

THE MIDDLE (F) & THE INGENUE (F)

NOTE: Please, no kissing in auditions

THE RAIN SCENE

Manke softly taps for Rifkele.

MANKE: Rifkele, Rifkele . . .

RIFKELE: Manke, Manke . . . did you call me?

MANKE: Yes, Rifkele. Come, we'll stand in the May rain, splash water over each other and get wet down to our skin.

RIFKELE: Shhh. Speak softly.

MANKE: I'll loosen your hair. I want to wash your hair in the rain.

RIFKELE: I heard you tapping and I tiptoed out so quietly Papa couldn't hear me.

MANKE: The night is so beautiful, the rain is so fresh and everything is so sweet in this air.

RIFKELE: Shhh, shhh. My father beat me.

MANKE: He won't hurt you anymore.

THEY FEEL THE RAIN

Manke leads Rifkele into a flood of light. They turn their faces up to the light. They feel the rain. They reenter the brothel wrapped in their shawls. Manke leads Rifkele to the sofa.

MANKE: Are you shivering, Rifkele?

RIFKELE: I'm cold.

MANKE: Let me wrap my body around you.

RIFKELE: —That's nice.

MANKE: Oh, You smell like grass in the meadows . . . you let me wash your breasts in the rain.

RIFKELE: I did.

MANKE: Your breasts are so pale. So soft.

RIFKELE: Manke. I want you to teach me.

MANKE: Wait, wait . . . let me brush your hair—like a bride's hair with two long braids. Do you want me to Rifkele, do you want us to . . . ?

RIFKELE: Yes. Yes.

MANKE: You are my bride—you take my breath away! We sit at the shabbes table after your parents have gone to sleep.

We're alone. And we're shy. But you are my bride and I am your bridegroom.

RIFKELE: I want you to take me.

MANKE: Are you sure?

(Beat.)

RIFKELE: I want to taste you.

(They kiss.)

MANKE: Isn't it good, Rifkele? Isn't it good?

RIFKELE: God yes.

MANKE: Now we lie together in one bed. No one will see.

Would you like to stay with me all night in one bed?

RIFKELE: I do. I do.

MANKE: I can't breathe. Come to me. Come to me.

(Suddenly there is the sound offstage of a door being kicked open; and the terrifying sound of boots running up the stairs. The troupe knows the time has come.)

CHANA: I'm scared.