

GLOSSARY

Aguna A woman whose husband has abandoned her, leaving her in a kind of marital limbo. Unless his death is proved, she is unable to divorce him, unable to remarry.

Briss Circumcision ceremony for a male infant.

Cabala An occult system of religious study. Based on an esoteric interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, it contained elements of magic and attracted students who were deeply mystical.

Cheder Hebrew elementary school for boys.

Chupah A wedding canopy.

Dreidl A spinning top used at Hannukah to play a gambling game.

Dybbuk A demon which takes possession of a human body.

Gehenna Hell.

Gemara A complete and lengthy rabbinical study on the Mishna, which is itself an interpretation of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament.

Golem A common Yiddish word for a witless fool.

Hannukah Early winter celebration of the victory of the Maccabees of ancient Israel over the Syrians

Hasidim A sect of Jewish mystics founded in Poland in the mid-18th century. Hasidic Jews were extremely orthodox, and they practiced their religion with a kind of ecstasy which included dancing.

Ketuba Marriage contract.

Kittel White robe worn by the groom at an Orthodox wedding, and at other services.

Kosher Ritually clean.

Mikvah Ritual bath of purification. Used by a married woman, in this instance, at the end of each menstrual period before intercourse could be resumed.

Mezuzah A sacred scroll fixed on the doorpost of a dwelling, as a protection and reminder of the presence of God.

Minyan 10 men needed for a public religious service.

Purim Early spring celebration of the mythical victory of the Jews over Haman, who sought to destroy them.

Ritual Garment—("tzitzis") Fringed garment always worn by men next to the skin.

Sh'ma (Sh'ma Yisrael) The first words of the basic Hebrew prayer: Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.

Shiksa A non-Jewish woman.

Shiva Period of mourning.

Shtetl A village or small town.

Sinas Chinon Blind hatred.

Shulchan Oruch "Set table." The comprehensive code of Jewish law, contained in four books.

Tallis Prayer shawl worn by men.

Talmud The collection of rabbinic commentaries which consist of the Mishna and the Gemara, which constitute the basis for religious authority in Judaism.

Torah The five books of Moses, the Pentateuch.

78-79
I. B. Singer

2

CAST OF CHARACTERS

TEIBELE—30-35—a beautiful agunah
GENENDEL—30-35—an attractive widow
ALCHONON—30-35—a shabby scholar
MENASHA—30-35—a dapper peddler
OLD RABBI—a venerable authority figure
BEADLES (2)—25-35

Teibele and Her Demon

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

TIME: 1880

PLACE: A Polish shtetl

The action of the play takes place in the village of Fram-pol. The interior/exterior set consists of TEIBELE's living quarters and the streets around her little house which is also her drygoods store. Outside her house is the community well with a pump and public cup for the convenience of the passerby. It is suggested that music be woven throughout to establish mood, to underscore dialogue, and as bridges and motifs, etc.

AT RISE: *Lights dim up to reveal short tableau of the thirtyish, still beautiful TEIBELE engrossed in a book. Her area is the room behind her store. Lights dim up in the street area as ALCHONON, standing at the well nearby, gazes at her rapt figure. He is in his early thirties, bespectacled, with the unworldly look of a shabby scholar. Lights dim out on TEIBELE as MENASHA enters from the far end of the street with his peddler's pack on his back. He is a trifle younger than ALCHONON, nattily dressed, earthy, outgoing, and self-confident. Surprised to see ALCHONON, he sneaks up playfully behind him.*

MUSIC - HANU MISC

MENASHA. Alchonon, you're here again? Have you decided to live at the well?

ALCHONON. A man is allowed to be thirsty.

MENASHA. Thirsty! You must have a fire in your

stomach. (*patting his pocket*) Try some of the real stuff for a change.

ALCHONON. In the street?

MENASHA. You see anyone?

ALCHONON. Teibele. (*turning*) She was there a moment ago.

MENASHA. (*shrugging*) Teibele. Teibele, the agunah. Look but don't touch. A deserted wife is like a Chanukah candle. You can see it, but you can't use it. (*indicating flask*) Here, take some.

ALCHONON. Not now, Menasha. Why do you need vodka so much?

MENASHA. In a hole like this without vodka, you die young from boredom.

ALCHONON. I'm shrivelling up here myself. Summer months I can just about stand it. In winter, the nights become so long, I wonder I don't go cuckoo.

MENASHA. It happened already. You are cuckoo. At least I make a living here. But for a scholar and a cabalist like you to dribble away his life as a lowly teacher's helper, that's what I call suicide.

ALCHONON. I've lived and studied in Lublin and when all's said and done, it's the same swamp as Frampol. At least here I had a stroke of luck. I found you to talk to. One friend heals many wounds.

MENASHA. I wish I could be more of a friend but I'm stuck in the same rut. At least when I peddle my junk I find women. Last week I got a very nice piece of merchandise. Not yet eighteen. Married to an imbecile. I got her for a string of glass beads. She kissed me and bit me like a wolf cub. Hoo-ha! (*They laugh.*)

ALCHONON. Lucky dog.

MENASHA. I'd get you plenty of wenches if you'd go out on the road with me. You'd do all right.

ALCHONON. I'm not a business man. That's one thing. Neither can I lie down with the first peasant who's willing. I have to love the woman. A woman is for the soul as well as the flesh. If I love a woman my soul ascends to the throne of glory while my body burns like the fire of Gehenna. God and Satan merge into one eternal passion.

MENASHA. In Frampol? It would take a miracle.

ALCHONON. Great love can create great miracles. A change will come into my life soon. When you're at the bottom of the abyss, you must ascend.

MENASHA. Such wonderful words. What are you quoting? The Cabala?

ALCHONON. My own version of the Cabala.

MENASHA. You're always thinking.

ALCHONON. Some thoughts can change a man's life.

MENASHA. Next to a scholar like you I feel like an ignoramus. But before these wonders take place, let's go to the tavern. Come on, I'll tell you some more about my shiksa.

ALCHONON. You haven't fallen in love with her?

MENASHA. No, I may be a sinner but I'm still faithful to our God. When I go to Gehenna I want it to be a Jewish Gehenna.

ALCHONON. With beautiful Jewish girls and a couple of shiksas for dessert.

MENASHA. Right! The tavern?

ALCHONON. No.

MENASHA. What are you going to do? Stand here and guard the well? Wait for Elijah to come down in his fiery chariot and bring you the Queen of Sheba?

ALCHONON. Things can happen.

MENASHA. In Frampol?

ALCHONON. Even in Frampol.

MENASHA. Tonight?
ALCHONON. Even tonight.

(ALCHONON exits with a wave to MENASHA who exits in opposite direction. Dusk falls. Lights dim up on TEIBELE area. TEIBELE and GENENDEL are admiring some cloth. GENENDEL is TEIBELE's age or a little older, down to earth, and attractive in her own way.)

GENENDEL. Teibele, it's just what I wanted. I can't wait to make it into a blouse.

TEIBELE. When is the briss?

GENENDEL. Day after tomorrow. It seems like every other woman is giving birth this fall. If my Zorach were still alive we'd have a house full of children by now.

TEIBELE. You know, there is a she-demon by the name of Shibtah who steals newborn infants. A mother who is nursing shouldn't dare go out at night because Shibtah is lurking.

GENENDEL. I'll tell them what you said.

TEIBELE. God forbid the things that can happen. I read in the Holy Book that every man has 1000 demons on his left side and 10,000 demons on his right. They follow him wherever he goes and hover over him. They also accompany him to his grave.

GENENDEL. As long as the mezuzah on your doorpost is kosher they have no power.

TEIBELE. A mezuzah doesn't always help, Genendel. When there's a dybbuk loose in town you have to put on two aprons, one in front and one from behind. If not, the dybbuk may enter from either side.

GENENDEL. Can't he enter through the mouth?

TEIBELE. They like the impure spots. When a female

? has her period they arrive in droves. This is why a man shouldn't come near her unless she's first been to the ritual bath.

GENENDEL. And even the mikvah isn't always a protection.

TEIBELE. You can never be too careful with a demon.

GENENDEL. My Aunt Risha told me a story once about a demon who lived with a human female and gave her five children.

TEIBELE. I've read it! It's right here in the **Measure of Rightness**. *(crosses to bed, and taking book from under her pillow, shows it to GENENDEL)* The woman's husband was a goldsmith and he spent his time traveling to the courts of the squires, and he'd make chains and rings and bracelets for the wives and mistresses. He'd come home, rush off, and again months would pass. One night, when his wife was lying in bed thinking sinful thoughts, this demon appeared and forced himself on her.

(In the street, ALCHONON, passing TEIBELE's house overhears their conversation and eavesdrops. He moves off before TEIBELE reaches the end of her incantation.)

GENENDEL. **Why didn't she recite The Sh'ma?** *why?*

TEIBELE. She did! Nevertheless, he forced her to become his wife. She had a cellar in the house and they'd go down there to embrace twice a week. She got pregnant and bore him five monsters.

GENENDEL. Did she get a big belly?

TEIBELE. No. Their offspring are half air, half scum. They can't be seen by the human eye. Only heard now and then.

GENENDEL. Oy! Now I'll be afraid to go home.

TEIBELE. If, God forbid, something should happen there is an incantation.

GENENDEL. What is it?

TEIBELE.

In the black sea
Lies a black stone
In the throat of the crow
Sticks a hard bone
Don't drink beer
Don't drink wine
Goats drip fat
So do swine
Hermizah now fly
Where people seek not
Where cattle tread not
Where iron is the earth
And copper the sky
~~Zedkie~~, save me
~~Taftifiyah~~, redeem me
Into Thy hand I commend my spirit
Thou hast redeemed me
Oh Lord God of truth
Amen ~~Sciah~~.

GENENDEL. To remember all that would take me a year and a Wednesday.

TEIBELE. Sha! Don't mention Wednesday. Wednesdays and Saturdays are the nights when the evil spirits walk abroad. **It's mentioned in several books.**

GENENDEL. Teibele, you put me to shame. You're so well read.

TEIBELE. What else is left to me? Let me show you something. (*TEIBELE goes to a cupboard and brings out a small box from which she extracts a talisman, hands it to GENENDEL.*) My mother bought me this

talisman to wear between my breasts, to protect me when I became pregnant. But it wasn't to be. (*She returns talisman to box.*) With Moische Mattis, God locked my womb. You can marry again some day if you find the right match, Genendel, but I am an agunah. ~~For a~~ deserted wife there's no future.

GENENDEL. Why Moische Mattis left you I'll never understand.

TEIBELE. I've almost forgotten what he looks like. Even when we lived together he was away so often. Making pilgrimages to all kinds of holy men. It grew into a passion. Maybe it's a sin for me to say this but he didn't need a wife. It took him months to deflower me.

GENENDEL. Do you think he's still alive?

TEIBELE. Who knows?

GENENDEL. If he were alive he'd send you divorce papers by now. (*sighs*) Well, if I'm going to sew this blouse on time I'd better get started. Goodnight. (*They kiss.*) Having you as a friend saved my life, Teibele.

TEIBELE. I feel the same way about you. This Frampol (may God not punish me) is a desert.

GENENDEL. Goodnight. Your story made me tingle! (*Exit GENENDEL. TEIBELE turns down her quilt, gets ready for bed.*)

TEIBELE. (*to herself*) Two lonely souls . . . Only a miracle can save us. (*Her hands stray wistfully to her breasts as she undresses. When she is stripped to her shift she intones the Prayer before Retirement.*) In the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, may Michael be at my right hand, Gabriel at my left, before me, Uriel, behind me, Raphael; and above my head the divine presence of God.

(*She blows out the candle, crosses to her bed. Pulling up the quilt, she sighs and falls asleep. In the*

music to a fug
deaf

darkness a figure crawls toward her bed: Enter ALCHONON barely visible and disguised as a demon. Suddenly a leg of TEIBELE's bed is raised from the floor, coming down with a resounding thump. TEIBELE screams.)

ALCHONON. Don't scream, Teibele. If you cry out, I will destroy you. I am the demon Hurmizah, ruler over darkness, rain, hail, thunder, and wild beasts. I am the evil spirit who espoused the young woman you spoke about tonight. And because you told the story with such relish, I heard your words from the abyss, and I was filled with lust for your body. Do not try to resist! Those who refuse to do my will I drag away beyond the ~~Mountains of Darkness~~ to Mount Sair, into a wilderness where men seek not, where beasts tread not, among adders and scorpions, until every bone of their body is ground to dust, and they are lost forever in the nether depths. But if you comply with my wish, not a hair of your head will be harmed, and I will grant you success in everything.

TEIBELE. What do you want of me? I am a married woman.

ALCHONON. Your husband is dead.

TEIBELE. How? When?

ALCHONON. It's already a year and seven months. He died in a cholera epidemic in the city of Leipzig, and I followed his hearse with a swarm of other demons.

TEIBELE. Demons!

ALCHONON. Evil deeds give birth to demons. They are the offspring of transgression.

TEIBELE. Moishe Mattis was not a sinner. He was a pious man.

ALCHONON. A man who deserts his wife is not pious.

He danced around with his Chassidim, drank ~~aque~~ vitae, and left you alone. He didn't seek you in the nights when you came from the mikvah. And when he did, he couldn't satisfy you. After he left you, he indulged in the ~~deeds~~ of Onan, and from each drop of semen a devil was born. When he died they flew after his body, called him father and disgraced him.

TEIBELE. What was he doing in Leipzig?

ALCHONON. The rabbi of Turisk had learned that he was not a whole man and made him leave. He stole the rabbi's spice box and wandered to the fair of Leipzig.

TEIBELE. Why?

ALCHONON. All the great fairs team with living corpses.

TEIBELE. Must I sit shiva for him?

ALCHONON. Not after so long an interval.

TEIBELE. Will I be permitted to remarry?

ALCHONON. Never! I cannot testify for you. The testimony of a demon is not valid. But I'm not lying. Your husband is dead. The worms have already gnawed away his nose.

TEIBELE. How do you know?

ALCHONON. I know. I am the Rabbi of the demons.

TEIBELE. Oh, God in heaven!

ALCHONON. Don't invoke God's name. He cannot help you now. The ~~Messiah on a white donkey~~ hasn't come yet. And until resurrection at least another 689,000 years will pass.

TEIBELE. Sh'ma Israel!

ALCHONON. Hush! Quiet! If you try this again I'll rip the tongue out of your mouth. I'll pluck your eyes out and bite off your nipples.

TEIBELE. Pity! Have pity!

ALCHONON. We don't know what pity is.

TEIBELE. I will die if you touch me.

ALCHONON. You won't die. I've yearned for you for years. I know all your innermost secrets. When you still went faithfully to the mikvah I accompanied you. I lusted for your body. You need not be ashamed before me because I've seen you naked many many times. Your breasts are white and your nipples are red. Is this true or not?

TEIBELE. True!

ALCHONON. I had no power over you then but I spoke to you without language and tickled your hidden places. My words became your thoughts.

TEIBELE. What do you want of me? I will lose the world to come.

ALCHONON. You will lose nothing. Many pious females copulated with our kind and today they're sitting on golden chairs in paradise. I myself have lain in the laps of the most beautiful and pious daughters of men. With Hodl, the daughter of Baalshem and with Sarah, the daughter of Good.

TEIBELE. Sarah, the daughter of Good?

ALCHONON. She conjured me with holy names to come to her bed. I lay with Bathsheba long before David took her away from Uriah, and with Queen Esther when Ashasuerus brought her to his palace. That is mentioned in the Talmud.

TEIBELE. I'm still fertile. I may get pregnant. And then . . .

ALCHONON. No grief will come to you. I've taken the form of a man in order not to terrify you. You won't be disgraced. I will be your husband, your brother, your father. I could force you but I'd rather you open your lap to me of your own free will.

TEIBELE. I'm afraid, I'm afraid.

ALCHONON. They were all afraid. But after I came to them they loved me with a great love, longed for me and called my name in the night.

TEIBELE. Why have you chosen me?

ALCHONON. I loved you the first time I saw you.

TEIBELE. When? Where?

ALCHONON. On your wedding night. Your husband, Moishe Mattis, came to you but he did not know how to unbind you. He buzzed like a bee and in his clumsiness he gushed semen on your thighs. I entered your bed and your body burned me like fire. My tongue brushed your ear and told you sweet secrets.

TEIBELE. (*almost screaming*) Don't!

ALCHONON. You are mine.

(M) (*He flings himself on her. Blackout. The lights dim up. A short interval has passed.*)

ALCHONON. Are you still afraid of me?

TEIBELE. Yes, I am.

ALCHONON. Did I make you suffer? Tell the truth!

TEIBELE. No.

ALCHONON. Was it pleasant? (*TEIBELE is silent.*)
Yes or no?

TEIBELE. (*hesitating*) Yes, but . . .

ALCHONON. But what?

TEIBELE. It is a sin.

ALCHONON. No sin. You're not married. I came to give you pleasure, not to frighten you. I heard you crying in the nights and I knew your longing.

TEIBELE. Yes. Yes. Yes.

ALCHONON. Don't keep muttering yes. Talk to me like a woman to a man. Kiss me! (*TEIBELE doesn't stir.*)
Kiss my lips. They thirst for you. (*TEIBELE kisses his*)

cheek timidly.) Kiss my mouth! (*kisses her*) How sweet your mouth is. I'm the happiest demon in Frampol. You're better than all my wives.

TEIBELE. Wives!

ALCHONON. Yes, wives. Don't be jealous of them. They are she-demons and you are the daughter of man. You are the only human female I possess.

TEIBELE. If you have them, why do you need me?

ALCHONON. They are shrill and vulgar, but you are quiet and modest. Their bodies are made of air and spider webs while yours is flesh and blood.

TEIBELE. How many have you?

ALCHONON. Seven.

TEIBELE. Seven!

ALCHONON. Seven she-demons. Let's see. There's Naamah, Machlath, and Af, Chaimah, Zluchah, Nafka and Chuldah.

TEIBELE. Such names!

ALCHONON. I left their beds and came to you.

TEIBELE. Why?

ALCHONON. Because you loved me even though you didn't know me. You uncovered yourself before me. You fondled my tail unawares and you even licked it. (*He laughs.*)

TEIBELE. I? How? (*pause*) Don't your wives do the same?

ALCHONON. They fornicate with all of us but you give yourself only to me.

TEIBELE. They betray you? Why do you stay with such kind?

ALCHONON. It's our nature. We pair off in the dark, not knowing who with whom. Every night is a black wedding to us. But since we stem from Adam's loins we crave his daughters.

TEIBELE. What is so good about us?

ALCHONON. I'll speak only about you. She-demons are false but you are true. With all their masks and cunning there is no substance to them. They are shadows of toadstools. They have no wombs. Their breasts are foam and scum. When you touch them they dissolve, while you can be caressed and pinched. (*pinches her*)

TEIBELE. It hurts! (*giggles*)

ALCHONON. They can bark but you can cry. (*He kisses her eyes.*)

TEIBELE. My tears are gone.

ALCHONON. New ones will gather.

TEIBELE. Tell me more about these wives of yours. What is Naamah like?

(*During the description of the seven wives, TEIBELE grows more and more titillated.*)

ALCHONON. Naamah is a terror. When we quarrel she spits venom and blows fire at me through her nostrils.

TEIBELE. How awful!

ALCHONON. Machlath has the face of a leech and those whom she lashes with her tongue are branded forever.

TEIBELE. Are you branded?

ALCHONON. She left a scar on my belly. Touch it.

TEIBELE. No, no. (*She twists away from him.*)

ALCHONON. Af bedecks herself with emeralds, diamonds and silver. Her braids are spun of gold. On her ankles she wears bells and bracelets. When she dances naked before our lord Asmodeus, all the deserts ring out with their tinkling.

TEIBELE. Naked? Before Asmodeus?

ALCHONON. She is my wife but his concubine.

TEIBELE. She lives with both of you?

ALCHONON. With all of us.

TEIBELE. Shameless!

ALCHONON. Chaimah is the only one I can talk to. But she's awake only one night a year—the midnight of the winter solstice. We've had some rollicking times in the graveyard feasting on the freshly buried infants.

TEIBELE. Don't tell me any more!

ALCHONON. Zluchah is the enemy of brides. If a bride steps outside alone at night during the Seven Nuptial Benedictions, Zluchah wriggles up to her and the bride falls down in a fit unable to speak.

TEIBELE. Why keep a vicious devil like her?

ALCHONON. In the nether world you take what you get. (*pause*) How many did I mention?

TEIBELE. Five.

ALCHONON. Yes, now who's next?

TEIBELE. Nafka!

ALCHONON. Nafka is the most lecherous of all of them! Her speech is the hissing of the primeval serpent. She hangs down from the Tree of Death like a bat and shrieks for semen.

TEIBELE. This is horrible.

ALCHONON. Chuldah has the shape of a cat. Her eyes are as green as gall. She chews on bear's liver while we copulate.

TEIBELE. Disgusting!

ALCHONON. Therefore, Teibele, when I observed you on your wretched wedding night—your breasts, your belly, your hips, your thighs—I loved you and I kept a watch on you. Tonight when you told your tale with such skill and charm, I couldn't curb my desire for you any more. I entered your house, your bed and you . . .

TEIBELE. It must be a dream. I'll wake up and—

ALCHONON. This is no dream. I am your spouse. Be thou desecrated unto me by the lawlessness of Esau and Samael . . .

TEIBELE. I'll be lost, lost forever.

ALCHONON. Dance with me. This is our black wedding.

TEIBELE. Leave me! Leave me!

ALCHONON. You will, Teibele. Dance with me. (*whirling her in the air*)

In the beginning

All was dust

And then came Satan

The Father of Lust.

Chaos above

The abyss below

And Satan's bark

Let there be dark.

TEIBELE. Leave me!

ALCHONON. Never. You are mine forever! (*He falls on her.*)

End of Scene 1

SCENE 2

Two days later. TEIBELE's room.

AT RISE: TEIBELE in a night robe reads aloud from a prayer book. Outside a thunderstorm rages.

TEIBELE. "Father in Heaven, I come before Thy throne of judgment with a broken heart. Frightened by my evil deed, my transgression, and iniquity—A vessel of shame and a disgrace to my holy ancestry—"

(The door opens. Enter the RABBI, leaning on a cane, and two BEADLES carrying with them a ram's horn and a spice box.)

TEIBELE. Rabbi!

RABBI. Sha! Teibele, I have pondered what you told me yesterday about being frightened by a creature of the night and we've come to drive it away.

1ST BEADLE. With blowing the ram's horn. And black candles.

2ND BEADLE. With incense and conjuring.

TEIBELE. Whom are you going to drive out? There's no one here now.

RABBI. Once the Evil Powers get their foot in the door they cling like burrs.

TEIBELE. I wasn't told you'd be coming. I'm on my way to bed.

RABBI. Better you didn't know ahead of time. When the Evil One gains dominion in a house he can then read your thoughts.

TEIBELE. I'm a simple woman. What do they want from me?

RABBI. You're not so simple. You can read the sacred books. Besides, you are beautiful. So my wife tells me.

TEIBELE. You think it's because of my reading? *(suddenly brightening to the compliment)* Did she really say that?

1ST BEADLE. Such things don't remain a secret.

2ND BEADLE. People have eyes.

RABBI. Beauty has a source. It comes from on high. One of the ten attributes of God is the glory of His beauty. Demons, however, are ugly. When they spy a beautiful woman they latch on, and will besmirch her to the end of time. If, God forbid, she gives herself to

them, she loses her eternal soul, her health, her very life. Therefore those blessed with beauty are always in mortal danger.

TEIBELE. What good is my beauty? I'm an agunah for life, forsaken by men and God.

RABBI. Men may forsake you but you are not forsaken by God and this is the most important fact in any life. Heed my words. Before we begin, describe to me exactly what took place. First, how many were there? Two? Three? More?

TEIBELE. A few, I think.

RABBI. Males or females?

TEIBELE. I didn't notice. I was petrified.

1ST BEADLE. Did they have feet of roosters?

TEIBELE. I didn't look at their feet.

2ND BEADLE. Horns?

TEIBELE. Horns? No.

RABBI. Long hair?

TEIBELE. Really, I don't remember.

RABBI. Did they speak to you?

TEIBELE. What? Yes—no!

RABBI. Teibele, you were naturally very confused and upset when I saw you yesterday but if I'm going to help you you mustn't mix up what happened. Now. Did they say anything to you?

TEIBELE. No.

RABBI. Did they try to ravish you?

TEIBELE. I wouldn't forget that.

RABBI. What did they do?

TEIBELE. Nothing! They just walked around. They frightened me so.

RABBI. Have you asked the scribe to check your mezuzah?

TEIBELE. No. I should have sent for him.

RABBI. (to 2ND BEADLE) Remove the mezuzah.

2ND BEADLE. Yes, Rabbi.

RABBI. Perhaps a letter has been tampered with. (BEADLE unfurls the parchment and hands it to the RABBI.)

RABBI. (scanning it) Not really invalidated but the letter daled from the word echod is half faded.

1ST BEADLE. It's their doing!

2ND BEADLE. Rabbi, there is not a minute to lose.

RABBI. Open the spice box.

TEIBELE. If the ram's horn is blown, it will wake up the whole town.

RABBI. When there's a clap of thunder we'll give the first blast. No one will hear.

TEIBELE. Yes, Rabbi.

RABBI. In the name of God, the Lord of Hosts, whoever has attempted to step over the threshold of this house, be he demon, ghost, lapitut, goblin, hobgoblin, destroyer, defiler, imp or meddler, we adjure you, with the Holy Name of 28, and the Holy Name of 75, in the name of the Holy Angels, Metatron, Sandalfon, Zakiel, Paniel, Raphael, Gabriel, Michael, Uriel to LEAVE THIS DWELLING—both the room where we are standing, the adjoining rooms, the garret, the cellar, the woodshed, the stable, the privy, the drygoods store and everything which belongs to this household. Depart ye and return nevermore—whether male, female, or eunuch. Leave nothing behind—neither on the bed, nor under the bed, in no nook or cranny. Begone and be scattered to the four winds to a place where birds fly not, grain grows not, where Satan, Asmodeus, Samael, Andrimelch hold dominion—(a peal of thunder) Blast! (1ST BEADLE plays a long drawn out note. Quickly:) A broken call! (1ST BEADLE blows three short blasts.) A

tremulous call! (1ST BEADLE repeats call nine times. To TEIBELE:) Believe me, Teibele, no one heard it. (pause) I brought you these charms and amulets to hang in all the corners of the house.

TEIBELE. Thank you, Rabbi.

RABBI. Before you hang them repeat the incantation. Kuzu b'mochzas kuzu.

TEIBELE. (repeating) Kuzu, b'mochzas kuzu.

RABBI. Sleep now, Teibele, in blessed rest.

TEIBELE. Thank you, Rabbi, thank you.

(Exit RABBI and BEADLES. TEIBELE stands staring intently ahead. Taking one of the amulets and holding it aloft, she recites.)

TEIBELE. "Kuzu b'mochzas kuzu."

(ALCHONON/HURMIZAH appears and blowing out the candle moves up noiselessly behind TEIBELE and embraces her. She starts, then leans with utter stillness against his body.)

End of Scene 2

SCENE 3

A March evening—six months later. TEIBELE's room. AT RISE: The table is laid with a repast of challah, dates and figs, and a carafe of wine. Silver candlesticks with short thick candles lend a further holiday touch.

GENEDEL. The way it's snowing you'd swear it was Chanukah, not Purim. We're in for a long cold spell.

TEIBELE. (*gaily*) I like winter. In summer, no sooner do you go to bed than the rooster is crowing . . . In winter you have lots more chance to sleep.

GENENDEL. Who can sleep? I wake up at three and finished.

TEIBELE. To be awake on a winter night is also not so bad.

GENENDEL. It was different when my Zorach was alive. Together with a man, everything is good.

TEIBELE. It's Purim. Let's drink a glass of wine.

GENENDEL. Yes. (*GENENDEL pours wine. She and TEIBELE intone blessing in Hebrew.*)

TEIBELE. (*hurrying prayer to its end*) L'Chaim! God send you the destined mate.

GENENDEL. Thank you, Teibele. I'd like also to wish you something nice. What shall I wish? Perhaps that your Moishe Mattis should be found. If not alive, at least dead.

TEIBELE. He will never be found. Most probably the worms have eaten away at his nose.

GENENDEL. Why the nose?

TEIBELE. When a corpse has lost his nose he can't be recognized.

GENENDEL. Who told you this? The Rabbi?

TEIBELE. Yes — no. Someone told me. I don't remember who.

GENENDEL. Sometimes you take my breath away.

TEIBELE. Why?

GENENDEL. You say something that doesn't sound like you — as if a dybbuk were speaking through your mouth.

TEIBELE. (*frightened*) What are you talking about?

GENENDEL. I didn't mean anything by it.

TEIBELE. It's a holiday. Have a piece of cake . . .

GENENDEL. Yes, it's a holiday. In all the houses it's noisy, jolly. They sing, they perform. My Zorach had the sweetest voice in the world.

TEIBELE. Did he speak to you in the nights? Did he tell you stories?

GENENDEL. Stories? What do you mean?

TEIBELE. I read that some men, when they enfold their wives at night, arouse them with thrilling tales.

GENENDEL. About what?

TEIBELE. About spirits, hobgoblins, demons, imps.

GENENDEL. No. Zorach didn't talk much. He came to me and we embraced. Quietly. Did Moishe Mattis tell stories?

TEIBELE. Moishe Mattis? Never!

(*Door opens with a gust of gaiety. Enter ALCHONON and MENASHA twirling noisemakers. ALCHONON is disguised as Haman and MENASHA as Zeresh, his wife. ALCHONON sports a triangular hat and a paper sword. Long black moustaches are pasted comically to his upper lip.*)

ALCHONON. (*clowning*)

A good Purim angels,
I'm drunk and I fall
My moustaches are long
Let's play a role.

MENASHA. (*clowning*)

Today is Purim
Tomorrow it's over
Give me a drink
To make me sober.

TEIBELE. See, Genendel. The Purim players haven't forgotten us.

ALCHONON. How could we forget two such succulent tidbits? You, Teibele, are the prettiest woman in the whole of Frampol. One look at you drives me mad.

GENENDEL. You hear, Teibele? Hamon paid you a compliment.

TEIBELE. I wish it were Mordechai, but praise one accepts even from Hamon.

GENENDEL. Some Hamon. It's Alchonon, the teacher's helper. . . .

TEIBELE. And who's his wife?

GENENDEL. Menasha, the peddler.

TEIBELE. You have a sharp eye. When people put on masks I can't tell one from the other.

GENENDEL. What's a mask? A piece of cardboard with two holes.

ALCHONON. A mask is more than a piece of cardboard. Behind a mask a beggar can become a king and a king a beggar.

TEIBELE. Not for long. When the beggar takes off his mask he's still a beggar.

ALCHONON. Some never take off their mask.

TEIBELE. The teacher's helper is talking like a philosopher. Where did you learn this?

ALCHONON. Can't I have an original thought?

TEIBELE. You can teach a bear to dance and a parrot to repeat words. But from their own sense they can do nothing.

GENENDEL. If he says the thought is his, it's his.

TEIBELE. He can fool you, not me.

ALCHONON. (*lifting his mask for a second*) You can fool anyone. A good Purim. (*He starts to exit.*)

MENASHA. He's really strange tonight. A good Purim! (*He follows ALCHONON out. Exit both.*)

TEIBELE. A good riddance!

GENENDEL. They're not that bad. Menasha is even good looking. Some say that Alchonon used to be good Talmudist but when a man his age remains alone it makes him—(*She makes the sign for "crazy."*)

TEIBELE. Who would marry such an eyesore? The other day I noticed him at the well. He was shivering from the cold so I offered to advance him a few yards of cloth. I said pay me off five pennies a week. I thought he'd be overjoyed. But he stood there and stared at me like a Golem.

GENENDEL. If he was looking at you so much perhaps he likes you.

TEIBELE. Who cares? . . . Oy! It's turning into a blizzard.

GENENDEL. Teibele, tell me a story. The one you once told me about the goldsmith was so exciting I didn't sleep half that night.

TEIBELE. You still remember it?

GENENDEL. Do you think this woman will be punished in Gehenna?

TEIBELE. Since a demon forced her she shouldn't be punished. I read in the "Lamp of Light" that if you defy a demon he will inflict such tortures, that the saintliest person couldn't withstand it.

GENENDEL. It said so in a book? What kind of torture do demons inflict?

TEIBELE. Well, if you kill a person he's dead and it's over with. But they can pinch, bite, and pull out every hair from your head. They can drag you to deserts and leave you there to rot.

GENENDEL. So when a demon gets power over a female she has to surrender?

TEIBELE. God Almighty knows how much pain a human being can stand and when she must surrender.

GENENDEL. In your opinion could a pious woman enjoy being used by a demon?

TEIBELE. (*suspiciously*) What's got into you tonight?

GENENDEL. If you live alone all kinds of notions stray into your head. And such dreams I have! Once I dreamt that an ox lay with me. He gored me with his horns and yet he spoke with the voice of a man.

TEIBELE. Did you enjoy the dream?

GENENDEL. (*shyly*) I became wet.

TEIBELE. The world is full of secrets. Terrible secrets.

End of Scene 3

SCENE 4

Later that night. TEIBELE's room.

AT RISE: TEIBELE in her nightclothes is peering through the window. The clock chimes midnight. She scampers to bed and assumes a romantic pose. Long pause.

TEIBELE. On a night like this can anyone come? It's a sin to let a dog out. Father in Heaven, You know the truth. Only You. You.

(She begins the Prayer for Retirement. The door opens and ALCHONON/HURMIZAH staggers in half dead. He is acutely chilled and, despite his best efforts, shivering uncontrollably.)

TEIBELE. In the name of God, the God of Israel.

ALCHONON. Teibele.

TEIBELE. (*turning to see him*) Oy.

ALCHONON. Didn't I tell you no prayers when you're expecting me?

TEIBELE. I didn't think you were coming any more.

ALCHONON. (*crossing to bed*) Whatever the weather, we demons are unaffected by it. (*lies down beside her*)

TEIBELE. Oh! How cold you are.

ALCHONON. Body is body. When it's hot it sweats, when it's cold it freezes.

TEIBELE. You're one piece of ice.

ALCHONON. Not I. The body.

TEIBELE. (*enlightened*) Oh!

ALCHONON. I flew straight from the Valley of Snow. There it's perpetual winter. The stones burst from the frost. Burning coals turn into icicles.

TEIBELE. Where is this place?

ALCHONON. On the farthest edge of the world where the sun shines only one day a year.

TEIBELE. And you were able to locate a body?

ALCHONON. A body which lay dead for seven years.

TEIBELE. You could bring it back to life?

ALCHONON. Just for this night.

TEIBELE. And afterwards?

ALCHONON. I'll fly the carcass back.

TEIBELE. (*playfully*) Why couldn't you pick up a nice toasty one?

ALCHONON. (*caressing her*) A warm body rots.

TEIBELE. Don't touch me! You're frozen.

ALCHONON. Near you it will thaw.

TEIBELE. You're shivering.

ALCHONON. The body is shivering.

TEIBELE. Your teeth are chattering.

ALCHONON. Really? He must be chilled to the bone.

TEIBELE. Shall I bring you a glass of hot raspberry? There's still a fire in the stove.

ALCHONON. If you think it would help the poor fellow.
(*As she crosses to the stove, ALCHONON sneezes.*)

TEIBELE. Gesundheit! (*She returns with a cup of tea.*)
Drink it while it's hot.

ALCHONON. Perhaps it will warm him up a bit. (*He gulps at it.*)

TEIBELE. Hurmizah . . . this man you found . . . He was lying for seven years, unburied?

ALCHONON. While he was sailing a gale drove his ship into the congealed sea. Everyone on board drowned but he clung to a beam and was swept to the Valley of Snow. And there he died of exposure.

TEIBELE. Was he a Jew?

ALCHONON. See for yourself.

TEIBELE. Can't you do something to keep him alive? Maybe he has a wife who's still waiting for him.

ALCHONON. We demons have no right to revive a corpse for more than one night. (*He sneezes.*)

TEIBELE. Gesundheit again! — Did the raspberry help? Do you — I mean does he — feel better?

ALCHONON. A — (*starts to cough*)

TEIBELE. He's caught a terrible cold.

ALCHONON. What's the difference? Tomorrow he'll be dead. (*He falls back on the pillow.*)

TEIBELE. Let me bring you some more hot raspberry.

ALCHONON. Come to bed.

TEIBELE. Maybe a hot brick?

ALCHONON. Just get into bed. Do as I ask.

TEIBELE. (*coquettishly*) Tell me some more about him. How old was he? What took him so far from home?

ALCHONON. He was a spice merchant and he'd heard of a rare spice that grows in the Arctic regions. It blossoms at the exact day when the sun shines.

TEIBELE. What is such a spice needed for?

ALCHONON. It's used to cure many diseases. But it's very expensive. Only kings and dukes can afford it.

TEIBELE. Did his wife love him?

ALCHONON. Passionately. He had a thrilling touch. Put yourself in his hands.

TEIBELE. Show me what they felt like. (*They embrace.*)

ALCHONON. (*pulling away*) Your outhouse is in the yard?

TEIBELE. Where should it be? But the snow is almost as high as the latch. And the wind cuts like a knife.

ALCHONON. It's all the same to me.

TEIBELE. Wait. I have a cotton robe. It belonged to Moishe Mattis, peace be with him. Also a pair of boots. Put them on.

ALCHONON. What a nuisance of a body. I'll never choose one like this again. (*hesitant*) The boots . . . the boots may leave deep footprints. If someone —

TEIBELE. By morning, they'll be blown away.

ALCHONON. With so many bodies in the universe, how could I pick such a schlemiel. (*Exit ALCHONON.*)

TEIBELE. Father in Heaven, even though he's a demon, have mercy on him. After all, you created him.

End of Scene 4

SCENE 5

The following Saturday. Lighted area representing MENASHA's room.

AT RISE: MENASHA and ALCHONON seated at table.)

MENASHA. "Reb Fishele," I said. "That the cold is perishing I don't argue with. That it's lasting longer than usual I also don't argue with. But that this is the coldest

winter in all your ninety-five years—Reb Fishela, you say this every winter.” (to *ALCHONON*) Your coughing is drowning out my story.

ALCHONON. I heard you. (*He coughs again.*)

MENASHA. I'm telling you, sleep here tonight. I'll rub you with turpentine. And some hot raspberry will break up the phlegm. If it settles in your chest, it's one short step to pneumonia. And then go look for remedies.

ALCHONON. Stop trying to scare me. I'm going home and that's that.

MENASHA. Why are you such a stubborn idiot?

ALCHONON. Menasha, I know you mean well but you're making me extremely nervous. For the last time, thank you. (*sound of church bells ringing*) It's good that there are Gentiles in Frampol and that there was a Jesus and that there are church bells. Otherwise we would never know what time it is. It's eleven o'clock. I'm leaving.

MENASHA. All right, but you're courting suicide.

ALCHONON. Whatever I'm courting, let me court it in peace.

MENASHA. I'm beginning to wonder if you haven't a woman whom you go to. This is the only explanation.

ALCHONON. Well, it's true. The Queen of Sheba comes flying to me with an entourage of she-demons.

MENASHA. Even the Queen of Sheba would be discouraged in weather like this.

ALCHONON. In love nothing is too much of a hardship. Do you remember what's written in the Song of Songs? "Strong as death is love . . ."

MENASHA. I know the passage.

ALCHONON. I love her.

MENASHA. Whoever she is, it doesn't pay to sacrifice your life for her. If she really loves you, she'll wait till you get over your cold.

ALCHONON. Of course she'd wait! But I can't wait.
MENASHA. As bad as that?

ALCHONON. Indescribable.

MENASHA. Who is she? You're talking to Menasha. Better tell me who she is. I got a feeling you'll need some advice. So?

ALCHONON. No.

MENASHA. I thought we two were like brothers. At least that's how I felt towards you. Now you're keeping secrets from me.

ALCHONON. Menasha, you're my only friend in the world. But it's her secret, too.

MENASHA. That never stopped you before. All right, you don't want to say, I won't pry. But listen to me. You don't have warm-enough clothes to go ploughing through snow and ice. And for what? To carry on with a tramp in a freezing garret?

ALCHONON. She's no tramp. And it's not a garret! We lie together in comfort. In a warm house and bed. Everything connected with her is warm.

MENASHA. In that case why don't you marry her?

ALCHONON. Ah. . . !

MENASHA. Ah. . . !

ALCHONON. I wish I could.

MENASHA. Since you love each other—(*prodding*) As you say.

ALCHONON. I do say.

MENASHA. Then marry her if only to save your health.

ALCHONON. Nothing would make me happier. Menasha, I'm going to tell you the story from the beginning, but first give me your most holy oath that you'll never never never reveal it to anyone.

MENASHA. Has anything we've ever talked about gone beyond these four walls?

ALCHONON. Swear upon your fringed garment.

MENASHA. Alchonon!

ALCHONON. Please, Menasha, I'm in no mood for a debate.

MENASHA. Very well. *(takes out his fringed garment)*

ALCHONON. Repeat after me: I swear by God in heaven, by my very life, by the sacred souls of my parents in Paradise, I won't divulge this secret to anybody nor breathe a word of it ever as long as I live.

MENASHA. I swear by God in heaven, by my very life, by the sacred souls of my parents in Paradise, that I won't divulge this secret to anybody nor breathe a word of it ever as long as I live.

ALCHONON. If I should break this holy oath may all the maledictions in the Book of Curses fall upon my head.

MENASHA. If I should break this holy oath may all the maledictions in the Book of Curses fall upon my head. Who is she?

ALCHONON. Teibele.

MENASHA. Teibele!

ALCHONON. Teibele.

MENASHA. I'm hearing things.

ALCHONON. Sometimes I myself can't believe what's happened.

MENASHA. You lucky bastard.

ALCHONON. Now you know. I visit her two nights a week. Wednesdays and Saturdays.

MENASHA. For Teibele it's worth catching pneumonia.

ALCHONON. I know you've got a soft spot for her.

MENASHA. I don't deny. But who would believe she could be had? If any other man had told me this, I'd kill him. But how did you do it, you crafty demon?

ALCHONON. That's the other half of the story.

(Lights dim down to signify a passage of time, then dim up again. MENASHA and ALCHONON sit bemused.)

MENASHA. Pure genius.

ALCHONON. I better go. It's almost time.

MENASHA. I'd give ten years of my life to be in your shoes.

ALCHONON. It's the best winter of my life if I live through it.

MENASHA. Wait a while, Alchonon.

ALCHONON. She suffers if I'm a minute late.

MENASHA. If another man had told me this I'd choke him for envy alone. But we're brothers, you and I. I must help you.

ALCHONON. I've spent days and nights and weeks thinking about this.

MENASHA. The solution is simple. A witness to testify that Moishe Mattis is dead. Then you can snuggle with Teibele in wedded bliss for the rest of your days.

ALCHONON. Unless an angel from heaven steps forward, that's not likely to happen.

MENASHA. I couldn't be a good witness? All I have to do is go away for a week or so and when I come back I'll have the testimony of a rabbi in my bag that Moishe Mattis is no more.

ALCHONON. What rabbi will give you a letter like that?

MENASHA. Rabbi Menasha. I'll write it myself and sign it myself.

ALCHONON. Commit forgery?

MENASHA. It's very considerate of me, I agree. You certainly don't deserve such devotion. Keeping secrets from Menasha.

ALCHONON. It's the truth. Menasha, are you serious? You think you could get away with it?

MENASHA. It's child's play. A brain that could hatch such an original seduction as yours inspires me. I've loved you as a friend. Now I revere you as a master.

ALCHONON. But there's still a problem. Teibele is in love with Hurmizah. She has no use for the teacher's helper. I try to slip my name into the conversation but she ridicules me. Calls me an empty vessel. Him, I mean. Me. She'd rather see her hand chopped off than marry Alchonon.

MENASHA. One finger at a time. There's always a solution.

ALCHONON. God Himself couldn't unravel this one.

MENASHA. Our two heads together are cleverer than God.

ALCHONON. If you're able to bring this off I'll need a hundred years to repay you.

MENASHA. I'll settle for one night with Teibele. (*smiles as ALCHONON recoils*) I'm not looking for reward.

ALCHONON. You will be rewarded—by God or by the Devil.

MENASHA. It could only be the Devil.

End of Scene 5

SCENE 6

A few days later. TEIBELE's room.

AT RISE: ALCHONON/HURMIZAH and TEIBELE relaxing together in bed.

TEIBELE. Have you ever seen such weather? In three weeks Passover will be here!

ALCHONON. The calendar predicts it. Every fourth year the winter lasts seven months.

TEIBELE. Hurmizah, you broke your promise. You said you'd bring me a body from a warm climate but again you're solid ice.

ALCHONON. Flying over deserts of snow, it cooled off.

TEIBELE. Was he eating garlic when he died?

ALCHONON. I decided to use a living body this time. It's possible he ate garlic for supper?

TEIBELE. Where is he from?

ALCHONON. The Holy Land.

TEIBELE. What does he do?

ALCHONON. He's a student in a Yeshiva in Jerusalem.

TEIBELE. You know who he reminded me of? He resembles the body you inhabited the other night.

ALCHONON. Does he? I didn't notice.

TEIBELE. The skull is the same, the bump in the shoulders . . .

ALCHONON. All bodies are alike to me.

TEIBELE. And the same smell.

ALCHONON. Garlic is eaten everywhere.

TEIBELE. I mean the smell of his flesh.

ALCHONON. All humans smell the same way.

TEIBELE. My Moishe Mattis, peace be with him, had a smell I could recognize among a million men.

ALCHONON. Female imagination.

TEIBELE. It's also the same voice.

ALCHONON. That's intentional. When I enter a body

his throat becomes my throat and his tongue my tongue.
(*He coughs.*)

TEIBELE. You still have that catarrh.

ALCHONON. It's the sudden change of climate from the Holy Land to Poland.

TEIBELE. Does he realize that you're inside him?

ALCHONON. He's unconscious. I entered him while he was sleeping. Tomorrow morning when he wakes up he'll be back in his own bed.

TEIBELE. With a mysterious cold.

ALCHONON. They have sunshine all year around. There, he can dry it out. He'll think he dreamed it all.

TEIBELE. What's happened to me is also like a dream. Yet after you left me last time, I looked out in the morning and saw footprints in the snow. The wind hadn't scattered them after all.

ALCHONON. Come to me.

TEIBELE. Your cheeks are hot. Do you have fever?

ALCHONON. I have no idea what he has.

TEIBELE. May I touch your forehead?

ALCHONON. Teibele, there's something I have to tell you but don't get excited.

TEIBELE. What is it? You're frightening me.

ALCHONON. It's bad news and good news.

TEIBELE. Don't say anything.

ALCHONON. When the outcome is good everything is good.

TEIBELE. What is it?

ALCHONON. I won't be able to come to you any more.

TEIBELE. Why not?

ALCHONON. My lord Asmodeus will no longer allow me to make these flying visits to you. From now on I must remain in his castle.

TEIBELE. Oh, Mother! I knew this would happen. I

had a premonition. (*She weeps.*)

ALCHONON. It's not my doing. I love you, Teibele. But we demons are all the slaves of Asmodeus. His word is law. If a demon dares to defy him he'd be torn to pieces.

TEIBELE. What has he against me? Did I do something that offended him?

ALCHONON. Listen, Teibele. At Asmodeus' bed, same as King Solomon's, stands a watch of sixty demons. I've been ordered to be one of these guards.

TEIBELE. Seven nights a week?

ALCHONON. All seven.

TEIBELE. Why does he need so many guards?

ALCHONON. Among the demons, same as with humans, there's jealousy and hate. Asmodeus' wife Lilith is the greatest beauty of all time and Satan lusts for her. Many wars have been fought among the demons because Satan is determined to take her away from the lord Asmodeus.

TEIBELE. How can that be? I've read in a book that Asmodeus is Satan.

ALCHONON. What do the scribblers of storybooks know? Asmodeus and Satan are each kings of many demons but Asmodeus' castle is on Mount Sahir and Satan's castle is in Sodom. Each of them has a multitude of imps, sprites, hobgoblins as well as large armies of ghosts. The feud between these two camps began before the Flood. And why? Satan's passion for Lilith.

TEIBELE. You'll never be able to visit me again?

ALCHONON. Never.

TEIBELE. I knew this would happen. For days I've felt as if a fist were being pressed into my heart.

ALCHONON. Teibele, let me tell you the good news.

TEIBELE. (*dully*) Yes?

ALCHONON. In Frampol there is a man named Menasha. You know him?

TEIBELE. Like a bad penny.

ALCHONON. My powers of prediction inform me that Menasha will be in Leipzig soon. There he'll encounter a man who witnessed your husband's death. What I'm telling you is a great secret. If you speak a word of this to anyone or even hint at it, the creatures of the night will wreak vengeance of indescribable tortures on you.

TEIBELE. Not one word, God forbid!

ALCHONON. This same Menasha will deliver a letter from the Leipzig Rabbi to the Rabbi of Frampol reporting that Moishe Mattis, son of Itzak Meyer, died, was cleansed and brought to burial in the city of Leipzig—signed, sealed and delivered. You'll be allowed to remarry. Isn't that happy news?

TEIBELE. It would have been once. But I've gotten so used to you I can't imagine myself with anyone else.

ALCHONON. Like it or not, your destiny is ordained.

TEIBELE. What is my destiny?

ALCHONON. What I'm about to tell you may shock you, but in time it will prove to be a stroke of the very best fortune for you.

TEIBELE. What is my destiny?

ALCHONON. I know the match won't please you, but I guarantee you if you'll do as you're told you'll be happy and you'll love your husband not a speck less than you love me. Probably much more because I'm a demon and he's a man created in God's image.

TEIBELE. Who is he?

ALCHONON. It has been decided in heaven. Alchonon.

TEIBELE. Alchonon! That do-nothing, know-nothing, good-for-nothing—! (*laughs and cries at the same time*)

ALCHONON. I forbid you to speak of Alchonon that way. He's a scholar. He loves you with a great, great

love. He has a few defects, superficial ones, but when you are man and wife you'll come to realize his genuine virtues.

TEIBELE. Why him? There are widowers in town, divorced men. I'd sooner have any one of them—than that, that—

ALCHONON. What evil has he ever done you that you should hate him so?

TEIBELE. I don't hate him, I despise him. He's a lame-brain. Everyone knows he's a misfit, a calamity.

ALCHONON. Why?

TEIBELE. Why? You'd have to know him. He's silent like a stone. Moody. Filthy. A broken down bachelor. They say he spies on the women through a chink in the bathhouse.

ALCHONON. Lies! We demons know the truth. Alchonon is a cabalist. He transgressed in the first reincarnation with a married woman. For this he was sent to Frampol to atone for his sins. But now the time of his punishment is over and he's due for a reward—you, Teibele. The only helpmate worthy of him.

TEIBELE. I won't be able to abide him. (*tearful*) He walks around in rags and he never combs his beard.

ALCHONON. He's tall, strong . . .

TEIBELE. He makes my skin crawl.

ALCHONON. You can't marry anyone else.

TEIBELE. Then let me live out my years alone.

ALCHONON. No. You're reserved for Alchonon. You must be a good wife to him and satisfy him body and soul.

TEIBELE. I won't be able. I won't be able. (*pause*) How is it that the demons take his part? Is he one of them?

ALCHONON. No. But he can utter such spells and incantations that they all acknowledge his power.

TEIBELE. That schlemiel!

ALCHONON. Not another word against him. That's an order!

TEIBELE. (*whimpering*) I'll be a laughing stock.

ALCHONON. Better that than the fury of demons.

TEIBELE. Why? What would they do to me?

ALCHONON. Gore you, trample you, torture you, kill you.

TEIBELE. (*agonized*) Oh. (*pause*) Even his name revolts me.

ALCHONON. I gather. But if I tell you that I overheard with my own ears the Angel Gabriel proclaiming this union, Teibele, then you understand, once and for all, no power in the universe can change it.

TEIBELE. Job's tidings you've brought me tonight.

ALCHONON. Enough! When Menasha returns with the parchment marry Alchonon without delay. You'll discover qualities in him you didn't suspect. Teibele, be good to him.

TEIBELE. I'd rather die. Kill me, Hurmizah. Take pity on me and kill me.

ALCHONON. I'm not an angel of death. Goodbye, Teibele. Much joy awaits you.

TEIBELE. Wait! Wait a moment. Kiss me, Hurmizah. (*They kiss.*) Kiss me for the last time. (*They kiss again. The cock crows.*) Don't, don't go, don't go my demon, my husband.

ALCHONON. (*thrusting her from him*) Alchonon must be your husband! (*He exits.*)

TEIBELE. Hurmizah!

CURTAIN

End of Act One

ACT TWO

SCENE I

The following day. TEIBELE's room.
AT RISE: TEIBELE is reading aloud from a prayer book.

TEIBELE. "A prayer to recite when the spirit is heavy. Merciful God, great Inspirer of awe, I stand before Thee, Thy humble handmaiden. Who am I to be worthy even to utter Thy holy name? Nothing but a sinful woman, laden with iniquity. But Thy mercy is forever and therefore I want to pour out my woe before you with shaking knees—"

(*Enter GENENDEL.*)

GENENDEL. (*opening her arms wide*) Teibele!

TEIBELE. Genendel!

GENENDEL. A miracle has happened for you. A great miracle.

TEIBELE. I heard.

GENENDEL. I've prayed for this. A day didn't pass that I didn't drop a coin in the charity box of Rabbi Meir, the miracle worker, for your sake. The month of Nissen when I went to the cemetery I prostrated myself on your mother's grave and I called to her. "Itta Deborah, see the anguish of your daughter Teibele and help her."

TEIBELE. I know, I know. You're the most devoted friend I have.

GENENDEL. The whole town is excited. That a miracle like this should happen! And through whom? Through a no-account like Menasha. Truly, the ways of Providence are hidden.

TEIBELE. I haven't taken it all in yet.

GENENDEL. The matchmakers will be breaking your door down. They'll be after you like a pack of wolves. Don't let yourself be rushed into anything, Teibele. Now you can have your pick. Remember, you have everything in your favor. Beautiful, learned, clever, with a house, a dry goods store. And no children.

TEIBELE. God willing, something good will happen to you. It's time you too should end your loneliness.

GENENDEL. First, let me see you happy. Listen, you know I'm not a meddler, but on the way over here it occurred to me that Reb Barish Zawochwost might not be a bad match for you. He's been a widower almost two years. When Henele died he swore at her deathbed that he'd never marry anyone else. But the Rabbi says that an oath made in time of grief has no validity.

TEIBELE. It's too soon for me to think about anything.

GENENDEL. What would be bad? He has a dry goods store. You have a dry goods store. Between you, you'd have the only dry goods store in Frampol. He only has a daughter and she's engaged already.

TEIBELE. I don't want to hear about such things now. Please Genendel, I beg you.

GENENDEL. You spent enough years waiting. I'd like to see you enjoy your life for a change.

TEIBELE. I want to see the same for you, and don't you postpone and postpone?

GENENDEL. Wouldn't it be nice if we both found someone at the same time? You're like a sister to me. When you marry, I'll marry.

TEIBELE. If I had a real sister she couldn't love me better than you do. I certainly couldn't love her more than I love you.

GENENDEL. We're even closer than sisters. If all men

looked at you through my eyes, your house would be surrounded.

TEIBELE. We'll see. We'll see.

GENENDEL. I'd like to see you settled with Reb Barish Zawochwost. Just give me the word and I'll take care of the rest. Believe me, there'll be no charge.

TEIBELE. I can't, Genendel. I can't!

GENENDEL. Why not? Tell me.

TEIBELE. I can't tell anyone.

GENENDEL. Is there someone else you have in mind?

TEIBELE. I can't tell you.

GENENDEL. Did you make someone a promise?

TEIBELE. Stop badgering me!

GENENDEL. As God is my witness I only want your happiness . . . Oy, I think I understand.

TEIBELE. What do you understand?

GENENDEL. Menasha proposed and you accepted because he was the bearer of good tidings.

TEIBELE. No, of course not . . .

GENENDEL. Suddenly he ups and goes to Leipzig. Did you send him to look for witnesses? If you paid him his expenses you owe him nothing else.

TEIBELE. I didn't send him. I didn't even know about it. (*GENENDEL looks relieved.*)

GENENDEL. I can't get over how this blessing should arrive through Menasha. You should see him. He's got a crowd around him in the marketplace. The girls are gawking at him from behind the curtains.

TEIBELE. You like him?

GENENDEL. Nonsense. He's younger than I. He's a peddler. And he comes from a very humble background. Still when I heard what message he delivered I felt like kissing him. If he didn't hang around with riff-raff like Alchonon, he might have something.

(*Door opens. A shy and nervous ALCHONON "dressed up" in borrowed clothes, stands in the doorway.*)

ALCHONON. Can I come in?

GENENDEL. Look who's here!

ALCHONON. Teibele, I wanted to wish you mazeltov.

TEIBELE. Thanks. Good luck to you.

ALCHONON. Can I come in for a minute?

GENENDEL. Later, Alchonon.

TEIBELE. Let him come in. What's the difference?

(*ALCHONON enters.*)

GENENDEL. It's her house, not mine.

TEIBELE. Sit down, Alchonon. (*They sit facing each other across the room. Conversation proceeds haltingly.*)

ALCHONON. What happened to you is a miracle from on high.

TEIBELE. That's what they say.

ALCHONON. And that Menasha, who's nearer to me than a brother, should have been the one to bring you this news, is a double miracle.

TEIBELE. Two miracles are better than one. Speaking of miracles, I didn't know you were a cabalist?

ALCHONON. There's a lot they don't know about me here.

GENENDEL. Cabala?

ALCHONON. Yes. Cabala is for humans, not just for angels.

TEIBELE. When do you study? You spend half the day at the well.

ALCHONON. Cabala is also a well. According to the Cabala, all wells flow from one well.

GENENDEL. I never heard you speak like this.

ALCHONON. There are times when a soul must conceal itself and there are times when a soul must reveal itself.

TEIBELE. And it's time for revelation.

ALCHONON. Yes, Teibele.

TEIBELE. Why now?

ALCHONON. Invisible threads join together all matters. When you shake one thread, all the threads shake.

TEIBELE. When do you study? In the middle of the night?

ALCHONON. Yes. Night is a time of rigor but also of mercy. There are truths which one can see only when it's dark. (*They suddenly stare at each other across the room. TEIBELE emits a high nervous giggle.*)

TEIBELE. I may be dreaming and any moment I'll wake up and the master of dreams will stick out his tongue at me.

ALCHONON. But the letter is no dream. Menasha showed it to me. It's all according to the law. Teibele, you're free to marry. Happy is the man who'll get you.

TEIBELE. What makes you so sure he'll be happy? Moishe Mattis ran away from me, didn't he?

ALCHONON. He wasn't your true destined one. This is the reason he couldn't see the beauty of your body and soul.

GENENDEL. You hear this? I can't believe my ears!

TEIBELE. Yes, I hear.

GENENDEL. It's not the same Frampol, not the same Alchonon. A new light has fallen over everything.

ALCHONON. A man may cover his eyes from the sun but the sun is still a source of light. We ourselves shut off the valves through which God's mercy flows.

GENENDEL. He speaks wisdom like a Rabbi.

ALCHONON. Shall I tell you why I'm always at the well?

GENENDEL. I'd like to know.

ALCHONON. I come there because the well is near Teibele's store and from there I can glimpse her beautiful face.

GENENDEL. Oy, Mama, I'm fainting!

TEIBELE. I'm sorry, Alchonon, but this is not the language of a cabalist.

ALCHONON. Why not? The patriarchs were all mighty lovers. Jacob loved Rachel and he worked fourteen years to get her. And David loved Bathsheba. And so great was his craving for her that he had her husband murdered. The love of male and female has its source in God's love for the Shechinah. The world was created male and female. The sun is male and the earth is female. And because the sun loves the earth it pours its light on her and the earth bears fruit. So it is with all matters. I love you, Teibele, because you're my destined one, my truly destined one.

GENENDEL. Oy, I'm dying!

ALCHONON. What is your answer?

TEIBELE. (*trembling*) Not now.

ALCHONON. When?

TEIBELE. We need to talk about it privately.

ALCHONON. I'll be back in an hour. I'll expect a definite answer.

TEIBELE. You'll have it.

ALCHONON. Good day to both of you. (*ALCHONON stumbles out in high excitement, a dazed smile on his lips.*)

GENENDEL. I think I'm bewitched!

TEIBELE. You're not far wrong.

GENENDEL. Why didn't you laugh in his face?

TEIBELE. I'm not free to decide anything.

GENENDEL. Who decides for you? Teibele, you give me the shivers.

TEIBELE. Haven't I begged you not to pry.

GENENDEL. Very well, Teibele. No more questions. Only don't do anything rash. Take your time.

TEIBELE. Please go, Genendel. I must be alone.

(*They embrace in silence. GENENDEL exits.*)

End of Scene 1

SCENE 2

TEIBELE's wedding day.

(*PROLOGUE: RABBI and BEADLES shouldering the wedding canopy (chupah) proceed trippingly down the street to TEIBELE's house. They exit into wings.*)

AT RISE: *Lights dim up on TEIBELE sitting in her room reading a story book.*

TEIBELE. (*reads*) When the princess realized that all hope was gone she wanted to die and she asked her doctor to give her poison, but the doctor told her father what his daughter intended to do and the King called for her and said to her: Life is a gift of God and we are not allowed to . . .

(*Enter GENENDEL.*)

GENENDEL. What? On your wedding day you sit and read a book? (*pause*) Have you been crying? The Rabbi will soon be here and Alchonon is on the way. He looks like a regular bridegroom.

TEIBELE. Genendel, to me this is a day like any other day.

GENEDEL. I cannot understand you. I'm afraid I never will. First you choose a man whom you always despised. Then you sit there on your wedding day in your everyday clothes and cry over some silly story book. I used to think that you had no secrets before me, but I see now that I am a complete stranger to you.

TEIBELE. Don't say it. You are the only comfort in my life.

GENEDEL. You have become a riddle to me. A frightening riddle to me and the rest of Frampol. Everybody is astounded. You can't marry in this dress! You have a chest full of beautiful clothes. The whole thing looks like a mockery.

TEIBELE. Perhaps it is a mockery.

GENEDEL. Your old wedding dress is still beautiful. I beseech you to put it on.

TEIBELE. I cannot, I cannot.

GENEDEL. If you don't dress up, I'm leaving right this minute!

TEIBELE. Don't force me, Genendel! Don't force me!

GENEDEL. I'm not taking part in this act of gloom and spite. A good day, Teibele. (*turns to go*)

TEIBELE. Don't leave me! Don't!

GENEDEL. It's yes or no. (*opens chest and takes out a white wedding dress*)

TEIBELE. What are you doing to me? My best friend has become my worst enemy.

GENEDEL. Put it on!

TEIBELE. Well, let me imagine that I am dead and this is my shroud.

GENEDEL. There is a limit even to madness.

(*Helps her put on the dress. RABBI and BEADLES enter with ALCHONON and MENASHA. One BEA-*

DLE carries the canopy, the other a white robe, a kittle for ALCHONON.)

RABBI. Where are your guests? At least we need a minyan.

ALCHONON. Teibele, you haven't invited anyone?

TEIBELE. You agreed to a quiet wedding.

MENASHA. A wedding may be quiet but it can't be like a funeral.

RABBI. It's too late now. Treitel, go out and bring five more men from the street to make a minyan.

1ST BEADLE. Whom shall I bring, Teibele?

TEIBELE. Any beggar will do.

1ST BEADLE. In all my life I've never been to such a wedding. How does it go? (*singing*) She was called Noodles, Beans was his name. They married on a Friday.

MENASHA. (*joining in*) And nobody came. (*Exit 1st BEADLE.*)

RABBI. What is the reason for all this?

ALCHONON. Time may tell. Or even time won't tell.

RABBI. I'll sit down and write the Ketuba. Meanwhile, put up the canopy. (*begins to write the Ketuba*)

MENASHA. Where are the drinks? Where is the wine? There can't be a wedding without wine. Besides, I must have a drink. If not . . .

GENEDEL. (*points to a shelf*) Here, Menasha.

1ST BEADLE. (*returning*) Beggars she wants, beggars she gets. I just pulled five from the tavern. They're on their way.

GENEDEL. (*to MENASHA*) There is the wine and the cake. But wait till after the ceremony.

MENASHA. I can't wait. (*pours himself a glass*)

L'Chaim! Mazeltov! (*RABBI glares at MENASHA who puts down the glass without drinking.*)

RABBI. (*to ALCHONON and TEIBELE*) According to the law, since you're going to marry a widow, you promise her one hundred gulden in case you divorce her. In case you die, God forbid, your heirs will pay her the one hundred gulden. Except for this, all your duties are the same as for any other man. You are to provide your spouse with food, clothes and come to her in her clean days—

ALCHONON. Yes, Rabbi.

RABBI. And you, Teibele, since you have chosen Alchonon of your own free will, you must be a devoted wife to him, respect and cherish him.

TEIBELE. I'll try.

RABBI. Whatever takes place here today is re-enacted in all the spheres, high and low. When a man and woman join on earth, two souls join in Heaven. Angels and seraphim rejoice in true love. But when love is tainted by falsehood, the channels of mercy are cut off and the souls are punished in Gehenna. Dress the bridegroom.

1ST BEADLE. Yes, Rabbi. (*MENASHA helps ALCHONON don the Kittle.*)

RABBI. This so that you will remember the day of death.

(*They take their place under the canopy and RABBI begins intoning the marriage service.*)

RABBI. "O Lord, Who are supremely mighty, blessed and glorious, bestow Thy blessing upon this groom and his bride. Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who createst the fruit of the vine . . ."

(*Lights dim out on the wedding service leaving in view only the shadowy figures of the BEADLES who sway with the canopy, raising it up and down. Exit BEADLES.*)

End of Scene 2

SCENE 3

Chanukah. TEIBELE's room.

AT RISE: ALCHONON, MENASHA and GENENDEL are seated at the table playing the dreidl game.

ALCHONON. (*spinning the dreidl*) Gimel!

GENENDEL. Again Gimel?

ALCHONON. Since I'm a rotten storekeeper and a tutor without pupils, let me at least win at dreidl.

GENENDEL. You know what the saying is. Lucky at games, no luck with the ladies. But you've been lucky in both ways.

ALCHONON. Who's to say?

GENENDEL. Married six months and already dissatisfied. If you married Teibele, you are lucky.

ALCHONON. Marrying isn't everything.

MENASHA. What else do you want? The moon in the sky?

ALCHONON. I'm sorry I mentioned it.

GENENDEL. He just likes to complain. It's his nature.

MENASHA. Everybody's. When you don't have a thing, nothing else seems so important. But once you get it, you take it for granted. Now, if I had a woman as enticing as Teibele, I'd be jumping for joy.

GENENDEL. (*calling*) You hear, Teibele?

TEIBELE. (*entering*) Men are full of illusions.

ALCHONON. Are women any different?

GENENDEL. I lived with my Zorach for eight years and each day was like a holiday for me. If I had lived with him for forty years it would have been the same.

TEIBELE. You'll be happy again one day, Genendel.

GENENDEL. What Zorach was nobody can be. The goodness and understanding I had from him I wouldn't find anywhere in the world.

ALCHONON. How do you know? Have you been all over the world?

TEIBELE. Her world is Frampol. What Frampol doesn't have the whole world doesn't have.

ALCHONON. It could be there's someone for you in Frampol you don't even know about.

GENENDEL. For example?

ALCHONON. (*indicating MENASHA*) My good friend here.

MENASHA. You're starting again with your antics.

ALCHONON. Why antics? I knew Zorach, peace be with him. He was a fine man. But with all his fine qualities he still couldn't measure up to you.

MENASHA. Have you become a matchmaker?

TEIBELE. (*teasing*) Genendel is blushing!

ALCHONON. If I can't be a businessman and I can't be a tutor, let me try being a matchmaker.

GENENDEL. What time is it? My washerwoman comes early in the morning. Alchonon cleaned me out.

ALCHONON. Only seventeen groschen.

GENENDEL. Don't worry. I won't give you the evil eye.

MENASHA. I'm going too. We'll leave the lovebirds alone.

TEIBELE. Don't rush away. We don't go to sleep this early.

MENASHA. With a dumpling like you for a wife, a man is anxious to get to bed. Besides, our Genendel is afraid of the dark. She's positive that Frampol is crawling with demons.

TEIBELE. You can prove otherwise?

MENASHA. I'm not afraid of the demons. They are afraid of me.

GENENDEL. Do me a favor Menasha, don't joke about it at night. Even the words make me shudder.

MENASHA. The male demons may be malicious, but the females—fireballs! They don't need to be coaxed. They're more than willing.

GENENDEL. How would you know? Have you ever had dealings with them?

MENASHA. Plenty of times. When they kiss you, you go mad with pleasure, and what they say in your ear makes your blood sizzle. And their eyes . . .

TEIBELE. Menasha, you're frightening us.

MENASHA. What are you scared of? You have a man in the house.

TEIBELE. Go ahead and laugh, but I assure you those who've suffered by them don't take it so lightly.

GENENDEL. Come on, Menasha. We'd better get started. Now you'll have to deliver me to my doorstep.

MENASHA. I'll take you behind the door, if you let me.

GENENDEL. What a mouth he has. I don't envy the woman who'll get him.

ALCHONON. You ought to.

MENASHA. Goodnight, Teibele. Goodnight, Alchonon. We'll continue the game tomorrow.

ALCHONON. Take care of Genendel. Let no demon steal her away.

MENASHA. It's too late. Now she's in my clutches. (*Exit MENASHA and GENENDEL.*)

TEIBELE. He has a loose tongue, your Menasha.

ALCHONON. Our Rabbis have created so many laws, so many prohibitions. Don't Do This. Don't Do That. Not Kosher. Strictly Forbidden—Without a little sacrifice in our talk we'd all be vegetables here in Frampol.

TEIBELE. Talk all you want, but still there has to be sense in it. And why harp on how you're not a businessman, not a this, not a that? Nobody's expecting you to be a provider. The store, thank goodness, takes care of both of us. You paint yourself more of a lump than you really are.

ALCHONON. Let's not fool ourselves, Teibele. You consider me a schlemiel. You even said so.

TEIBELE. When? Never!

ALCHONON. You said it but you've forgotten it.

TEIBELE. It's all in your imagination. There's a bitter look in your eyes, half the time. What's bothering you?

ALCHONON. Why pretend? Things are not good between us.

TEIBELE. What's this grumbling? I told you right out, before we were married, that you're not a man to my taste. I didn't mislead you, God forbid.

ALCHONON. I hoped gradually you'd get used to me and the rest would take care of itself. But things have gone from bad to worse.

TEIBELE. Nothing's changed one way or the other. If we married each other it means that was what destiny intended and we have to accept it. But it ought to be a matter between us. Nobody else's business.

ALCHONON. I'm not telling anybody. But each time I want you I see that it's a burden to you.

TEIBELE. So that's what you've been brooding about. Living alone for so many years, I suppose I'm not used to being with a man anymore.

ALCHONON. Was Moishe Mattis better?

TEIBELE. Why are you forever bringing up Moishe Mattis? He's in a different world and he should be left in peace.

ALCHONON. Can I say anything you don't criticize?

TEIBELE. Forgive me, Alchonon, but all these reproaches accomplish nothing. Every minute we're in bed you torment me with nonsensical questions. What would happen if my ship went down and I was washed up on a desert island with the captain? What would happen if Frampol became Sodom and we all turned into sprites and hobgoblins? Sometimes I wonder if you're all there.

ALCHONON. I was told that women revel in such talk. It's even written in the Talmud that in bed man and wife may be playful. Kiss, caress, and kindle their passions.

TEIBELE. Every night you prattle about demons. Even tonight at the game, suddenly there was talk of demons.

ALCHONON. Blame Menasha. He started it.

TEIBELE. It gets on my nerves. If you must talk when we're together, stick to simple things—the house, the store . . . Does all this come from studying the Cabala?

ALCHONON. Yes. But if it's silence you want, I'll be silent.

TEIBELE. There are things about which the less said the better.

ALCHONON. Very well. From today on, I'll become a silent man. I'm going to recite the Sh'ma. (*He washes his hands, murmurs the Hebrew words of the prayer as TEIBELE prepares a bedroll for his pallet on the floor and gets into her own bed.*) Teibele. Are you still clean?

TEIBELE. Yes.

ALCHONON. Can I lie down beside you?

TEIBELE. I suppose so. But I had a very tiring day. It wasn't market day but customers didn't stop coming. In Barish's store it was empty.

ALCHONON. Barish. Your would-be bridegroom.

TEIBELE. I knew you'd say that. God shouldn't punish you but you always manage to get my hackles up.

ALCHONON. I honestly don't know what's the matter with you.

TEIBELE. The matter? Perhaps God knows, Alchonon. Goodnight.

(ALCHONON broods a moment then, deeply hurt, snuffs out the candle with the palm of his hand and crosses to his pallet.)

TEIBELE. Forgive me.

ALCHONON. Goodnight.

(Long pause denotes passage of an interval. Lights start to dim up.)

TEIBELE. *(crying out in her sleep)* Hurmizah, Hurmizah!

ALCHONON. Wake up. Wake up!

TEIBELE. Oy!

ALCHONON. Who is Hurmizah?

TEIBELE. What?

ALCHONON. You were screaming his name.

TEIBELE. I had a girlhood friend and that was her name.

ALCHONON. Here in Frampol?

TEIBELE. When we lived in Goray.

ALCHONON. A girl called Hurmizah?

TEIBELE. I think it was her nickname.

ALCHONON. A good friend?

TEIBELE. Yes.

ALCHONON. You write to her?

TEIBELE. No. She died young.

ALCHONON. You miss her.

TEIBELE. Yes. Sometimes.

ALCHONON. I don't want to alarm you but Hurmizah is the name of a demon.

TEIBELE. Really?

ALCHONON. He's mentioned in the Book of Raziel. He's the lord of lust. When he touches a female her skin becomes so inflamed that unless he's wearing many amulets and uses the strongest incantations she's compelled to give herself to him.

TEIBELE. I never heard of that before.

ALCHONON. Perhaps your friend copulated with Her-
mizah.

TEIBELE. What are you saying?

ALCHONON. There is a holy name in the book with which he can be conjured.

TEIBELE. The Cabala goes into such matters?

ALCHONON. The Cabala deals with all matters. Go back to sleep.

TEIBELE. I'm not sleepy. Is there really such a holy name by which this demon can be conjured?

ALCHONON. Yes, there is.

TEIBELE. You know it?

ALCHONON. Yes.

TEIBELE. Have you ever conjured him?

ALCHONON. Would you like me to?

TEIBELE. Whatever gave you that idea? *(pause)* Perhaps just to see what he looks like. But I'd never want to be touched by him.

ALCHONON. If I were to utter a holy name I know, he would be at your command.

TEIBELE. Oh, Alchonon, my life is terribly strange and the people who are sent to me are even stranger.

ALCHONON. There is an explanation but I'm afraid to tell you.

TEIBELE. If you know, tell me Alchonon!

ALCHONON. You lived once before in this world. Four thousand years ago.

TEIBELE. Who was I?

ALCHONON. A woman, not a man.

TEIBELE. Who?

ALCHONON. If I tell you, you'll be terribly shocked.

TEIBELE. Nothing can shock me any more.

ALCHONON. You were Rechab the Harlot.

TEIBELE. What!

ALCHONON. You fraternized with the spies which Joshua sent to Jericho.

TEIBELE. I read about Rechab in the Yiddish Bible.

ALCHONON. It's written in the Talmud that Rechab's beauty and lasciviousness kindled in men such a fire that if someone mentioned her name he immediately polluted himself.

TEIBELE. How can you know who I was thousands of years ago?

ALCHONON. I don't dare tell you. It might frighten you out of your wits. I know everything about you.

TEIBELE. Everything?

ALCHONON. Squeeze my hand for courage . . .

TEIBELE. Here is my hand.

ALCHONON. You were sent to earth because a demon wanted to have you.

TEIBELE. A demon?

ALCHONON. They have great power even in heaven.

TEIBELE. What demon?

ALCHONON. Hurmizah.

TEIBELE. You know about that?

ALCHONON. I know everything.

TEIBELE. Do you know that he ordered me to marry you?

ALCHONON. He ordered me to marry you.

TEIBELE. You are like God himself. Nothing is concealed from you.

ALCHONON. I have studied my Cabala.

TEIBELE. I never would have married you if he hadn't forced me.

ALCHONON. You've made that pretty plain.

TEIBELE. And probably you'd never have proposed if he hadn't forced you.

ALCHONON. You're wrong, Teibele. I've always loved you.

TEIBELE. Where will this marriage lead us?

ALCHONON. You've been pining for Hurmizah ever since he left you to go to Asmodeus' castle. Don't deny it. Nothing can be withheld from me. I can read the heart of a stone.

TEIBELE. What a fate was decreed for me! First, my husband deserts me. Then a demon arrived. And now I'm in the hands of a sorcerer.

ALCHONON. You cannot deny your nature, Teibele. You were born with the power of loving many men. In your former existence you committed unspeakable iniquities. With your tempting eyes, and your slippery tongue, and your lecherous flesh, you caused thousands of men to sin. In your lap their will melted like wax. And you enjoyed your lechery. You used to prepare a golden bed for your clients and descend to them naked on a golden ladder.

TEIBELE. What shall I do? Help me. Help me.

ALCHONON. It is said in the Talmud that if a person feels that he can't overcome his passion, he should cloak himself in black mourning and do what his heart desires.

TEIBELE. This is in the Talmud?

ALCHONON. It says it of a man but it's also true of females.

TEIBELE. You would allow me to lie with the devil?

ALCHONON. He's been threatening me. He's given me a warning: If I won't allow him to lie with you, on Sabbath night he'll whip me with his fiery rod and I will die.

TEIBELE. Great God, great God.

ALCHONON. He'll kill you, too, if you resist him.

TEIBELE. I'm ready to die. But you shouldn't be the victim of my abominations.

ALCHONON. We have no choice.

TEIBELE. And afterwards? Will I be punished?

ALCHONON. If it were a man you copulated with, it would be adultery. But the Mosaic laws of marriage don't include demons.

TEIBELE. I'm terrified.

ALCHONON. You wanted to hear it all.

TEIBELE. Whatever happens now, it's out of our hands. Merciful God, let me die.

(A wave of joy ripples through ALCHONON as he smiles up at God.)

End of Scene 3

SCENE 4

The next night. TEIBELE's room.

AT RISE: TEIBELE lights a candle and immediately blows it out. Taking a shawl, she covers the mezuzah. Very nervous and tense, she sits on the edge of the bed to await HURMIZAH.

TEIBELE. *(to herself)* When we begin to sink, we sink into the very abyss.

(Enter ALCHONON/HURMIZAH.)

TEIBELE. *(quietly)* Hurmizah.

ALCHONON. Yes, I've returned to you. I flew from Asmodeus' castle over all the deserts and seas.

TEIBELE. Yes.

ALCHONON. Teibele, I've been yearning for you all this time.

TEIBELE. I've yearned for you. I don't know how I've lived through these last months.

ALCHONON. I looked for comfort in the laps of the seven wives and eighteen concubines I received from my lord Asmodeus but an hour didn't pass that I didn't long for you.

TEIBELE. Oh, Hurmizah.

ALCHONON. I can hear the voices of all hearts. Yearning is a voice which echoes from one end of the universe to another. And I heard yours.

TEIBELE. I'm a married woman now. I married Alchonon.

ALCHONON. You followed my instructions.

TEIBELE. *(barely audible)* And now the sin will be even greater.

ALCHONON. I know all the laws of the Shulchan Oruch and of the Eben Ezer. It's only adultery if done with a man. With a demon you can do anything you feel like.

TEIBELE. Is this the truth?

ALCHONON. I didn't come all this way to deceive you.

TEIBELE. Why did you order me to marry him?

ALCHONON. Do you regret it?

TEIBELE. He's not for me.

ALCHONON. What's wrong with him?

TEIBELE. Everything!

ALCHONON. Be specific.

TEIBELE. I don't know where to begin.

ALCHONON. There's a long night ahead of us. And your husband is sound asleep in the attic. Well?

TEIBELE. He's absolutely not for me.

ALCHONON. Why not? He's a scholar. He's a cabalist. One of the greatest. Not just in Frampol but in Lublin as well. He's one of the greatest men in Poland.

TEIBELE. I realize it now, but . . .

ALCHONON. But what?

TEIBELE. When he touches me my body quivers with . . . disgust . . .

ALCHONON. Why? He's clean, he's tall, he's virile. In some eyes, even handsome.

TEIBELE. May the One Above not punish me but I just can't stomach the man. When he lies down next to me I can hardly keep from leaping out of bed.

ALCHONON. Does he smell bad?

TEIBELE. That's not it exactly.

ALCHONON. What then?

TEIBELE. I can't describe it.

ALCHONON. I know what it is. Your yearning for me made him repulsive to you. From now on, I'll come to you once a week. I'll be your lover again but he must remain your husband.

TEIBELE. Please, no! He would still revolt me.

ALCHONON. We demons eat in sin. We drink in sin. We sleep in sin. But such hatred towards a man who loves you is wrong even in our eyes.

TEIBELE. He's not my destined one. He's the very opposite.

ALCHONON. What do you want to do? Divorce him?
TEIBELE. If he'd consent, I'd give him anything he wanted.

ALCHONON. The house?

TEIBELE. Whatever he asks.

ALCHONON. The store too?

TEIBELE. I said everything!

ALCHONON. And then what will you do. Go begging?

TEIBELE. Anything rather than live with him.

ALCHONON. Such hatred is rare, even in Hell. And you can't even give me a good reason.

TEIBELE. I wish I could. He speaks wise words but they bore me. He speaks kind words but they prick me like pins. When he kisses me I feel poisoned. All I ask of life is not to have him in my sight. I've tried to understand these feelings but I can't.

ALCHONON. There is an expression for this in the holy tongue. Sinas Chinom—blind hatred—the same sort of hatred that destroyed the Temple and the city of Jerusalem.

TEIBELE. You're right. I've tried so often to drive away these feelings but I've begun to think that I, too, have become a demon.

ALCHONON. It's been known to happen when a spark from one of us falls into a daughter of Eve.

TEIBELE. Help me be free of him, Hurmizah, help me break free.

ALCHONON. Never! You must continue as his wife. But I've told you, from now on I'll come to you. I will comfort you. Having me again may awaken your love for him. Great hatred can become great love. There is a mansion in Heaven where these two emotions meet and merge.

TEIBELE. Perhaps in Heaven. Not in me!

ALCHONON. (*kissing TEIBELE*) In you too! (*pause*)
What is it?

TEIBELE. May I ask you something?

ALCHONON. Whatever you wish.

TEIBELE. Whose body have you possessed for to-
night?

ALCHONON. (*in confusion*) Why do you want to know
this?

TEIBELE. Forgive me, Hurmizah, but you speak with
his voice and it's uncanny how much this body resem-
bles his.

ALCHONON. You never found it so before.

TEIBELE. You always brought the body of another
man. Did you take over Alchonon's body this time?

ALCHONON. To tell the truth, I did.

TEIBELE. Why?

ALCHONON. I was in a hurry to get here. I didn't stop
to search for a body. I figured his body is no worse than
the others. Tomorrow morning when he wakes up he'll
know nothing and remember nothing.

TEIBELE. But I will know and I will remember.

ALCHONON. I've borrowed the bodies of thieves, mur-
derers. I even stole corpses from the cleansing hut — you
never minded them!

TEIBELE. Any one except his.

ALCHONON. Very well. For the future I'll make a note
not to possess him. But for tonight you'll have to put up
with his body.

TEIBELE. No. Not tonight. Not ever.

ALCHONON. Do you wish him dead?

TEIBELE. God forbid.

ALCHONON. What do you want?

TEIBELE. There are so many other bodies in Frampol
you might have picked.

ALCHONON. Name one.

TEIBELE. Well . . .

ALCHONON. Whose, for instance?

TEIBELE. I . . . I . . .

ALCHONON. Tell me. Hold back nothing from me.
Who is he?

TEIBELE. (*impulsively*) Menasha! . . . He's a friend of
Alchonon.

ALCHONON. You long for him?

TEIBELE. Anyone but Alchonon. I long for you.

ALCHONON. How long have you lusted for Menasha?

TEIBELE. I have lusted only for you.

ALCHONON. When you're in bed with Alchonon you
dream of Menasha. Why?

TEIBELE. All kinds of thoughts run through my head.

ALCHONON. In your mind's eye you uncovered your-
self to Menasha and you gave yourself.

TEIBELE. No, no!

ALCHONON. (*gibing*) Next time I'll come to you in
Menasha's body and you'll be able to enjoy him.

TEIBELE. Since you insist, let it be his. (*She turns
away. ALCHONON winces.*)

ALCHONON. Aren't you forgetting Genendel?

TEIBELE. (*guiltily*) Genendel?

ALCHONON. Teibele, you know I can penetrate every
corner of your mind. So don't try to wriggle away from
the truth.

TEIBELE. What truth?

ALCHONON. Genendel is in love with Menasha.

TEIBELE. (*reluctantly*) It may be true.

ALCHONON. She confided this to you, didn't she?

TEIBELE. Yes.

ALCHONON. But you want Menasha for yourself. Fine friend.

TEIBELE. It wouldn't be the real Menasha. You said yourself you only borrow the body, nothing more.

ALCHONON. You've learned what I taught you very well. Too well. If only I didn't displease you so as Alchonon. You only imagine it makes a difference. Worlds are shattered by such whims. (*long pause*) So you want me to come as Menasha. Perhaps Menasha is the answer.

TEIBELE. What kind of answer?

ALCHONON. New blood can bring new passions. Your enjoyment of Menasha will awaken in you a lust for Alchonon, too.

TEIBELE. How?

ALCHONON. It's an ancient remedy. When Abraham lost his potency toward Sarah, she gave him her maid Hagar and that kindled his lust for both of them. What Sarah did for Abraham, I can do for you . . . (*pause*) maybe even better. Teibele, have you ever told Genendel you've been loving a demon?

TEIBELE. Yes.

ALCHONON. Does she envy you?

TEIBELE. She admitted it.

ALCHONON. Would she accept me if I came to her in Menasha's body?

TEIBELE. How could she defy a demon? Especially in Menasha's body.

ALCHONON. Are you ready to share with her?

TEIBELE. With anyone else, never! But with her . . .

ALCHONON. Could you persuade her?

TEIBELE. Even if I could, why should I? And why should you want me to? Are you in love with *her*, too?

ALCHONON. Of course not! But abandon is the wine

of love. It is the spark which ignites desire . . . and the fires of hell.

TEIBELE. Oh, you lead me deeper and deeper into the abyss. Has the abyss no bottom?

ALCHONON. No one has ever reached the highest height or the deepest deep.

TEIBELE. And you want me to fall even lower.

ALCHONON. Together with me.

TEIBELE. Why?

ALCHONON. It's a game! In the the Kingdom of Satan the abyss is Heaven. We demons have reversed creation. The dark was there before the light, and will outlast both it and its maker. Men's shame is demons' honor. We wear our horns with pride. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was a lie. We will play a game that will make even Satan envious.

TEIBELE. I will lose the world to come.

ALCHONON. You've lost the world to come forever. Next time I'll come to you in Menasha's body. You bring Genendel.

TEIBELE. What will become of me after I die?

ALCHONON. You'll be one of us.

TEIBELE. Woe to me, it's what I deserve.

ALCHONON. From now on you can sin to your heart's content. You are already beyond the law. (*exits*)

TEIBELE. Rehab the Harlot. And now . . . a demon.

End of Scene 4

SCENE 5

A few days later. TEIBELE's room.

AT RISE: *TEIBELE and GENENDEL are wearing shifts. The town clock strikes midnight. TEIBELE lights a candle.*

TEIBELE. (*incanting*) Come, Lord Hurmizah and take me.

GENENDEL. (*repeating*) Come, Lord Hurmizah and take me.

TEIBELE. Whatever is mine.

GENENDEL. Whatever is mine.

TEIBELE. Is also thine.

GENENDEL. Is also thine.

TEIBELE. In the name of Lilith and Satan, the rulers of darkness,

GENENDEL. In the name of Lilith and Satan, the rulers of darkness,

TEIBELE. Come and show your might,

GENENDEL. Come and show your might,

TEIBELE. Lords of the night.

GENENDEL. Lords of the night.

(*Extinguishes candle. MENASHA appears in the guise of HURMIZAH.*)

MENASHA. (*to TEIBELE*) Like Mother Rachel you gave your Hurmizah a concubine to nestle against. The highest gift a female can give to a male.

TEIBELE. She and I are two bodies with one soul.

GENENDEL. Two bodies with one soul.

MENASHA. And I am twin souls in one body.

TEIBELE. You have a soul?

MENASHA. Everyone has a soul. Even a frog in a swamp. (*to TEIBELE*) Come, daughter of man.

TEIBELE. It's Hurmizah's way of talking but the voice is Menasha's.

MENASHA. Menasha's tongue but Hurmizah's essence.

TEIBELE. You and he unite perfectly.

MENASHA. Should I inhabit him again when I come to you?

TEIBELE. Again and again.

MENASHA. What does Genendel say?

GENENDEL. Yes, I am pleased.

MENASHA. Let's begin the night with a dance.

TEIBELE. Alchonon may hear.

MENASHA. Alchonon sleeps like a stone. Come, both of you. (*They dance.*)

You are my wives

And I am your groom

Sent to you

From the powers of doom

A chimney sweep

Whose fearsome broom

Will cleanse your soot

And sweep you deep.

TEIBELE. Hurmizah, you never spoke like this.

GENENDEL. In rhymes, like a wedding jester.

MENASHA.

When the body is new

So is the soul

A new actor

Plays a new role.

TEIBELE. My demon is back. (*to GENENDEL*) And with you to share him. (*MENASHA embraces both women and draws them to the bed.*)

MENASHA. What breasts, what bellies, what loins, what hips . . . what thighs, what delights for a demon's lips.

GENENDEL. Oh!

MENASHA. (*sweetly*) What? Eh?

GENENDEL. Many a night I dreamed of this.

MENASHA. Dreams sometimes come true.

TEIBELE. I knew. You lusted for her and she lusted for you.

MENASHA. Into the mouth of the serpent two pigeons flew.

(As all three embrace there is a sudden pounding on the door. They stare at each other in fear and confusion. The knocking repeats itself and the BEADLES and the RABBI enter swiftly.)

TEIBELE. Hurmizah what is this?

GENENDEL. Rabbi!

1ST BEADLE. *(raising lantern)* So it was Menasha I saw creeping in here.

2ND BEADLE. *(raising lantern)* Teibele . . . and Genendell! *(TEIBELE faints.)*

GENENDEL. Teibele! . . . Help! *(MENASHA attempts to flee. The BEADLES grab him.)*

MENASHA. Let go! I am not Menasha. I only borrowed Menasha's body. I am a demon!

RABBI. A demon? Shaday destroy Satan!

MENASHA. *(struggling to free himself)* Let me go! Let me go! Or I'll destroy you all. Asmodeus, save me!

RABBI. Hold on to him, Leib.

GENENDEL. *(running out)* Let me out of here! *(The BEADLES block her escape.)*

RABBI. What is this? A house of shame?

MENASHA. *(shouting)* Alchonon! Alchonon! Quickly!

RABBI. Where is Alchonon? Where is your husband?

*(Enter ALCHONON from the attic.)**

*Attic not physically essential — may be offstage.

TEIBELE. Alchonon.

MENASHA. Don't stand there like a clay golem. Save me!

ALCHONON. The needle fell out of the sack. It points where it points.

MENASHA. Alchonon, you got me into this. In God's name, help me!

RABBI. You knew about this? You, Alchonon, allowed your wife to commit adultery.

ALCHONON. Yes, Rabbi. I allowed everything you see.

MENASHA. You traitor!

ALCHONON. Forgive me Menasha. Forgive me Genendel. I've wronged you both.

RABBI. You have desecrated your marriage.

ALCHONON. I have done worse. I had no right to marry Teibele. By law she's still married to Moishe Mattis.

RABBI. Menasha forged the letter?

ALCHONON. It was his hand but my influence. He was not to blame.

RABBI. How did such a thing begin?

ALCHONON. I seduced Teibele by pretending I was the demon Hurmizah. I'm no demon but I sold my soul to the demons.

TEIBELE. It was a demon. The demon Hurmizah.

ALCHONON. It was never anyone but me.

TEIBELE. You? Hurmizah? Liar!

ALCHONON. I was the demon.

RABBI. Beadles, tie them up.

TEIBELE. Kill me, Jews! Kill me!

RABBI. Satan has invaded Frampol, Satan the destroyer.

TEIBELE. Rabbi, he's lying. He was not Hurmizah. Hurmizah was a real demon. Not a man.

ALCHONON. I was Hurmizah from the beginning.
TEIBELE. You filthy liar!

(She spits at him. MENASHA and GENENDEL are led out. BEADLES rip TEIBELE's nightgown. They place a garlic wreath on her neck and another on her head. They press a broom into her hand and spit on her. RABBI spits on her, then tears open her gown, baring her breasts. ALCHONON cries out in horror and with an imploring gesture tries to stop the proceedings but the RABBI flings him roughly away. RABBI and BEADLES drive TEIBELE through the streets. She is laughing maniacally and screaming "liar.")

End of Scene 5

SCENE 6

A year later. TEIBELE's room.

AT RISE: The RABBI sits with bowed head. Enter ALCHONON.

ALCHONON. You sent for me, Rabbi?

RABBI. Yes, Alchonon. Come in. I want to talk to you. *(pause)* The past year has been one of heavy penitence for you.

ALCHONON. I feel my shame every moment.

RABBI. You've given your whole self to fasting and prayer. That is good. Now there is a special penance you must do. *(pause)* You know that Teibele has been ill this past year. Now she is near death.

ALCHONON. I have destroyed her.

RABBI. Listen to me, Alchonon. Teibele is torn apart by delusion and anguish. She clings to the obsession that she loved a demon. She yearns for him, cries out for him. She has no peace, no peace.

ALCHONON. It's madness.

RABBI. The deceiver and the deceived are often partners. Teibele could not have been drawn into your game unless she was eager to believe the lie. Now she can't make peace with the thought that her demon was really you. She suffers from the turmoil within her. Her body begs for eternal rest but the soul won't leave. Alchonon, she is unable to die.

ALCHONON. Rabbi, what do you want of me?

RABBI. *(solemnly)* You must tell her that you lied when you said the demon was really you.

ALCHONON. That evil lie! I cannot. I have sworn a sacred oath against all lies.

RABBI. To relieve the agony of the dying one may even lie.

ALCHONON. I can't do it.

RABBI. Do it. I take the sin upon me. Let her die in peace.

ALCHONON. In deception you mean.

RABBI. It is written in the Gemara that those who impersonate cripples will end up as cripples. When a person assumes a disguise, this disguise becomes part of his essence. When you pretended to be a demon, for that time you were a demon.

ALCHONON. And now you want me to relive that crime?

RABBI. It will count as a blessing, not a sin.

(Enter BEADLES carrying TEIBELE to her bed. She is pain-wracked and drifts between consciousness and delirium.)

TEIBELE. Leave me. Please go away. I want to die alone. (*RABBI dismisses BEADLES.*) Hurmizah, have pity. Hurmizah, Hurmizah.

RABBI. Teibele, here is Alchonon. He wants to testify.

TEIBELE. Alchonon! More lies! He was as much Hurmizah as I can now dance on the roof. My demon was young, wild, naked. He kissed me, fondled me. He danced before me and sang of his love.

Teibele, Teibele

Pretty miss

In your abyss

Let me kiss.

ALCHONON. Teibele, listen! I lied! Everything you said was true. You lay with a demon, not with me.

TEIBELE. My God, the truth finally floats to the top. How could you tell such a lie?

ALCHONON. My love for you, Teibele, made me jealous of Hurmizah. (*pause*) Forgive me.

TEIBELE. I forgive you. (*pause*) I could only love him.

RABBI. (*indicating he may go*) Alchonon.

ALCHONON. Goodbye, Teibele. (*withdraws but does not exit*)

TEIBELE. Holy Rabbi, I thank you.

RABBI. You know the truth now, Teibele.

TEIBELE. No, Rabbi. Only half the truth. I still don't know why Hurmizah chose me.

RABBI. (*to himself*) Some passions never die.

TEIBELE. It was more than passion, Rabbi. I loved him with such a love that I cannot repent even at the door of Gehenna.

RABBI. Don't blaspheme, Teibele. You will soon have to render account to God.

TEIBELE. I will call to him even from my grave. Rabbi, it is time.

RABBI. I will stay with you.

TEIBELE. No, Rabbi. I've lived alone, I want to die alone.

RABBI. Very well. Teibele, say the Sh'ma.

(*As TEIBELE begins the Sh'ma in Hebrew, RABBI exits.*)

ALCHONON. (*choked*) Teibele! Teibele! (*He turns toward the door.*)

TEIBELE. (*moaning*) Hurmizah!

(*Pausing at the threshold ALCHONON struggles with himself as to what he must do. Turning around, he comes back into the room.*)

ALCHONON. (*softly*) I am here.

TEIBELE. You have returned to me, my demon?

ALCHONON. Yes, Teibele. (*He props her up in his arms.*)

TEIBELE. Soul of my soul, you have returned. I had given up hope.

ALCHONON. Yes, Teibele, I have returned. God sent a messenger to tell me of his great pity for you. The power of His goodness filled me with such light that I abandoned Asmodeus and the darkness of Hell. I had to travel through many worlds to embrace you again. Now we will journey together.

TEIBELE. Where will you take me?

ALCHONON. To eternity.

TEIBELE. Is it far?

ALCHONON. It is here, Teibele. Everywhere. Made of lust and mercy. We two will be as one. There'll be no more partings. And there'll be time for all my stories. We'll dance for joy and I'll sing to you:

Teibele, weibele
 Pretty miss
 Oh, the bliss
 Of one more kiss

(TEIBELE laughs delightedly. Pause.)

TEIBELE. Am I dying?

ALCHONON. There is no death. There is only eternal love.

TEIBELE. How beautiful it will be.

ALCHONON. I love you Teibele. I have always loved you. Come, my bride.

TEIBELE. Take me, my true husband . . . my lover . . . my demon.

(She dies. As the lights dim out ALCHONON gently rocks her in his arms.)

CURTAIN

THE END

COSTUME PLOT

Characters and Costumes

TEIBELE

1 Wedding Dress/Veil
 1 Apron
 1 Skirt
 1 Blouse
 1 Robe
 1 Shawl
 1 Nightgown
 1 Chemise (shift)
 1 Pr. laced boots

GENENDEL

1 Petticoat
 1 Chemise (shift)
 1 Skirt
 1 Blouse
 1 Apron
 2 Shawls
 1 Pr. boots

ALCHONON

1 Pr. tattered pants
 1 Pr. boots
 1 Tattered overcoat
 1 Pr. glasses
 1 Tricorn hat
 1 Patchwork overcoat
 1 Mask
 1 White shirt
 1 Pr. pants
 1 Overcoat