While I've sat all day here alone
From dawn to dusk, every sound in the hall,
Every cry from the street's a delivery call,
And all day long, I've sat and moaned
In our empty rooms
For a chair and a clock
And a dining room set and a sofa!

A picture over the fireplace, a scuttle to fill with coal
And set down beneath a mantle with candle-sticks
Near a fine parlor table and a tufted chair—
But the where's the chair? It isn't there yet!
There's a nowhere where the chair should be,
As part of a proper parlor set!

But so far—a clock, a clock! A clock!
And a chair to sit and rock
While waiting for a knock on the door.
Well, that's what waiting's for!

GOLDY slumps worriedly into the chair and continues rocking. Dimout.