

HELLO DOLLY!

The Story

“And what do you do for a living, Mrs. Levi?” asks Ambrose Kemper in the first scene of that most delightful of musical comedies, *Hello, Dolly!* “Some people paint, some sew ... I meddle,” replies Dolly, and we are off on a whirlwind race around New York and Yonkers at the turn of the century, as we follow the adventures of America's most beloved matchmaker, Mrs. Dolly Gallagher Levi.

Hello, Dolly! is the story of Mrs. Levi's efforts to marry Horace Vandergelder, the well-known half-a-millionaire, and send his money circulating among the people like rain water, the way her late husband, Ephraim Levi, taught her. Along the way she also succeeds in matching up the young and beautiful Widow Molloy with Vandergelder's head clerk, Cornelius Hack, Cornelius' assistant Barnaby Tucker with Mrs Molloy's assistant, Minnie Fay, and the above mentioned struggling artist Ambrose Kemper with Mr Vandergelder's weeping niece, Ermengarde. Mrs. Levi tracks Vandergelder to his hay and feed store in Yonkers, then by train back to Mrs. Molloy's hat shop in New York, out into the streets of the city, where they are all caught up in the great Fourteenth Street Association Parade, and finally to the most elegant and expensive restaurant in town, the Harmonia Gardens, where Dolly is greeted by waiters, cooks, doormen, and wine stewards, in one of the most famous songs in the history of American musical comedy, *Hello, Dolly!*

What happens in the end? Dolly gets her man, of course. Even makes him glad she caught him, and promises that his fortune will soon be put to good use. She quotes her late husband, Ephraim Levi, as she says that “money, pardon the expression, is like manure. It's not worth a thing unless it's spread around, encouraging young things to grow.”