

The Matchmaker monologue choices

(Please make sure that if you use these choices, they are cut to one minute for your audition. More has been given in some cases to help you orient to the circumstances of the play and the character.)

Vandergelder: Ninety-nine percent of the people in the world are fools and the rest of us are in great danger of contagion. But I wasn't always free of foolishness as I am now. I was once young, which was foolish; I fell in love, which was foolish; and I got married, which was foolish; and for a while I was poor, which was more foolish than all the other things put together. Then my wife died, which was foolish of her; I grew older, which was sensible of me; then I became a rich man which is as sensible as it is rare. Since you see I'm a man of sense, I guess you were surprised to hear that I'm planning to get married again. I have two reasons for it. In the first place, I like my house run with order, comfort and economy. That's a woman's work; but even a woman can't do it well if she's merely being paid for it. In order to run a house well, a woman must have the feeling that she owns it. Marriage is a bribe to make a housekeeper think she's a householder. Did you ever watch an ant carry a burden twice its size? What excitement! What patience! What will! Well, that's what I think of when I see a woman running a house. What giant passions in those little bodies---what quarrels with the butcher for the best cut---what fury at discovering a moth in a cupboard! Believe me! - If women could harness their natures to something bigger than a house and a baby-carriage they'd change the world!

Vandergelder: And the second reason, ladies and gentlemen? Well, I see by your faces you've guessed it already. There's nothing like mixing with women to bring out all the foolishness in a man of sense. And that's a risk I'm willing to take. I've just laid side by side the last dollar of my first half-million. So if I should lose my head a little, I still have enough money to buy it back. After many years' caution and hard work, I have the right to a little risk and adventure, and I'm thinking of getting married. Yes, like all you other fools, I'm willing to risk a little security for a certain amount of adventure. Think it over.

Mrs. Levi: My pleasure? Mr. Kemper, when you artists paint a hillside or a river you change everything a little, you make thousands of little changes, don't you? Nature is never completely satisfactory and must be corrected. Well, I'm like you artists. Life as it is is never quite interesting enough for me---I'm bored, Mr. Kemper, with life as it is---and so, I do things. I put my hand in here, and I put my hand in there, and I watch and I listen---and often I am very much amused.

Mrs. Levi: There's another thing. I'm very interested in this household here---in Mr. Vandergelder and all that idle, frozen money of his. I don't like the thought of it lying in great piles, useless, motionless, in the bank, Mr. Kemper. Money should circulate like rainwater. It should be flowing down among the people, through dressmakers and restaurants and cabmen, setting up a little business here, and furnishing a good time there. Do you see

what I mean? I want New York to be more like Vienna and less like a collection of nervous and tired ants. New York should be a very happy city, Mr. Kemper, but it isn't. And if you and Ermengarde get a good deal of Mr. Vandergelder's money, I want you to see that it starts flowing in and around a lot of people's lives.

Mrs. Levi: Oh, Mr. Vandergelder, I wish Irene Molloy could see you now. But then! I don't know what's come over you lately. You seem to be growing younger every day. Why, I can see at a glance that you're the sort that will be stamping about at a hundred. I'm a judge of hands, Mr. Vandergelder---show me your hand. (*Looks at it*) Lord in heaven! What a lifeline! From *here* to *here*. It runs right off your hand. I don't know where it goes (*Turns hand over. Looks up sleeve*) They'll have to hit you on the head with a mallet. They'll have to stifle you with a sofa pillow. You'll bury us all!!

Mrs. Levi: Ephraim Levi, I'm going to get married again. Ephraim, I'm marrying Horace Vandergelder for his money. I'm going to send his money out doing all the things you taught me. Oh, it won't be a marriage in the sense that we had one---but I shall certainly make him happy, and---Ephraim---I'm tired. I'm tired of living from hand to mouth, and I'm asking your permission. Ephraim---will you give me away?

Mrs. Levi: Money, money, money---it's like the sun we walk under; it can kill and it can cure. Horace Vandergelder's never tired of saying most of the people in the world are fools, and in a way he's right, isn't he? Himself, Irene, Cornelius, myself!! But there comes a moment in everybody's life when he must decide whether he'll live among human beings or not---a fool among fools or a fool alone. As for me, I've decided to live among them.

Cornelius: Chief clerk! Promoted from chief clerk to chief clerk---and if I'm good, in ten years I'll be promoted to chief clerk again. Thirty-three years old and I still don't get an evening free. When am I going to begin to live? How much money have you got - where you can get at it? You and I are going to New York. Barnaby, we're going to live! I'm going to have enough adventures to last me until I'm partner. So, go and get your Sunday clothes on. Yes, I mean it. We're going to have a good meal; and we're going to be in danger; and we're going to get almost arrested; and we're going to spend all our money. And one more thing; we're not coming back to Yonkers until we've kissed a girl!

Cornelius: (to the audience) Isn't the world full of wonderful things? There we sit cooped up in Yonkers years and years and all the time wonderful people like Mrs. Molly are walking around in New York and we don't know them at all. I don't know whether---from where you're sitting---you can see---well, for instance, the way her eye and forehead and cheek come together, up here. Can you? And the kind of fireworks that shoot out of her eyes all the time. I tell you right now: a fine woman is the greatest work of God. You can talk all you like about Niagara Falls and the Pyramids; they aren't in it at all.

Cornelius: They're so different from men. Why, everything that they say and do is so different that you feel like laughing all the time. Golly, they're different from men. And they're awfully mysterious too. You never can be really sure what's going on in their heads. They have a kind of wall around them all the time---of pride, and a sort of play acting; I bet you could know a woman a hundred years without ever being really sure whether she liked you or not. This minute I'm in danger. I'm in danger of losing my job and my future and everything that people think is important, but I don't care. Even if I have to dig ditches for the rest of my life, I'll be a ditch-digger who once had a wonderful day.

Mrs. Molloy: Minnie, you're a fool. All millineresses are suspected of being wicked women. Why half the time all those women come into the shop merely to look at me. The only men I meet are feather-merchants! Take my word for it, Minnie, either I marry Horace Vandergelder, or I break out of this place like a fire-engine. I'll go to every theatre and ball and opera in New York City. But what I think Mr. Vandergelder is---and it's very important---I think he'd make a good fighter. Take my word for it, Minnie; the best of married life is the fights. The rest is merely so-so. Now Peter Molloy---God rest him!---was a fine arguing man. I pity the woman whose husband slams the door and walks out of the house at the beginning of an argument. Peter Molloy would stand up and fight for hours on end. He'd even throw things, Minnie, and there's no pleasure to equal that. When I felt tired I'd start a good blood-warming fight and it'd take ten years off my age.

Malachi: A purse. That fellow over there must have let it fall during the misunderstanding about the screen. No, I won't look inside. Twenty-dollar bills, dozens of them. I'll go over and give it to him. (To audience) You're surprised? You're surprised to see me getting rid of this money so quickly, eh? I'll explain it to you. There was a time in my life when my chief interest was picking up money that didn't belong to me. The law is there to protect property, but---sure, the law doesn't care whether a property owner deserves his property or not, and the law has to be corrected. There are several thousands of people in this country engaged in correcting the law. For a while, I, too, was engaged in the redistribution of superfluties.

Malachi: There are some people who say you shouldn't have any weakness at all – no vices. But if a man has no vices, he's in great danger of making vices out of virtues, and there's a spectacle. We've all seen them; men who were monsters of philanthropy and women who were dragons of purity. We've seen people who told the truth, through the Heavens fall, and the Heavens fell. No, no nurse one vice in your bosom. Give it the attention it deserves and let your virtues spring up modestly around. Then you'll have the miser who's no liar; and the drunkard who's the benefactor of a whole city.

Barnaby: I think the moral is about – I think it's about adventure. The test of an adventure is that when you're in the middle of it, you say to yourself, "Oh, now I've got myself into an awful mess; I wish I were sitting quietly at home." And the sign that something's wrong with you is when you sit quietly at home wishing you were out having lots of adventures. So that e all hope

that in your lives you have just the right amount of sitting quietly at home, and just the right amount of....adventures. Goodnight!