

Yekl and the Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories of the New York Ghetto Study Guide

Yekl and the Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories of the New York Ghetto by Abraham Cahan

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Contents

Yekl and the Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories of the New York Ghetto Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Yekl.....	3
The Imported Bridegroom.....	8
A Providential Match.....	13
A Sweatshop Romance.....	15
Circumstances.....	17
A Ghetto Wedding.....	21
Characters.....	23
Objects/Places.....	31
Themes.....	34
Style.....	41
Quotes.....	44
Topics for Discussion.....	49



Yekl

Yekl Summary

In the first chapter, "Jake and Yekl," the cloak shop is idle because the boss is on a quest for work. Jake lectures upon the comparative merits of Boston and New York while speaking in Boston Yiddish. He mentions his Christian friend in Boston before expostulating on boxing. His female listeners are more attentive to Jake's appearance and his reenactment of the boxing than his actual words. When Mr. Bernstein interjects that America is an educated country, everyone joins the conversation except the socialist. The conversation changes to baseball which causes a fight between Jake and the presser. Mr. Bernstein separates the two men and suggests that Jake spend his money on classes, to become educated, instead of bets. Mr. Bernstein is offended by Jake's retort which causes Jake to feel badly. Fanny asks Jake if he is going to Joe's dance class tonight, and Jake snaps at her as well. The boss returns with work that no other boss could acquire. Everyone happily begins working, and Jake's gloomy mood vanishes. Jake plans to use his pay to place a deposit on tickets to New York. He recalls the image of his mother's relief when he received a certificate ensuring his exemption from military duty. Jake's real name is Yekl, but he changed his name three years ago when he first stepped on American soil and began to desecrate the Sabbath. It has been three years since he has seen his parents.

In chapter two, "The New York Ghetto," Jake meets Fanny on the street after work and reaffirms that he is not going to Joe's dance school. Jake plans to tell Joe that he will not sell any ball tickets tonight and scurries down Suffolk Street to Joe's where everyone greets Jake. Joe asks Jake to convince Mamie to dance with some gentleman. Jake says Mamie will not agree but leaves Joe to ask her. After a small dispute, Mamie agrees. Later, as Jake dances with Mamie, Miss Jacobs and Fanny argue about who is jealous. Jake asks Fanny to dance when he sees her sitting sadly by herself. They argue because Fanny is jealous of Mamie, but Fanny dances with Jake. Fanny sits beside Mamie, and Jake joins the two rivals. Jake buys sodas for both ladies and leaves about an hour later with Mamie and Fanny, as he thinks about putting a deposit on a ticket to New York.

"In the Grip of his Past," the third chapter, tells that Jake never fully abandons the idea of bringing his wife and son to New York though pricing tickets becomes more of a routine than an actual intention. Although Jake often mentioned his family in Boston, he avoids all references to them while he is in New York. Jake is tender in his thoughts toward his wife, though he does not think of his New York girlfriends tenderly. Jake realizes that it is impossible to import his family and continue his present life style. Since Jake and his parents are unable to write, they pay a proxy who writes to Jake, chiding him about importing his family for his parents. Jake feels like he should weep for his absent family but he does not. He feels desolate, like an orphan, when he realizes that he is unable to recall his son's features. Jake returns to his lodgings, planning to say his



prayers, but he realizes that he cannot remember his prayers by heart and, after convincing the landlady of his sincerity, borrows her prayer book.

In "The Meeting," Jake waits at the Immigration Bureau on Ellis Island, excited for his family to arrive. When he finally sees Gitl, his wife, he is ashamed of her uncouth and un-American appearance. He refuses to hug her when she is released, causing his son, Yossele, to kick him. Gitl compliments Jake, but Jake is ashamed of Gitl and Yossele. Gitl is awed by the new Jake but misses her husband, Yekl. Since Jake is embarrassed at Gitl wearing a wig, she exchanges it for a kerchief, but he sees that as worse. Gitl is appalled to ride in a carriage on the Sabbath, but Jake insists, chiding her for using a Russian word.

In chapter five, "A Paterfamilias," Gitl has been in America for several weeks and compromises with Jake by wearing a bandanna over only half of her hair. Mrs. Kavarsky, the landlady, convinces Jake to buy a corset and hat for Gitl. It takes several days before Gitl tries them on, and she is pleased and embarrassed by her image. Gitl practices her American Yiddish because Jake yells at her when she speaks Russian. Gitl gets used to Jake, but she worries about recovering her husband's affection. Jake grows accustomed to being seen as a married man. Fanny is more embarrassed than Jake and finds a different job. Though Jake is relieved, he also misses Fanny. Jake becomes attached to Yossele who he calls Little Joey. Mr. Bernstein boards with Jake and his family. At dinner, Jake jokes and everyone laughs, even Yossele. The party discusses that Yossele is so smart he could become the President if he had only been born in America. Mr. Bernstein wishes for a son like Yossele, and Jake teases him about his clandestine visits to a marriage broker. After dinner, Mamie arrives and Jake introduces Mamie to Gitl. Mamie praises America though she disapproves of Gitl. Mamie threatens to tell Gitl about Jake's life before Gitl's arrival. Gitl is scared and jealous of Mamie since she is unable to understand Mamie and Jake's conversation. When Mamie leaves, Gitl asks about Mamie's finery, and Jake explains that Mamie is probably going to a ball. Jake reassures his wife that he and Mamie worked together and Mamie's visit was only to inquire about a job.

In chapter six, "Circumstances Alter Cases," Jake is miserable after Mamie's visit. Gitl tends Jake until he falls asleep. When she asks Mr. Bernstein if he knows Mamie, Mr. Bernstein claims that Jake knows many nice ladies and that Gitl is lucky that Jake is her husband. Mr. Bernstein, realizing his error, quickly assures Gitl that Jake loves her and has been much happier since she arrived. Gitl tells Mrs. Kavarsky about Mamie's visit, and Mrs. Kavarsky claims that Jake will be sent to prison if he cheats on his wife. When Mrs. Kavarsky blames the kerchief and wig if Jake were unfaithful, Gitl promises to discard both. When Jake awakes, he feels guilty and goes to Mamie's house, but since he does not see her on the sidewalk, he returns to his home. Mamie is in bed because she is upset about meeting Gitl. The next day, Jake stops by Mamie's house after work, and they argue. The more Jake thinks about Mamie, the more irritable he grows with Gitl. Jake alternates between indifference and affection for Yossele. One day, Fanny visits Gitl, and Gitl worries that Jake has eloped with Mamie. Fanny tells Gitl about Jake's clandestine meetings with Mamie, and Gitl cries.



In "Mrs. Kavarsky's Coup D'Etat," Mrs. Kavarsky again blames Gitl's kerchief for Jake's infidelity, and Gitl denounces her kerchief. Mrs. Kavarsky comforts Gitl since Jake is kind to Yossele. Mrs. Kavarsky arranges Gitl's hair, and Gitl is pleased with her landlady's compliments. Mrs. Kavarsky proudly presents Gitl to Jake, but Jake is disgusted with his wife's appearance. When Gitl cries in the bedroom, Mrs. Kavarsky chides Jake for the way he treats Gitl and for preferring the company of dancing girls to his wife. When Gitl comes out of the bedroom to yell at Jake, Jake denies her accusations. Mrs. Kavarsky tells them to make up, but Jake leaves after telling Mrs. Kavarsky to mind her own business. On the street, Jake worries about where he will spend the night. He decides to leave Gitl and considers kidnapping his son. Jake wonders if Mamie will run away with him and heads toward her house.

In chapter eight, "A Housetop Idyl," Jake and Mamie go to the roof to talk. Mamie suspects that Jake wants to ask her to run away together. Jake nervously starts sobbing and tells Mamie that someone told Gitl that he secretly sees Mamie. Jake admits that he did not realize how much he cared for Mamie until Gitl came to America. Mamie chides Jake that he should have sent Gitl a bill of divorce instead of passage tickets. Jake claims that his mother convinced him to act contrary to his will. Jake assures Mamie that he likes her better than Fanny or any of the other girls. Mamie tells him to go home to his wife and son because it is too late. Jake considers suicide and tells Mamie that she will be sorry. He promises to divorce Gitl and marry Mamie since she is the only one he cares for. Mamie checks her accounts, revealing that she has a lot of money set aside. Although Jake asks Mamie to run away with him, Mamie has a better idea. Jake will hide in Philadelphia with Mamie's married sister until the divorce is settled; Mamie will pay for and arrange the divorce. After he is divorced, Jake and Mamie will marry and open a dance school. Jake agrees though his heart hurts to part with his son. Mamie admits that Joe has been bothering her to marry him, but Mamie loves Jake. As Mamie sends Jake to Philadelphia on a midnight train, she tells him that the train ticket is as good as a marriage certificate.

In chapter nine, "The Parting," Jake and Gitl come face to face for the first time since his flight and the last time as husband and wife in January. Many other people are present. The rabbi tries vainly to dissuade Jake and Gitl from completing their divorce. Gitl is torn between the desire to hurt Jake and the desire to beg him to reconsider. Jake sees Gitl's American appearance as defiance and her failure to bring Yossele to the proceedings as unnecessary malice. The rabbi obtains the divorcees' agreement and explains the additional procedures. Jake and Gitl are divorced, and the rabbi hands the paperwork to Gitl who faints. Jake leaves before Gitl recovers. As Gitl cries the rabbi tells her that she must wait ninety-one days to remarry though Jake may remarry immediately. Mrs. Kavarsky tells Gitl that she is lucky to be rid of Jake and Gitl dries her eyes. In "A Defeated Victor," the tenth and final chapter, Gitl returns home, the sadness that the bond between her and Jake is broken further accentuated by Yossele's presence. Gitl tells Yossele that his father is dead. Mrs. Kavarsky chides Gitl for her tears, pointing out that Mr. Bernstein may leave also if he sees his betrothed crying. The chiding makes Gitl cry worse though she is actually happy since Mr. Bernstein plans to marry her, care for Yossele and open a grocery store. Jake and Mamie take a carriage to the mayor's office to be married. Jake dreads the ceremony, thinks of how Gitl and



his neighbors must be mocking him, and considers returning to Gitl to impose his authority as Yossele's father and demand that Gitl mind her household duties. Jake wishes that the trip to the mayor's office could be prolonged indefinitely, but the carriage nears the courthouse quickly.

Yekl Analysis

The first chapter of this short story introduces the title character Yekl, now known as Jake. Mr. Bernstein and Fanny are also introduced. The fact that the female listeners are more interested in Jake's appearance than his story demonstrates his attractiveness to the opposite gender. Fanny's inquiry about whether Jake will be at Joe's dancing school that night specifically shows her love for Jake. Jake's plan to use his pay to put a deposit on tickets for a passage to New York foreshadows the discovery about Gitl and Yossele as well as their arrival in New York. The fact that Yekl is known as Jake shows his Americanization and loss of original identity. Although Jake says he is not going to Joe's dance school, he acts contrary to his declaration. Joe acknowledges Jake's influence with Mamie by asking Jake to convince Mamie to dance with a gentleman. Jake's actions at the dance school show his courtship of Mamie and Fanny, as well as their jealousy of each other and devotion to Jake. Jake again thinks about placing a deposit on a passage to New York.

In the third chapter, the reason for Jake to buy the tickets is explained, and it is also made clear that no one in New York knows that he is married. The fact that Jake cannot remember his prayers by heart further shows his Americanization and highlights his religious negligence. Although Jake is excited for Gitl and Yossele to arrive, he changes his mind when he sees Gitl and is ashamed by her un-American appearance; this further emphasizes his Americanization. His decision to ride in a carriage despite it being the Sabbath demonstrates his religious negligence again. Gitl covers only half of her hair with a bandana, tries on the corset and hat, and practices her American Yiddish to please Jake by becoming more Americanized. The fact that she worries about recovering Jake's affections foreshadows their divorce. Mr. Bernstein boarding with Jake and Gitl, as well as his clandestine visits to a marriage broker, foreshadows his betrothal to Gitl after her divorce. Gitl's jealousy when she meets Mamie foreshadows her divorce as well.

Gitl demonstrates her jealousy when she asks Mr. Bernstein and Mrs. Kavarsky about Mamie. Mrs. Kavarsky encourages Gitl's Americanization since she blames her lack thereof as the reason for Jake's betrayal. Jake's visit to Mamie and the fact that she is mourning in bed after meeting Gitl demonstrates their love for one another and foreshadows Jake and Gitl's divorce. Jake becoming more irritable with Gitl and Fanny's visit to Gitl to tell her about his meetings with Mamie foreshadow the divorce. Mrs. Kavarsky arranges Gitl's hair, an action toward Gitl's Americanization, but ironically Jake is displeased with the result. Jake leaves, foreshadowing his divorce. His decision to ask Mamie to run away with him foreshadows his conversation with Mamie.



Jake admits to loving Mamie and promises to divorce Gitl and marry Mamie, fulfilling the foreshadowing about the conversation and foreshadowing his divorce. Mamie's plan further foreshadows the divorce. Gitl is conflicted at the divorce ceremony, desiring to beg Jake and hurt him at the same time. The fact that Gitl cannot marry for three months while Jake can marry the same day shows the disparity between the sexes in matters of divorce. Gitl's act of telling Yossele that his father is dead shows that she completely renounces her ex-husband. Jake and Mamie's plan to marry and open a dance school parallels Gitl and Mr. Bernstein's plans to marry and open a grocery store. It is ironic that though Jake initiates the divorce, he is disappointed with the result while Gitl is pleased with her future plans with Mr. Bernstein, despite the fact that she was initially devastated at the idea of the divorce.



The Imported Bridegroom

The Imported Bridegroom Summary

In chapter one, Flora reads "Little Dorrit" in the back parlor, feeling far away from herself for some moments. She is the only girl in her circle who reads Dickens, Scott and Thackeray in addition to "Family Story Paper" and "Fireside Companion. Flora has just recently turned twenty. When the matchmaker calls, Flora is eager to become the wife of a doctor since she craves a more refined atmosphere, but Asriel, her father, insists that she marry a God-fearing businessman, such as a merchant. Flora decides that she will not marry anyone except a doctor but wonders what to do about her father's opposition. Asriel prays as it is the anniversary of his father's death and Asriel is a very pious. After dinner, Asriel and Tamara, the widow of a rabbi who lives with Asriel and Flora, say grace, but Flora resumes reading her novel, causing her father to yell at her for the "Gentile nastiness." Flora is growing accustomed to Asriel's new habits; formerly, it was rare for him to say grace. Asriel announces that he intends to take a trip to Pravly, his birthplace, after Passover. Flora objects and leaves the room. When Tamara asks if Asriel will take Flora with him, he answers in the negative since he worries that his townspeople will mock Flora's gentile mannerisms. Besides, he wants to be in his hometown as he was when he was young.

Chapter two explains that Asriel grows fearful of death after his retirement. Though he usually drowns during synagogue, he first stays awake to hear the sermon of a newly landed preacher. This sermon convinces Asriel that he is very old and very wicked. He grows his side locks and begins reading Psalms, growing more pious daily until he begins growing homesick. Asriel left Pravly thirty-five years ago. He finds America inferior to Pravly only in its tasteless piety. In chapter three, Asriel arrives in Pravly and admires the beautiful scenery, recalling places from his past. He doubts his own identity as he contemplates Flora's photograph and thinks of events from his childhood. Asriel is displeased with the presence of a Gentile, Catholic Church in his town. He still feels like Asriel Thirteen Hairs, his nickname when he was a boy. Few people recognize Asriel. He encounters his old crony, Shmulke, and Aunt Sarah-Rachael who does not recognize him. Asriel exclaims that she does not understand anything.

Asriel's first Sabbath in his native town is memorable. Rabbi Lippe flaunts Shaya, the nineteen-year-old prodigy, that he is in negotiations to marry his youngest daughter. Shaya and Asriel are given seats of honor as guests, but Reb Lippe is too proud to allow Asriel to read the third section of the Pentateuch and auctions off the sections instead. Although Asriel places the winning bid, Reb Lippe reads. Many are skeptical about the fairness of the auction but only Shaya speaks out in support of Asriel. Asriel causes a ruckus, claiming that he is willing to pay any amount for the honor of reading. An older rabbi admonishes Asriel who apologizes to the congregation. After leaving the synagogue, Asriel no longer sees Pravly as poetic; he sees only a medium to fill with the rays of his financial success, and he determines that he will show them all who Asriel Stroon is. Asriel formulates a plot during the afternoon sermon about marrying one's



daughters. Asriel discusses the prodigy with the innkeeper early that evening. In chapter five, it is the same evening, and Asriel and Reb Lippe combat their purses again over the right to call Shaya son-in-law. As Shaya looks at the photograph of Flora, he realizes that Reb Lippe's daughter is not to his liking. Besides, America has a fascinating ring to it. An auction is held with Shaya as the prize, and Asriel wins. The next day, Asriel visits the graves of his family and realizes that most of the people he knew in his youth are now buried. Asriel makes peace with Reb Lippe before leaving Pravly, claiming that Reb Lippe will get another prodigy but there are none in America.

In chapter six, Asriel feels that he is going home as he nears New York. Shaya is amazed, and Asriel praises America and Flora to Shaya. Shaya agrees to be Asriel's Kaddish and observe the anniversary of Asriel's death after he is gone. After landing in America, Asriel takes Shaya shopping to obtain smart clothes before presenting him to Flora. Asriel greets his daughter and tells her he has brought her a present: a bridegroom. Flora is amazed and horrified when her father introduces Shaya before leaving them alone. Flora wants Shaya to leave, but he has nowhere to go. Shaya is charmed by Flora's labored Yiddish while she is charmed as though with a baby. Unfortunately, Flora is set upon marrying a refined, gentlemanly doctor, not a newly landed, non-English speaking, future Orthodox rabbi. She flees from the parlor in misery and rage. Feeling bad about leaving Shaya all alone, Flora sends Tamara to him with food since he is one of Tamara's sort. Asriel assures Flora that Shaya will not be a rabbi though he will be pious and study the Talmud his entire life. Tamara's agreement that any girl in the old country would be proud to have Shaya as a husband only causes Flora to tell the woman to mind her business. Tamara assures Asriel that the storm will blow over. Shaya's luggage arrives, including a huge box of Hebrew books. Flora does not understand the frightening books, and she cries in her bedroom. Shaya becomes absorbed in a particular passage as he arranges his books, and Asriel and Tamara admire his piety. Tamara tells Asriel that Flora does not know what a treasure God has sent her, but Asriel insists that she will before long.

On the next Sabbath, Asriel returns home from the synagogue at the head of a dozen Talmudists who offer blessings on the marriage between Shaya and Flora as well as hopes for children. Flora hides in her room, fearing what her friends would say about her betrothed. When Asriel humbly begs Flora to join everyone downstairs, she agrees because of his uncharacteristic humility. The Talmudists want Shaya to regale them with Words of the Law, but he is loath to engage in a spiritual discussion in front of Flora. The debate is initiated, with Shaya eager not to embarrass himself in front of Flora. Flora grows interested, feeling it unfair to pit six old-timers against one young boy, but Asriel and Tamara are too absorbed in the debate to congratulate themselves on Flora's interest. Shaya wins the debate and smiles triumphantly at Flora who drops her gaze and blushes; however, when Tamara asks Flora whether she should thank God for such a treasure as a sweetheart, Flora refuses to accept Shaya as her sweetheart.

In chapter eight, Asriel refuses to send Shaya away even if she does not agree to the match because he is fond of the boy. Shaya learns English, and Flora becomes fond of Shaya as though he is her brother. Flora teases Shaya about his enjoyment in hearing her play the piano because music is not for a holy child such as Shaya. Shaya enjoys



learning new things and asks his English teacher to secretly bring him a book of Geometry which Shaya studies alone after Asriel fires his teacher. Shaya visits the Astor Library and is ecstatic about the vast number of Gentile books. He asks Flora to go with him, and she agrees "some day." Shaya convinces Flora to help him with his English since he is distraught that most people cannot understand him. As she leans over the book, Shaya kisses her cheek, causing both young people's hearts to flutter. Flora tells him never to do that again, but Shaya laments that it bothers him when she says such things to him. After a passionate kiss, Shaya asks if Flora will agree to be his sweetheart now. Flora asks if Shaya would like to study to become a doctor if Asriel does not object. Shaya would, so Flora encourages him to study secretly and not to tell Asriel until it is too late. This is the only way Flora will agree to be Shaya's sweetheart so Shaya agrees. Flora leaves, and Shaya tells Asriel that Flora has agreed to be his sweetheart, causing the old man to praise God and rejoice.

Four months after Flora and Shaya's betrothal is celebrated, Asriel enters Flora's room and asks for Shaya. Flora loudly answers that Shaya is studying, adding "papa" to the end of her sentence. Suddenly, Shaya can be heard loudly singing a Hebrew song. Asriel proudly watches Shaya singing over a volume of the Talmud. After Asriel leaves, Flora encourages Shaya to continue studying Natural Philosophy, and Shaya expounds on the cunning exploration he is studying. Shaya spends his afternoons and some morning at various synagogues as a pretense so Asriel does not suspect that he is studying to become a doctor. Everyone praises Asriel and his prodigy. Asriel begins to worry about Shaya's merits after overhearing Reb Tzalel make comments about the boy. One day as Asriel sits in the synagogue talking to Reb Tzalel, Reb Tzalel admits that he needs to tell Asriel something that has been lying heavy on his heart: Shaya is becoming an atheist and leading others to sin. Reb Tzalel saw Shaya smoking a cigarette on the Sabbath last week. After Asriel accuses the rabbi of jealousy, Reb Tzalel blames Asriel for bringing Shaya to America to ruin him when Shaya would have become a great man if he had stayed in Pravly. Asriel rushes out of the synagogue as he begins to see Shaya as sacrilegious. He is rude to Shaya and Flora at home, causing Flora to worry that her father has discovered Shaya's studying to become a doctor.

In chapter ten, Asriel learns Shaya has not been to Souvalk Synagogue in weeks and begins to shadow Shaya who he no longer sees as Flora's bridegroom or a prodigy but as a sneaking atheist. He watches Shaya and his former teacher in ungodly pursuits and follows them to the "evil" library. When Shaya and the teacher enter a Christian restaurant, Asriel follows them and accuses them of eating pork before leaving angrily. In chapter eleven, Asriel returns home and yells at Flora for playing the piano. He threatens to kill Flora and Shaya is Shaya ever enters his home again, forbidding Flora to marry Shaya. Flora insists that she cannot live without Shaya and sneaks out of the house as Asriel continues his rant. When Asriel realizes that Flora has left, he searches the city for her only to return home to find her in her bedroom. Flora admits that she and Shaya married at a court, but Shaya will not be a doctor if Asriel insists. Although Asriel is upset that they married like Gentiles, he realizes that it can be fixed by a Jewish ceremony which will be held the next day. Asriel believes that America ruined Shaya. Asriel tells Tamara that he is alone and ruined. He wants to marry Tamara, give Tamara



half of his property, sell the rest, and live out the rest of his days in the Holy Land with Tamara. Flora rushes to tell Shaya the good news. The couple celebrates, but then Shaya wants Flora to come upstairs and hear the nice Christian Americans reading books. Flora is shocked that Shaya is interested in anything besides her. As Shaya becomes engrossed in the reading, Flora is perplexed by the scene which does not embody her image of the elegant world of doctors. Flora wants to leave, but Shaya is not ready. Flora is jealous of Shaya's love for books and begins to feel excluded from his future.

The Imported Bridegroom Analysis

The story begins with allusions to Dickens, Scott and Thackeray which serve to show Flora's Americanization. Her desire to be the wife of a doctor shows her ambitions to rise in social status as well as her pride in herself and her abilities. Asriel's insistence upon Flora marrying a God-fearing businessman demonstrates his piety, as does his prayer on the anniversary of his father's death and his chiding for Flora reading a Gentile novel. Asriel and Flora are both portrayed as very stubborn characters; unfortunately, what they want in Flora's bridegroom is at odds. This story becomes a sort of battle of wills between the father and daughter. Asriel's announcement that he intends to travel to Pravly after Passover foreshadows his journey to his hometown. His decision not to take Flora with him shows that he is ashamed of his daughter's Gentile and Americanized mannerisms. Chapter two reveals the reasons for Asriel's religious rebirth and his trip to Pravly. His visit to Pravly fulfills the earlier foreshadowing. Asriel is so changed as to be unrecognizable in Pravly; this indicates that he also has become Americanized.

Shaya is introduced in chapter four. Reb Lippe's pride leads him to auction off the readings. Cheating on the bid leads to Asriel's plotting for Shaya as a son-in-law to spite Reb Lippe. Because Asriel's pride is hurt, he decides to flaunt his wealth. His injured pride causes Asriel to view Pravly as a place that he must flaunt his wealth and prove his worth. Asriel's discussion with the innkeeper about the prodigy foreshadows his scheme to steal Shaya from Reb Lippe. The auction for Shaya fulfills this foreshadowing in the next chapter. Asriel's visit to the graveyard shows his respect for his parents, as well as reinforces his fear that death is imminent since most of his comrades are now under headstones. In making his peace with Reb Lippe, Asriel also insults the religious integrity of America by claiming that he could not find a prodigy there.

Asriel feels that he is going home as he nears New York because he has been so greatly Americanized. The evidence of Asriel's Americanization is ironic since he criticizes his daughter for the same while she was born in America. Asriel shows that he loves Shaya as a son already by asking Shaya to be his Kaddish. Asriel demonstrates knowledge of his daughter by having Shaya dressed sharply before introducing him to Flora. Flora is horrified at the introduction to her bridegroom, but the fact that she and Shaya are both charmed by one another foreshadows their future love and marriage. Flora's primary fear and apprehension concerning Shaya seems to arise from his religious learning which is illustrated by her reaction to his books. Asriel's pride



increased at synagogue as a result of his prodigy. When the Talmudists challenge Shaya to a debate, Shaya is hesitant because he wants to impress Flora. He also seems to realize that she is not pleased with his religious training. Flora's interest in the debate and her blush after Shaya smiles at her foreshadows that Flora will fall in love with Shaya.

Flora teases Shaya that music is not for a holy child like him when he praises her piano playing. Additionally, Shaya secretly studies Geometry, goes to Astor Library, is pleased with the vast number of Gentile books, and struggles to learn English. All of these actions foreshadow Shaya's decision to study to become a doctor as well as Flora agreeing to accept Shaya as her sweetheart. The kisses while Flora helps Shaya with his English foreshadow their love and marriage. Their discussion at the end of chapter eight fulfills the earlier foreshadowing as Shaya agrees to study to become a doctor and Flora agrees to be his sweetheart. Flora's loud reception of her father results from her desire to alert Shaya that Asriel has entered the room so that they can continue to keep his studies a secret from her father. Asriel's pride is seen in the fact that he feels he has a voice in the synagogue since Shaya's arrival. Reb Tzalel blames Asriel for ruining Shaya. In a later chapter, Asriel blames America for ruining Shaya, but since Asriel is the one who brought Shaya to America, it seems that he is indirectly accepting the blame upon his own shoulders. The conversation between Asriel and Reb Tzalel foreshadows Asriel discovering that Shaya is studying to become a doctor.

Asriel stalks Shaya and uncovers his secret, accusing him of being an Atheist. It is an ironic reversal that Asriel now disapproves of Shaya. Originally, Asriel insists that Flora marry Shaya though she refuses. By the end of the story, Asriel forbids it though Flora insists that she cannot live without Shaya. Flora's disappearance during her conversation with her father foreshadows her elopement which is shortly fulfilled when she confesses her courthouse marriage to her father. Asriel's primary concern after hearing of his daughter's marriage is not that she married Shaya but that she had a Gentile wedding. He quickly decides to fix it by holding a Jewish ceremony the following day. Asriel's plans for the future include leaving America which he sees as the destroyer of the Jewish religion. In the last chapter, Flora announces the good news to Shaya, but he is more concerned with the books that the American Christians are reading. Ironically, Flora is jealousy of and excluded by the very thing that she wanted for Shaya. Additionally, neither Flora nor Asriel get their true desire though Flora does marry Shaya. Neither is truly happy.



A Providential Match

A Providential Match Summary

His townspeople in Kropovetz still call him Rouvke Arbel. Arbel, or sleeve, is a reference to his job, but that was four years ago, and Rouvke is greatly changed. Although his face is still the same, his mother recently saw a picture of him and believed him to be a Gentile. He pays his bills promptly and is punctual. When he moves to America, Rouvke changes his name to Robert Friedman, and he is proud and arrogant. The feminine aspect of Rouvke's life is missing until recently. In Kropovetz, he works for Peretz and is infatuated with Peretz's only daughter, Hanele. Rouvke is sad when Feive, the matchmaker, arrives to negotiate Hanele's marriage; however, the negotiations are called off and many suitors are dismissed until the year Rouvke's name appears in the military roll call and he moves to America. In America, Rouvke is a peddler for his first four years, but the memory of Hanele plagues his heart at times. Occasionally, Rouvke asks his mother for minute details about Hanele. Rouvke peddles but does not interact with females as the other peddlers do. He tries to avoid the uncomfortable situation of being introduced to ladies at other peddlers' houses.

By the time Rouvke reaches twenty-five years old, he has over three thousand dollars in the bank and his heart and eyes wander to women, dwelling on the ladies he is introduced to. Rouvke enrolls in night school for immigrants and learns how to read and write English. He reminds himself that he is no longer Rouvke but Robert. He hopes to open his own peddlers' supply store. He worries that ladies only sneer at men who are unable to read the newspaper, but he is pained by others' ability to learn English quicker as well as the jokes that are made at his expense in front of young ladies. Rouvke begins inquiring for details about how marriages are negotiated and fantasizes about his own future marriage. Rouvke encounters Feive at the "Sons of Kropovetz" synagogue and, asking about his old master, learns that Peretz is in reduced circumstances. Although Rouvke pities Peretz, he also feels triumphant since he is now richer than his former master. Feive also tells Rouvke that Hanele is still unmarried and beautiful. Although Rouvke daydreams about marrying Hanele, he realizes that the idea is preposterous. Feive visits Rouvke and suggests that he marries Hanele, offering to negotiate the match. Although Rouvke rejects this idea since he would be a fool to marry Hanele now that she is so poor, he has now been changed from a bochor into a choson, a young man placed on the matrimonial market.

As Rouvke examines American girls, Hanele keeps entering his imagination, and he is enchanted with the idea of marrying her. Although Feive receives no positive hint as he continues broaching the subject, he writes to Peretz in Rouvke's favor. Rouvke overhears Mrs. Kohen's outraged conversation with Feive about the absurdity of Rouvke marrying Hanele. Insulted, Rouvke knocks and asks Feive if he truly believes Peretz will have him as a son-in-law, determined to marry Hanele now if only to spite Mrs. Kohen. Initially, Peretz is offended at Feive's suggestion but begins to see it as a providential affair. Peretz discusses it with Hanele who agrees to move to America and



marry Rouvke. Feive negotiates the marriage, and Rouvke receives many congratulations from the other peddlers. Rouvke meets Hanele at the nauseating seaport. When Hanele appears, Rouvke sees that she is more charming and beautiful than before; he feels like Rouvke instead of Robert. He goes to meet Hanele when her name is called, but Rouvke is shocked to see her being escorted by a young man in the overcoat of a Russian collegian. Hanele introduces Gospodin Levinsky, her choson. Gospodin promises to pay Rouvke back the marriage fees for Hanele. Hanele and Gospodin met in steerage and fell in love during their journey. Rouvke threatens to call the police as Feive threatens to tell Peretz what Hanele has done. Rouvke grabs Gospodin and yells for the police, but a hotel runner saves Hanele and Gospodin Levinsky as the other peddlers laugh at Rouvke.

A Providential Match Analysis

The fact that Rouvke changes his name to Robert Friedman and his own mother does not recognize his image demonstrates that Rouvke is greatly Americanized. His infatuation with Hanele, the fact that her many suitors are dismissed, Rouvke's memories of Hanele that plague him in America, and his refusal to interact with ladies foreshadows Rouvke's engagement to Hanele. The fact that Rouvke has over three thousand dollars in the bank by the time he reaches twenty-five years old is proof of his wealth. His desire to learn to read and write English, as well as his reminder to himself that he is now Robert instead of Rouvke, demonstrate Rouvke's pride and immense Americanization. It is ironic that Rouvke encounters Feive at the "Sons of Kropovetz" synagogue after he begins inquiring about the procedures to obtain a match.

Peretz's poverty is juxtaposed to Rouvke's comparative wealth, an ironic fact since Rouvke worked for Peretz in Kropovetz. Rouvke's triumph and the fact that he sees marrying Hanele now that she is poor as foolish indicate his pride. Rouvke's interest in marriage changes his social position from bochor to choson. Rouvke is afraid of American girls which is one of the reasons that leads him to agree to the match with Hanele. Feive acts without Rouvke's knowledge in writing to Peretz about the proposed match. Rouvke's pride makes another appearance in his decision to pursue the match if only to spite Mrs. Kohen after hearing her disparage the possibility. Peretz's initial pride and indignation at the suggestion fades to rationale as he realizes that many men are changed by moving to America. Hanele is an example of the dutiful daughter as she agrees to the match despite her initial shock. The appearance of Hanele with a young man foreshadows the fact that she has changed her mind about marrying Rouvke. This foreshadowing is immediately fulfilled when she introduces Gospodin Levinsky, her choson. It is ironic that Hanele finds her providential match though it is not Rouvke as her father thought. The other peddler's laughing at Rouvke injures his pride.



A Sweatshop Romance

A Sweatshop Romance Summary

Leizer Lipman runs a small shop out of his home; the shop also serves as the Lipmans' kitchen and dining room. Work is scarce, but since the designer of the Broadway clothing firm is Mrs. Zlate Lipman's cousin, he keeps them in work. Leizer and Zlate are out of the shop which gives a respite to their workers. Meyer complains about Beile's constant singing, stating that he prefers it when she keeps her mouth shut. Heyman argues with Meyer because he enjoys Beile's singing. Meyer mocks Heyman's servile attitude toward Lipman. David pauses in his work and stares at Beile. He asks if Lipman is going to raise her wages, and Beile says yes, though David still earns more than she does. The workers are actually paid by piece not weekly. Meyer asks how David makes so much more than the rest of them, and David explains that a day does not consist of twenty-four hours but of twelve coats for him; he only considers it a new day after he has completed twelve coats. David considers himself an odd fellow and thinks about the other workers, wondering why he thinks Beile looks so sweet.

As Beile looks at David, she thinks about her relationship with Heyman. Heyman has not even hinted at marriage, and Beile's mother wants Beile to demand a promise from Heyman or sue him for breach of promise, but Beile refuses. According to Meyer's wife, Beile loves Heyman, but Beile is disappointed because she feels love should be a much sweeter thing. Beile contemplates whether Heyman is too stingy to support a wife. Heyman is actually not delayed from proposing to Beile due to pecuniary concerns; he simply lacks the strength to discuss the matter with her, constantly telling himself that he will settle it the next day. Beile decides to allow her mother to talk to him. Leizer Lipman arrives and examines the coat that Meyer is working on. Zlate shortly follows with an elderly couple, Basse and Reb Avrom, recently arrived from her birthplace. Zlate gives her guests a tour of her home before Leizer begins telling Reb Avrom about the secrets of the American style of tailoring.

Zlate demands that Beile go to the store for soda, but Beile is appalled at her boss' commanding tone. David advises Beile to continue sewing; Heyman is irritated, but Beile listens to David. When Zlate yells and threatens Beile, Beile still does not budge. Heyman has no idea what to do, and Leizer watches quietly. David tells Beile to come with him and he will find her a better job. He also informs the Avroms that the Lipmans' carpet was bought on an installment plan and that they have nearly defaulted several times. After Zlate yells at him, Leizer politely tells David and Beile to leave. As David and Beile don their coats, Basse Avrom notices that Beile looks like a lady while Zlate appears more like a servant. David tells the Lipmans to have their wages and arrears ready on Friday as he and Beile leave. Heyman is too frightened to visit Beile that day, and it takes two weeks for him to summon the courage to appear at her home. Inside, Heyman can hear an engagement party for David and Beile taking place, so he retreats hastily. After the fiasco, Beile can only think of Heyman as a cowering figure during the fight, and she is sure she hates him. Beile considers allowing her mother to talk to the



lawyer about a breach of promise, but David's pluckier image comes to her mind. David finds work for Beile and visits her everyday, often treating her to candy and coffee, something Heyman never did. David proposes after ten days, and the engagement party is held the next night.

A Sweatshop Romance Analysis

The fact that the Lipmans are out of the shop provides some freedom for their workers and allows the reader to see Meyer, Heyman, Beile and David's characters more clearly. Heyman stands up for Beile when Meyer complains about her singing, foreshadowing the revelation of a relationship between Heyman and Beile. The fact that David stares at Beile and wonders why she looks so sweet foreshadows their relationship and his love for her by hinting that he is interested in her. The fact that the workers are not paid hourly but by the number of pieces that they complete shows the level of poverty and their dedication in completing as much work as possible. By thinking about her relationship with Heyman, Beile reveals their situation, including the fact that she does not truly love Heyman. Heyman's fear of proposing to Beile shows that he is a coward and foreshadows his later actions, or lack thereof. The Lipmans return home, signaling the end of the workers' freedom. Basse and Reb Avrom visit the Lipmans; they are recently arrived from Zlate's hometown and signify the common arrival of new immigrants. Zlate gives the Avroms a tour of her home, obviously demonstrating her immense pride as she brags about her and her husband's success.

Zlate's command that Beile go to the store is taken poorly and foreshadows Beile quitting the Lipmans' shop. David stands up for Beile, encouraging her to ignore Zlate's rude demand. Beile responds to his concern by heeding his suggestion. The fact that Heyman does not know what to do further shows his cowardly nature. When Zlate tells Beile to leave her shop, David stands up for Beile and offers to help her find a new job. Furthermore, David destroys Zlate's pride by telling the Avroms about her financial instability concerning her rug and near default on her installment plan. Basse Avrom's view of Beile and Zlate reveals an ironic contrast since the worker looks like a lady while the lady looks like a servant. Heyman shows his lack of courageous several more times as he is too afraid to visit Beile that day, waits too weeks and retreats hastily when he finally summons his courage only to overhear David and Beile's engagement party. Beile finally realizes that she does not love Heyman when she is only able to see him as a coward after the altercation at the Lipmans' shop. The fact that her anger toward Heyman is supplanted by David's image shows that Beile loves David. David treats Beile better than Heyman and is more liberal in his affections, evidenced by the fact that he treats her to coffee and candy. The engagement party fulfills the earlier foreshadowing that David loves Beile.



Circumstances

Circumstances Summary

In chapter one, Tatyana reads a review of a translation of Guy de Maupassant's stories in "Russian Thought," finding a thought by the critic that supports her argument against her husband, Boris. Suddenly, she recalls the soup and darts to the kitchen. Tatyana meets Boris not long after graduating from the female gymnasium, while he is a law student, and they marry shortly after he graduates. Because the government is bent on keeping Jews out of the forensic field, Boris is unable to gain admission to the bar, and he and Tatyana relocate to New York. In chapter two, Boris returns from work at a pearl-button factory. Tatyana happily greets her husband and admits that she ruined the soup because he learned that others know things too. Noting that she must have received the latest edition of "Russian Thought," Boris wants to look through it, but Tatyana forbids it until after dinner because she wants to spend time with him. Tatyana loves Boris too much to notice that his shabby work clothes diminish his intellectual appearance. After dinner, Tatyana reads the review to Boris, and he admits that the critic has an "interesting point." Boris concocts a scheme so that he will not have to continue at the button factory, but Tatyana is uninterested. Boris chides her for not making life a burden for him until he gets a better position. Tatyana teases him that he should have married Cecilia Trotzky. Boris laments that everyone in America goes to college, but he has a plan which depends largely on Tatyana. Since rent is their biggest expense, they should keep a boarder. Tatyana objects, and Boris relents. When Tatyana offers to get a job, Boris objects. Tatyana wants to be alone with Boris without a boarder because she wants no one else in the world.

The next evening on his way home from work, Boris recalls smiling with approbation with his half tipsy Czech foreman made efforts at witticism. Boris is disgusted at what circumstances have forced him to become. At home, he reopens the discussion of his scheme but surrenders to Tatyana again. A few days later, Boris is laid off for two weeks, and he and Tatyana struggle to make ends meet. Boris reminds his wife that he promised to give Dalsky an answer, and Tatyana surrenders to fate, allowing Boris to take a boarder. In the fourth chapter, Dalsky reviews his lesson, but nothing produces an impression. He enters the kitchen to water his plant, and Tatyana suggests that Dalsky should also eat. As Dalsky eats, Tatyana makes a playful attempt at reading his textbook, and Dalsky corrects her when she mispronounces the English words. Dalsky has lived with the Luries for two weeks and become a part of their family, bringing decor and chatting with the couple about the newspaper, gossip or Russian books. Dalsky laments that the pearl button factory has eaten Boris up. He does not encroach on Boris and Tatyana's privacy, but his presence makes a pleasanter atmosphere in the Luries' home. Boris points out the additional benefit that Tatyana is no longer lonely during the day. Dalsky moved to America to study and practice medicine, and he lives at peace with himself and the others in their colony.



In chapter five, three months pass as Boris grows morose from his job, and Tatyana becomes more irritable with her husband. One evening, Tatyana sits in a rocking chair, thinking that Dalsky will return from school around the same time that Boris will get home from work. Boris arrives with a shadow of disappointment etched across his brow. He attempts to tell his wife his newest plan, but she is not listening. The two are clearly out of sorts with one another. Dalsky returns and apologizes for his delay, caused by being detained at his lecture and running into Stern. Stern has a new scheme for a New Years' celebration which includes Boris and Tatyana playing the violin in a remarkable dialogue Stern uncovered in *Little Russian*. Boris thinks the scheme is stupid, but Tatyana is interested as Dalsky continues to explain, and Boris grows more interest.

There is a sharp contrast between Dalsky's scholarly appearance and Boris' disheveled look. After dinner, Tatyana contemplates Boris as he sleeps; she is revolted at the same time that she pities her husband. Tatyana vaguely recalls a passage in *"Anna Karenina"* where the title character is struck by the uncouth hugeness of her husband's ears after falling under Vronsky's charm. Tatyana realizes this is not the first time she has compared Boris and Dalsky; she is a married woman in love with another man! Sympathy moves Tatyana to tears until she recalls that taking a boarder was Boris' idea. Tatyana decides to come up with a pretext for insisting that Dalsky move out, but it proves unnecessary. A few days later, Dalsky tells the Luries that college makes it impossible for him to continue living with them. Actually, he notices the fights between the couple and thinks that Tatyana may be interested in him. He considers the adventure of reciprocating Tatyana's feelings but announces his intent to move the next day.

In chapter six, Tatyana is plagued with loneliness and irritated with Boris. Dalsky's window plant reminds her of her former boarder, but she does not have the heart to remove it. After a particularly sharp altercation, Boris asks what has happened to his wife and pales as he considers the situation, praying that his misgivings are baseless as he begs her to explain. Tatyana believes that Boris understands but agrees to write it to him in a short note. She writes that she is his best friend but that she believes they should part for a while since she cannot keep "him" out of her mind. She blames herself and states that she is struggling out of a state of mind which aggravates things in their home, but she needs to be alone in order to get over it. She will work to support herself but asks Boris to keep it a secret. Dalsky does not suspect any such thing, and Tatyana will die if Dalsky guesses her feelings. She will invent some explanation for their separation. In chapter seven, it is a winter evening at Silberman's shop where Tatyana now works. Tatyana is the only one not singing. She works hard and grows nearly oblivious to the pain in her heart. Tatyana finds her surroundings terrible and is tempted to return to Boris and beg forgiveness, but the image of Dalsky prevents it. As Tatyana continues working, she thinks of the New Years' celebration and the pending gossip about both her separation and her failure to appear on the platform. Around the same time, Boris returns home from work to clear the rooms of their home for the second day. The emptiness of the rooms holds a doleful, mysterious reproach to Boris, reminding him of his life with Tatyana. Suddenly hit with the impact of what has happened, Boris cries, calling Tatyana's name over and over.



Circumstances Analysis

Tatyana reading "Russian Thought" and recalling her literary argument with Boris demonstrates that both are intellectuals. The first chapter of this story provides background information about how Tatyana and Boris met, were educated and came to live in America. The fact that Boris is unable to obtain admission to the bar shows the bias against Jews in Russia. Boris and Tatyana immigrate to America to avoid such persecution. Boris, a trained lawyer, works in a pearl-button factory, a sign of his degradation as an immigrant and a Jew. Tatyana's desire to spend time with Boris during dinner and her failure to notice that his work clothes diminish his intellectual appearance signal the extent of her love for her husband. Tatyana and Boris' close relationship is shown by their joking nature with one another. Boris' suggestion that they keep a boarder foreshadows Dalsky's arrival. Tatyana's objection again demonstrates how much she loves her husband because she is unwilling to share his free time with anyone else.

Boris' change in behavior due to his circumstances shows his level of poverty and desperation due to his poverty. His repetitious mentioning of taking a boarder foreshadows Dalsky's arrival. Boris being laid off for two weeks signals a decrease in their financial security and makes the likelihood of having to take a boarder more prevalent. Tatyana finally submits to Boris, agreeing to take a boarder. Dalsky's arrival fulfills the earlier foreshadowing that results from Boris' suggestions to take a boarder. Tatyana and Dalsky's interactions, as well as the comment that Dalsky has become a part of the family, foreshadow Tatyana falling in love with Dalsky. Dalsky corrects Tatyana when she mispronounces English words, demonstrating his intelligence. Dalsky shows his respect for Boris in lamenting the effect that working at the pearl-button factory has had on Boris.

Boris and Tatyana begin fighting more frequently, foreshadowing their separation. Boris' new plan is repetitious and reminiscent of his suggestion of taking a boarder. Tatyana's interest as Dalsky explains Stern's New Years' scheme foreshadows the discovery that Tatyana is in love with Dalsky. Dalsky and Boris' appearances are contrasted; Dalsky's appearance seems to be comparable to how Boris looked before coming to America and working in the factory. Tatyana's allusion to "Anna Karenina" leads to her self-revelation that she is in love with Dalsky. Although Tatyana pities Boris at first, she quickly shifts the blame to his shoulders since it was his idea to take a boarder. Dalsky shows his honor and respect for Boris by announcing his intent to move the day after he begins to suspect that Tatyana may have inappropriate feelings for him.

Tatyana's continued misery and irritation toward Boris after Dalsky's departure foreshadows their separation. Her sadness regarding Dalsky's window plant and her inability to remove it demonstrates the depth of her love for her former boarder. When Boris pales after broaching the topic with his wife, it is evident that he is beginning to suspect that his wife's heart is no longer faithful to him. Tatyana reveals the truth to Boris in a letter. Her offer to work to support herself foreshadows her job at Silberman's shop. Her modesty and shame is revealed by her request that Boris not mention the

matter to Dalsky. Despite the tortuous way that Tatyana views her employment, she loves Dalsky too much to return to Boris. Her work can be seen as self-chastisement and punishment for her failure to remain faithful in her love for Boris. The empty rooms of their home torment Boris who laments losing Tatyana.



A Ghetto Wedding

A Ghetto Wedding Summary

Grand Street groans under the culmination of a long season of idleness and distress. Nathan and Goldy do not make much money, so Nathan peddles for extra money. Their wedding date is perpetually postponed until they can save the necessary funds. Although Nathan wants to have a modest wedding, Goldy objects to a slipshod wedding and cries that Nathan wants to make her a figure of ridicule. Nathan agrees to have a nice wedding, but their wedding keeps getting postponed because of financial hardship. After Nathan begins peddling, their finances look better and their reduced savings account increases. Goldy wants to accumulate just enough for a slipshod wedding and an establishment. One night as Nathan continues peddling permanently, Goldy visits. Nathan hates for her to see him peddling, but Goldy has an idea of how they can have a respectable celebration and fine furniture with the money they already have saved.

Nathan and Goldy go to her bedroom, also used as Mrs. Volpiansky's parlor, and Goldy suggests they have a nice wedding and rely on getting furniture as gifts instead of worrying about buying furniture. Since Nathan has no tangible argument, he agrees. Over a hundred invitations go out for the wedding, and Nathan pays three months' rent for three rooms on the second floor of a Cherry Street tenement house. Since it is customary to send the bulkier presents before the wedding, Goldy takes off work a week before the wedding to receive their presents which do not come. Goldy reassures herself that it is too soon as she hears voices in the walls due to the haunting quality of the empty rooms. On the sixth day, a cheap rocking chair arrives, and Goldy is disappointed. The only other gifts to arrive are a corner table, an alarm clock and an icebox. Although Goldy is woebegone, she triumphantly tells Nathan that most people will send gifts after the wedding.

It is late in the evening, and few guests have arrived. The dancing before the ceremony is still going on at ten o'clock at night when the ceremony finally begins, after Nathan and Goldy accept that no one else will come. Goldy dresses, and the bard begins his address to the bride, causing Goldy to cry and faint. The rest of the ceremony takes place without any accidents. The fact that she is married seems meaningless to Goldy. After dinner, Goldy feels different and blames herself for the waste of a nice wedding and the fact that now they do not have furniture. Nathan comforts Goldy, and they celebrate their marriage. After midnight, Goldy and Nathan leave the reception. The ghetto is immersed in repose, but Nathan wants to borrow a few dollars from a friend so that they can take a carriage home as befits a newly married couple; however, Goldy insists upon walking as a form of self-chastisement for her extravagance. As Nathan and Goldy walk through the ghetto, a gang of loafers mock them, but Goldy restrains Nathan from confronting the gang. All of the negative events fade into the background as Nathan and Goldy realize that they are finally married and are overwhelmed with happiness.



A Ghetto Wedding Analysis

Nathan and Goldy's wedding is continually postponed due to their poverty; this is also the reason that Nathan must peddle for extra money. Goldy's pride is demonstrated by her desire to have a respectable wedding instead of a slipshod wedding despite their poverty. Nathan submits to Goldy's desires several times throughout this story, despite the fact that her desires are usually irrational. Goldy seems to be showing rationale when she agrees to save enough to marry and situate an establishment, but she quickly diverts from this rationale by telling Nathan she has thought of a scheme that will allow them to have a respectable celebration and fine furniture with the money they currently have saved. Goldy shows her greed in her plan to have a nice wedding and expect fine furniture as gifts from her guests.

The wedding is planned extravagantly, as evidenced by the hundred invitations that are sent and Goldy taking off work a week in advance in expectation of receiving gifts. Goldy's expectations and greed are disappointed when few gifts arrive. The fact that few guests attend the wedding adds further to Goldy's disappointments. Goldy is sad at her wedding since it is not going the way she planned. After the ceremony has taken place, Goldy begins to feel like a married woman and, realizing her greed and pride, is ashamed of herself. Goldy refuses Nathan's plan to borrow money to hire a carriage because of her shame and pride. Goldy shows that she truly loves Nathan by restraining him from confronting the gang that mocks them as they walk back to their home. Everything fades into the background of Nathan and Goldy's happiness, showing that nothing matters to them except how much they love one another.



Characters

Jake appears in Yekl

Jake's original name is Yekl, but he changes it when he moves to America. He first lives in Boston before relocating to New York City. When Fanny asks Jake if he is going to Joe's dance class tonight, Jake snaps at her. Jake meets Fanny on the street after work and reaffirms that he is not going to Joe's dance school. Jake plans to tell Joe that he will not sell any ball tickets tonight and scurries down Suffolk Street to Joe's where everyone greets Jake. Later, as Jake dances with Mamie, Miss Jacobs and Fanny argue about who is jealous. Jake asks Fanny to dance when he sees her sitting sadly by herself. They argue because Fanny is jealous of Mamie, but Fanny dances with Jake. Fanny sits beside Mamie, and Jake joins the two rivals. Jake buys sodas for both ladies and leaves about an hour later with Mamie and Fanny, as he thinks about putting a deposit on a ticket to New York.

Jake never fully abandons the idea of bringing his wife and son to New York though pricing tickets becomes more of a routine than an actual intention. Although Jake often mentioned his family in Boston, he avoids all references to them while he is in New York. Jake is tender in his thoughts toward his wife though he does not think of his New York girlfriends tenderly. Jake realizes that it is impossible to import his family and continue his present life style. Jake feels like he should weep for his absent family but he does not. He feels desolate, like an orphan, when he realizes that he is unable to recall his son's features. Jake returns to his lodgings, planning to say his prayers, but he realizes that he cannot remember his prayers by heart and, after convincing the landlady of his sincerity, borrows her prayer book. Jake waits at the Immigration Bureau on Ellis Island, excited for his family to arrive. When he finally sees Gitl, his wife, he is ashamed of her uncouth and un-American appearance. He refuses to hug her when she is released, causing his son, Yossele, to kick him. Gitl compliments Jake, but Jake is ashamed of Gitl and Yossele.

Jake yells at Gitl when she speaks Russian. Jake grows accustomed to being seen as a married man. Though Jake is relieved when Fanny finds a different job, he also misses Fanny. Jake becomes attached to Yossele who he calls Little Joey. Mr. Bernstein boards with Jake and his family. When Mr. Bernstein wishes for a son like Yossele, Jake teases him about his clandestine visits to a marriage broker. After dinner, Mamie arrives, and Jake introduces Mamie to Gitl. When Mamie leaves, Gitl asks about Mamie's finery, and Jake explains that Mamie is probably going to a ball. Jake reassures his wife that he and Mamie worked together and Mamie's visit was only to inquire about a job. Jake is miserable after Mamie's visit and falls asleep. The next day, Jake stops by Mamie's house after work, and they argue. The more Jake thinks about Mamie, the more irritable he grows with Gitl. Jake alternates between indifference and affection for Yossele. After Fanny tells Gitl about Jake's true relationship with Mamie and Mrs. Kavarsky arranges Gitl's hair according to the American fashion, Jake is disgusted with his wife's appearance. When Gitl comes out of the bedroom to yell at Jake, Jake denies her



accusations. Jake leaves after telling Mrs. Kavarsky to mind her own business. On the street, Jake worries about where he will spend the night. He decides to leave Gitl and considers kidnapping his son. Jake wonders if Mamie will run away with him and heads toward her house.

Jake and Mamie go to the roof to talk where Jake nervously starts sobbing and tells Mamie that someone told Gitl that he secretly sees Mamie. Jake admits that he did not realize how much he cared for Mamie until Gitl came to America. He claims that his mother convinced him to act contrary to his will. Jake assures Mamie that he likes her better than Fanny or any of the other girls. Mamie tells him to go home to his wife and son because it is too late. Jake considers suicide and tells Mamie that she will be sorry. He promises to divorce Gitl and marry Mamie since she is the only one he cares for. Mamie checks her accounts, revealing that she has a lot of money set aside. Although Jake asks Mamie to run away with him, Mamie suggests that Jake hide in Philadelphia with Mamie's married sister until the divorce is settled. After he is divorced, Jake and Mamie will marry and open a dance school. Jake agrees though his heart hurts to part with his son. Mamie sends Jake to Philadelphia on a midnight train.

Jake and Gitl come face to face for the first time since his flight and the last time as husband and wife in January. Jake sees Gitl's American appearance as defiance and her failure to bring Yossele to the proceedings as unnecessary malice. The rabbi obtains the divorcees' agreement and explains the additional procedures. Jake and Gitl are divorced, and the rabbi hands the paperwork to Gitl who faints. Jake leaves before Gitl recovers. Jake and Mamie take a carriage to the mayor's office to be married. Jake dreads the ceremony, thinks of how Gitl and his neighbors must be mocking him, and considers returning to Gitl to impose his authority as Yossele's father and demand that Gitl mind her household duties. Jake wishes that the trip to the mayor's office could be prolonged indefinitely, but the carriage nears the courthouse quickly.

Asriel Stroon appears in The Imported Bridegroom

Asriel Stroon is a well-to-do, retired merchant. He is Flora's father. Asriel insists that Flora marry a God-fearing businessman, such as a merchant. Asriel prays as it is the anniversary of his father's death and Asriel is a very pious. After dinner, Asriel and Tamara, the widow of a rabbi who lives with Asriel and Flora, say grace, but Flora resumes reading her novel, causing her father to yell at her for the "Gentile nastiness." Asriel announces that he intends to take a trip to Pravly, his birthplace, after Passover. When Tamara asks if Asriel will take Flora with him, he answers in the negative since he worries that his townspeople will mock Flora's gentile mannerisms. Besides, he wants to be in his hometown as he was when he was young. Asriel grows fearful of death after his retirement. Though he usually drowns during synagogue, he first stays awake to hear the sermon of a newly landed preacher. This sermon convinces Asriel that he is very old and very wicked. He grows his side locks and begins reading Psalms, growing more pious daily until he begins growing homesick. Asriel left Pravly thirty-five years ago. He finds America inferior to Pravly only in its tasteless piety.



Asriel arrives in Pravly and admires the beautiful scenery, recalling places from his past. He doubts his own identity as he contemplates Flora's photograph and thinks of events from his childhood. Asriel is displeased with the presence of a Gentile, Catholic Church in his town. He still feels like Asriel Thirteen Hairs, his nickname when he was a boy. Few people recognize Asriel. He encounters his old crony, Shmulke, and Aunt Sarah-Rachael who does not recognize him. Asriel exclaims that she does not understand anything. Asriel's first Sabbath in his native town is memorable. Reb Lippe is too proud to allow Asriel to read the third section of the Pentateuch and auctions off the sections instead. Although Asriel places the winning bid, Reb Lippe reads. Asriel causes a ruckus, claiming that he is willing to pay any amount for the honor of reading. An older rabbi admonishes Asriel who apologizes to the congregation. After leaving the synagogue, Asriel no longer sees Pravly as poetic; he sees only a medium to fill with the rays of his financial success, and he determines that he will show them all who Asriel Stroon is. Asriel formulates a plot during the afternoon sermon about marrying one's daughters. Asriel discusses the prodigy with the innkeeper early that evening.

Asriel and Reb Lippe combat their purses again over the right to call Shaya son-in-law. An auction is held with Shaya as the prize, and Asriel wins. The next day, Asriel visits the graves of his family and realizes that most of the people he knew in his youth are now buried. Asriel makes peace with Reb Lippe before leaving Pravly, claiming that Reb Lippe will get another prodigy but there are none in America. Asriel feels that he is going home as he nears New York. Asriel praises America and Flora to Shaya. Shaya agrees to be Asriel's Kaddish and observe the anniversary of Asriel's death after he is gone. After landing in America, Asriel takes Shaya shopping to obtain smart clothes before presenting him to Flora. Asriel greets his daughter and tells her he has brought her a present: a bridegroom. He introduces Shaya before leaving them alone. Asriel assures Flora that Shaya will not be a rabbi though he will be pious and study the Talmud his entire life. Asriel and Tamara admire Shaya's piety. Tamara tells Asriel that Flora does not know what a treasure God has sent her, but Asriel insists that she will before long.

On the next Sabbath, Asriel returns home from the synagogue at the head of a dozen Talmudists who offer blessings on the marriage between Shaya and Flora as well as hopes for children. Flora hides in her room, fearing what her friends would say about her betrothed. When Asriel humbly begs Flora to join everyone downstairs, she agrees because of his uncharacteristic humility. Asriel and Tamara are too absorbed in the debate to congratulate themselves on Flora's interest. Asriel refuses to send Shaya away even if she does not agree to the match because he is fond of the boy. Asriel fires Shaya's English teacher for growing "too thick" with the boy. Shaya tells Asriel that Flora has agreed to be his sweetheart, causing the old man to praise God and rejoice. Four months after Flora and Shaya's betrothal is celebrated, Asriel enters Flora's room and asks for Shaya. Asriel proudly watches Shaya singing over a volume of the Talmud. Everyone praises Asriel and his prodigy. Asriel begins to worry about Shaya's merits after overhearing Reb Tzalel make comments about the boy.

One day as Asriel sits in the synagogue talking to Reb Tzalel, Reb Tzalel admits that he needs to tell Asriel something that has been lying heavy on his heart: Shaya is becoming an atheist and leading others to sin. Reb Tzalel saw Shaya smoking a



cigarette on the Sabbath last week. After Asriel accuses the rabbi of jealousy, Reb Tzalel blames Asriel for bringing Shaya to America to ruin him when Shaya would have become a great man if he had stayed in Pravyly. Asriel rushes out of the synagogue as he begins to see Shaya as sacrilegious. He is rude to Shaya and Flora at home, causing Flora to worry that her father has discovered Shaya's studying to become a doctor. Asriel learns Shaya has not been to Souvalk Synagogue in weeks and begins to shadow Shaya who he no longer sees as Flora's bridegroom or a prodigy but as a sneaking atheist. He watches Shaya and his former teacher in ungodly pursuits and follows them to the "evil" library. When Shaya and the teacher enter a Christian restaurant, Asriel follows them and accuses them of eating pork before leaving angrily. Asriel returns home and yells at Flora for playing the piano. He threatens to kill Flora and Shaya is Shaya ever enters his home again, forbidding Flora to marry Shaya. Flora insists that she cannot live without Shaya and sneaks out of the house as Asriel continues his rant. When Asriel realizes that Flora has left, he searches the city for her only to return home to find her in her bedroom. When Flora admits that she has married Shaya in a courthouse, Asriel is upset that they married like Gentiles, but he realizes that it can be fixed by a Jewish ceremony which will be held the next day. Asriel believes that America ruined Shaya. Asriel tells Tamara that he is alone and ruined. He wants to marry Tamara, give Tamara half of his property, sell the rest, and live out the rest of his days in the Holy Land with Tamara.

Rouvke Arbel appears in A Providential Match

His townspeople in Kropovetz still call him Rouvke Arbel. Arbel, or sleeve, is a reference to his job, but that was four years ago, and Rouvke is greatly changed. Although his face is still the same, his mother recently saw a picture of him and believed him to be a Gentile. He pays his bills promptly and is punctual. When he moves to America, Rouvke changes his name to Robert Friedman, and he is proud and arrogant. The feminine aspect of Rouvke's life is missing until recently. In Kropovetz, he works for Peretz and is infatuated with Peretz's only daughter, Hanele. Rouvke is sad when Feive, the matchmaker, arrives to negotiate Hanele's marriage; however, the negotiations are called off and many suitors are dismissed until the year Rouvke's name appears in the military roll call and he moves to America. In America, Rouvke is a peddler for his first four years, but the memory of Hanele plagues his heart at times. Occasionally, Rouvke asks his mother for minute details about Hanele. Rouvke peddles but does not interact with females as the other peddlers do. He tries to avoid the uncomfortable situation of being introduced to ladies at other peddlers' houses.

By the time Rouvke reaches twenty-five years old, he has over three thousand dollars in the bank and his heart and eyes wander to women, dwelling on the ladies he is introduced to. Rouvke enrolls in night school for immigrants and learns how to read and write English. He reminds himself that he is no longer Rouvke but Robert. He hopes to open his own peddlers' supply store. He worries that ladies only sneer at men who are unable to read the newspaper, but he is pained by others' ability to learn English quicker as well as the jokes that are made at his expense in front of young ladies. Rouvke begins inquiring for details about how marriages are negotiated and fantasizes about his



own future marriage. Rouvke encounters Feive at the "Sons of Kropovetz" synagogue and, asking about his old master, learns that Peretz is in reduced circumstances. Although Rouvke pities Peretz, he also feels triumphant since he is now richer than his former master. Feive also tells Rouvke that Hanele is still unmarried and beautiful. Although Rouvke daydreams about marrying Hanele, he realizes that the idea is preposterous. Feive visits Rouvke and suggests that he marries Hanele, offering to negotiate the match. Although Rouvke rejects this idea since he would be a fool to marry Hanele now that she is so poor, he has now been changed from a bochor into a choson, a young man placed on the matrimonial market.

As Rouvke examines American girls, Hanele keeps entering his imagination, and he is enchanted with the idea of marrying her. Although Feive receives no positive hint as he continues broaching the subject, he writes to Peretz in Rouvke's favor. Rouvke overhears Mrs. Kohen's outraged conversation with Feive about the absurdity of Rouvke marrying Hanele. Insulted, Rouvke knocks and asks Feive if he truly believes Peretz will have him as a son-in-law, determined to marry Hanele now if only to spite Mrs. Kohen. Feive negotiates the marriage, and Rouvke receives many congratulations from the other peddlers. Rouvke meets Hanele at the nauseating seaport. When Hanele appears, Rouvke sees that she is more charming and beautiful than before; he feels like Rouvke instead of Robert. He goes to meet Hanele when her name is called, but Rouvke is shocked to see her being escorted by a young man in the overcoat of a Russian collegian. Hanele introduces Gospodin Levinsky, her choson. Rouvke threatens to call the police as Feive threatens to tell Peretz what Hanele has done. Rouvke grabs Gospodin and yells for the police, but a hotel runner saves Hanele and Gospodin Levinsky as the other peddlers laugh at Rouvke.

Fanny appears in Yekl

Fanny loves Jake and is jealous when he dances with Mamie at Joe's dancing school. She changes jobs when she learns that Jake is married and tells Gitl about Jake's relationship with Mamie.

Mamie appears in Yekl

Mamie loves Jake and dances with him at Joe's dancing school, making Fanny jealous. She threatens to tell Gitl about his gallivanting before his wife joined him in America. Mamie is very jealous of Fanny and Gitl, but she agrees to send Jake to Philadelphia while she arranges his divorce. She rides to the mayor's office to marry Jake after his divorce is legally obtained.

Gitl appears in Yekl

Gitl is Jake's wife who joins him in America after three years of separation. She disgusts Jake with her un-American appearance. She is jealous of Mamie when Jake introduces the two women. Gitl learns of Jake's relationship with Mamie from Fanny. Jake



abandons and divorces Gitl. After her divorce, Gitl cries though she is truly happy because she plans to marry Mr. Bernstein and open a grocery store together.

Mrs. Kavarsky appears in Yekl

Mrs. Kavarsky is Jake's landlady. She loans Jake her prayer book when he cannot remember his prayers by heart. Mrs. Kavarsky serves as Gitl's confidant when Gitl suspects that Jake is cheating on her. She arranges Gitl's hair in the American style and chides Jake for the way he treats his wife. Mrs. Kavarsky comforts Gitl after the divorce.

Mr. Bernstein appears in Yekl

Mr. Bernstein is an educated man who works at the cloak shop with Jake. After Gitl and Yossele arrive in America, he boards with Jake and his family. Mr. Bernstein plans to marry Gitl and take care of Yossele after she divorces Jake. He plans to open a grocery store with Gitl.

Flora appears in The Imported Bridegroom

Flora is Asriel's daughter who is determined to marry a doctor. At first she disdains Shaya, but then Flora comes to love the prodigy. She convinces him to secretly study to become a doctor. When Asriel finds out about this secret, he forbids Flora to see Shaya. Flora elopes with Shaya, but she feels excluded from his future when he seems more interested in his books than his new wife.

Shaya appears in The Imported Bridegroom

Shaya is a prodigy in Pravly, and negotiations are underway for his marriage to Reb Lippe's youngest daughter when Asriel arrives, outbids Reb Lippe and takes Shaya to America to marry Flora. Shaya loves knowledge and Flora, so he agrees to study to become a doctor. When Asriel forbids the match, Shaya and Flora elope. Shaya disappoints Flora when she realizes that he loves knowledge more than he loves her.

Gospodin Levinsky appears in A Providential Match

Gospodin Levinsky is the Russian student that Hanele falls in love with on her journey to America. He offers to repay Rouvke for the marriage fees.



Hanele appears in A Providential Match

Hanele is Peretz's daughter who agrees to go to America and marry Rouvke; however, she falls in love with Gospodin Levinsky on her journey and decides to marry him instead.

Feive appears in A Providential Match

Feive is a matchmaker from Kropovetz who Rouvke again encounters at the "Sons of Kropovetz" synagogue in New York City. Feive negotiates the marriage between Rouvke and Hanele.

Heyman appears in A Sweatshop Romance

Heyman courts Beile but is too scared to propose to her. He is embarrassed about Beile and David's altercation with the Lipmans'. It takes him two weeks to summon the courage to visit Beile, only to hear her and David's engagement party going on inside of her house.

Beile appears in A Sweatshop Romance

Beile is courted by Heyman but thinks he is too stingy to propose. After Mrs. Lipman treats her like a servant, Beile quits the Lipmans' shop at David's encouragement. She is angry that Heyman does not stand up for her, but those feelings quickly subside as David begins to court her. Beile and David get engaged.

David appears in A Sweatshop Romance

David is mesmerized by Beile and enjoys her singing at work. He encourages her to quit the Lipmans' shop when Mrs. Lipman treats her poorly, and he helps Beile find a new job. After courting Beile for only ten days, David proposes.

Tatyana appears in Circumstances

Tatyana is Boris' wife. At first, she does not want to keep a boarder because she wants to have Boris to herself. When they do take a boarder, Tatyana falls in love with Dalsky and leaves her husband.

Boris appears in Circumstances

Boris studies to become a lawyer in Russia but cannot because he is a Jew. He immigrates to America where he works in a button factory and loses his intellectual



appearance. Boris suggests taking a boarder for the extra income. When Tatyana begins to fight with Boris more frequently, he suspects that she is in love with Dalsky. He mourns when Tatyana leaves him.

Dalsky appears in Circumstances

Dalsky is a student who boards with Tatyana and Boris. When he begins to suspect that Tatyana is interested in him, Dalsky moves out of their home.

Nathan appears in A Ghetto Wedding

Nathan peddles for extra money so that he can marry Goldy, his beloved, quicker. He agrees with Goldy's demands for a proper wedding though it is not important to him. Their financial problems do not matter to Nathan because he loves Goldy so much.

Goldy appears in A Ghetto Wedding

Goldy loves Nathan and wants to marry him, but she insists upon a property wedding instead of a "slipshod wedding." She suggests having a proper wedding and depending upon gifts from the guests to furnish their home. When she is disappointed in her gift expectations, Goldy is ashamed for her desire to spend their money on the wedding instead of furniture. As a form of self-chastisement, Goldy insists upon walking home from the wedding instead of borrowing money to hire a carriage. Their financial problems do not matter to Goldy because she loves Nathan so much.



Objects/Places

New York City appears in All

All of the stories occur in New York City.

Boston Yiddish appears in Yekl

Boston Yiddish is the Americanized form of Yiddish that Jake speaks.

Ticket appears in Yekl

Jake plans to use his pay to buy a passage ticket to New York for Gitl and Yossele.

Suffolk Street appears in Yekl

Jake walks down Suffolk Street on his way to Joe's dance school.

Jake's Home appears in Yekl

Jake rents rooms from Mrs. Kavarsky. This is where he lives with Gitl and Yossele. Mr. Bernstein boards with Jake. Jake often leaves his home to meet up with Mamie.

Mott Street appears in The Imported Bridegroom

Asriel and Flora live on Mott Street.

Pravly appears in The Imported Bridegroom

Pravly is Asriel's hometown in the old country where he visits. Asriel bids against Reb Lippe for Shaya as a son-in-law and brings Shaya from Pravly to America to marry Flora.

Talmud appears in The Imported Bridegroom

Shaya studies the Talmud, the holy book of Judaism, and is very familiar with its contents.



Astor Library appears in The Imported Bridegroom

Shaya is amazed with the vast number of Gentile books in Astor Library. He often secretly studies at the library in his quest to become a doctor. Asriel follows Shaya to Astor Library and becomes convinced that Shaya is an atheist.

Kropovetz appears in A Providential Match

Rouvke is from Kropovetz. Feive and Hanele are also initially from Kropovetz, but all three move to America.

Choson appears in A Providential Match

A choson is a young man on the matrimonial market. Rouvke becomes a choson when he decides that it is time to get married. He wants to become Hanele's choson, but she chooses Gospodin Levinsky instead.

Essex Street appears in A Sweatshop Romance

The Lipmans' tailoring shop is located on Essex Street.

Division Street appears in A Sweatshop Romance

Beile lives on Division Street, and the engagement party for Beile and David is held at her home.

Lipmans' Shop appears in A Sweatshop Romance

Heyman, Beile and David work at the Lipmans' tailoring shop, but Beile and David quit after Mrs. Lipman deprecatingly commands Beile to go to the store for soda.

Madison Street appears in Circumstances

Tatyana and Boris live on Madison Street.

University of St. Vladimir appears in Circumstances

Boris studies to be a lawyer at the University of St. Vladimir.



Letter appears in Circumstances

Tatyana writes a letter to Boris, admitting that she is in love with Dalsky.

Silberman's Shop appears in Circumstances

Tatyana works at Silberman's shop after leaving Boris. She finds the shop horrific and even considers going back to Boris to avoid it, but the memory of Dalsky prevents her.

Tatyana and Boris' Home appears in Circumstances

Tatyana and Boris live on Madison Street where they take Dalsky in as a boarder. After Tatyana leaves Boris, Boris sells their furniture and mourns in their room.

Grand Street appears in A Ghetto Wedding

Nathan peddles on Grand Street.

Ghetto appears in A Ghetto Wedding

Nathan and Goldy live in the ghetto and walk through a particularly bad neighborhood on their way home from their wedding.

Wedding appears in A Ghetto Wedding

Goldy insists upon having a proper wedding instead of a slipshod wedding. She believes they will receive nice furniture as gifts from her guests, but she is disappointed and blames herself for the waste.

Cherry Street appears in A Ghetto Wedding

Nathan pays three months advance rent for three rooms in a tenement house on Cherry Street in preparation for his and Goldy's wedding.

Themes

Immigration and Religion

The most important theme that unites these stories is the theme of immigration, specifically Jewish immigrants relocating to America. Jake mentions his Christian friend in Boston before expostulating on boxing, differentiating between Christians and Jews. Jake plans to use his pay to place a deposit on tickets to New York, a clear allusion to immigration. Jake's real name is Yekl, but he changed his name three years ago when he first stepped on American soil and began to desecrate the Sabbath; this shows the connection between immigration and forgetting religion. Jake never fully abandons the idea of bringing his wife and son to New York through pricing tickets. Jake realizes that it is impossible to import his family and continue his present life style.

Jake plans to say his prayers, but he realizes that he cannot remember his prayers by heart and borrows his landlady's prayer book. Jake waits at the Immigration Bureau on Ellis Island, but when he finally sees Gitl, his wife, he is ashamed of her uncouth and un-American appearance. Gitl is awed by the new Jake but misses her husband, Yekl. Gitl is appalled to ride in a carriage on the Sabbath, but Jake insists, chiding her for using a Russian word. Gitl practices her American Yiddish because Jake yells at her when she speaks Russian. Jake calls his son "Little Joey" instead of Yossele. Mrs. Kavarsky blames Gitl's kerchief and wig for Jake's infidelity since they are un-American, and she arranges Gitl's hair in a more fashionably American style. The rabbi tries vainly to dissuade Jake and Gitl from completing their divorce. Jake sees Gitl's American appearance as defiance.

Flora is the only girl in her circle who reads Dickens, Scott and Thackeray in addition to "Family Story Paper" and "Fireside Companion." Flora is eager to become the wife of a doctor since she craves a more refined atmosphere, but Asriel, her father, insists that she marry a God-fearing businessman. Asriel yells at Flora for reading "Gentile nastiness." Asriel announces that he intends to take a trip to Pravly, his birthplace, after Passover. When Tamara asks if Asriel will take Flora with him, he answers in the negative since he worries that his townspeople will mock Flora's gentile mannerisms. After retiring, Asriel realizes that he is very old and very wicked. He grows his side locks and begins reading Psalms, growing more pious daily until he begins growing homesick. Asriel's first Sabbath in his native town is memorable.

After being embarrassed at the synagogue, Asriel no longer sees Pravly as poetic; he sees only a medium to fill with the rays of his financial success, and he determines that he will show them all who Asriel Stroon is. He steals Reb Lippe's prodigy, but Asriel makes peace with Reb Lippe before leaving Pravly, claiming that Reb Lippe will get another prodigy but there are none in America. Asriel feels that he is going home as he nears New York. Shaya is charmed by Flora's labored Yiddish, but Flora is set upon marrying a refined, gentlemanly doctor, not a newly landed, non-English speaking, future Orthodox rabbi. Tamara tells Flora that any girl in the old country would be proud



to have Shaya as a husband, but Flora does not want Shaya as a husband because she is American. Flora is frightened by Shaya's collection of Hebrew books. After falling in love with Flora and knowledge, Shaya begins to secretly study to become a doctor. One day as Asriel sits in the synagogue talking to Reb Tzalel, Reb Tzalel admits that he needs to tell Asriel something that has been lying heavy on his heart: Shaya is becoming an atheist and leading others to sin. Asriel follows Shaya; his suspicions are confirmed and he claims that America has ruined Shaya.

His townspeople in Kropovetz still call him Rouvke Arbel, but Rouvke has changed greatly since immigrating to America; his own mother recently saw a picture of him and believed him to be a Gentile. When he moves to America, Rouvke changes his name to Robert Friedman. Rouvke enrolls in night school for immigrants and learns how to read and write English. He reminds himself that he is no longer Rouvke but Robert. He hopes to open his own peddlers' supply store. He worries that ladies only sneer at men who are unable to read the newspaper, but he is pained by others' ability to learn English quicker as well as the jokes that are made at his expense in front of young ladies.

Rouvke fears American girls and determines to marry Hanele, even if only to spite Mrs. Kohen who he overhears objecting to the match. Although Hanele is shocked at the suggestion at first, she agrees to move to America and marry Rouvke. Rouvke meets Hanele at the seaport only to find that she fell in love with Gospodin Levinsky on the journey; immigration has already changed Hanele from a dutiful daughter into a rebel, marrying a Russian student. In "A Sweatshop Romance," Leizer and Zlate Lipman, Meyer, Beile, Heyman and David are all immigrants. Specifically, Reb and Basse Avrom are the most recent immigrants, and Zlate gives her guests a tour of her home before Leizer begins telling Reb Avrom about the secrets of the American style of tailoring. As David and Beile don their coats after quitting the Lipmans' shop, Basse Avrom notices that Beile looks like a lady while Zlate appears more like a servant.

Tatyana reads a review of a translation of Guy de Maupassant's stories in "Russian Thought." Tatyana meets Boris not long after graduating from the female gymnasium, while he is a law student, and they marry shortly after he graduates. Because the government is bent on keeping Jews out of the forensic field, Boris is unable to gain admission to the bar, and he and Tatyana relocate to New York. Tatyana loves Boris too much to notice that his shabby work clothes diminish his intellectual appearance. Boris concocts a scheme so that he will not have to continue at the button factory, but Tatyana is uninterested. Boris chides her for not making life a burden for him until he gets a better position. Boris laments that everyone in America goes to college, but he has a plan which depends largely on Tatyana. Since rent is their biggest expense, they should keep a boarder. Nathan and Goldy's poverty results from their status as immigrants. Nathan's side job as a peddler is common for immigrants wanting to earn a little extra money. The fact that they do not receive the nice wedding gifts that Goldy anticipates results from their status as immigrants since the people they know are also immigrants and cannot afford the extravagant gifts that Goldy expected.



Love and Marriage

Another important theme that recurs throughout these stories is the presence of romantic love, oftentimes in conjunction with marriage. Fanny asks Jake if he is going to Joe's dance class tonight. Later, as Jake dances with Mamie, Miss Jacobs and Fanny argue about who is jealous. Jake asks Fanny to dance when he sees her sitting sadly by herself. They argue because Fanny is jealous of Mamie, but Fanny dances with Jake. Fanny sits beside Mamie, and Jake joins the two rivals. Jake never fully abandons the idea of bringing his wife and son to New York. Jake is tender in his thoughts toward his wife though he does not think of his New York girlfriends tenderly.

When he finally sees Gitl, his wife, he is ashamed of her uncouth and un-American appearance. Jake grows accustomed to being seen as a married man. Fanny is more embarrassed than Jake and finds a different job. Mamie visits Jake's house, and Jake introduces Mamie to Gitl. Mamie threatens to tell Gitl about Jake's life before Gitl's arrival. Gitl is scared and jealous of Mamie since she is unable to understand Mamie and Jake's conversation. Jake is miserable after Mamie's visit. Mr. Bernstein assures Gitl that Jake loves her and has been much happier since she arrived. Mrs. Kavarsky claims that Jake will be sent to prison if he cheats on his wife. Mamie is in bed because she is upset about meeting Gitl. The more Jake thinks about Mamie, the more irritable he grows with Gitl.

One day, Fanny visits Gitl and Gitl worries that Jake has eloped with Mamie. Fanny tells Gitl about Jake's clandestine meetings with Mamie, and Gitl cries. After Gitl accuses Jake of cheating on her, Jake decides to leave Gitl and wonders if Mamie will run away with him. When he approaches Mamie, Jake admits that he did not realize how much he cared for her until Gitl came to America. He promises to divorce Gitl and marry Mamie since she is the only one he cares for. Mamie offers to pay for and arrange the divorce. After he is divorced, Jake and Mamie will marry and open a dance school. Jake agrees though his heart hurts to part with his son. Mamie admits that Joe has been bothering her to marry him, but Mamie loves Jake. In January, Jake and Gitl come face to face for the first time since his flight and the last time as husband and wife. The rabbi tries to dissuade them, but the divorce proceedings are held. The rabbi informs Gitl that she must wait ninety-one days to remarry though Jake may remarry immediately. Although she cries, Gitl is actually happy since Mr. Bernstein plans to marry her, care for Yossele and open a grocery store. Jake dreads marrying Mamie and considers returning to Gitl to impose his authority as Yossele's father and demand that Gitl mind her household duties because he feels that Gitl and his neighbors are mocking him.

Because Flora is twenty years old, the matchmaker calls in "The Imported Bridegroom." Flora is eager to become the wife of a doctor since she craves a more refined atmosphere, but Asriel, her father, insists that she marry a God-fearing businessman. Rabbi Lippe flaunts Shaya, the nineteen-year-old prodigy, that he is in negotiations to marry his youngest daughter. To brag of his wealth, Asriel bids against Reb Lippe for the right to call Shaya "son-in-law," and Asriel wins which means Shaya will become Flora's husband. Flora is amazed and horrified when her father introduces Shaya because she



is set upon marrying a refined, gentlemanly doctor, not a newly landed, non-English speaking, future Orthodox rabbi. Flora worries what her friends would think of her betrothed. Flora becomes interested in Shaya's debate with the six Talmudists.

When Shaya wins the debate and smiles triumphantly at Flora, she drops her gaze and blushes. However, when Tamara asks Flora whether she should thank God for such a treasure as a sweetheart, Flora refuses to accept Shaya as her sweetheart. Asriel refuses to send Shaya away even if Flora will not agree to the match because he is fond of the boy. Shaya convinces Flora to help him with his English since he is distraught that most people cannot understand him. As she leans over the book, Shaya kisses her cheek, causing both young people's hearts to flutter. Flora tells him never to do that again, but Shaya laments that it bothers him when she says such things to him. After a passionate kiss, Shaya asks if Flora will agree to be his sweetheart now. Flora will only agree to be Shaya's sweetheart if he will secretly study to become a doctor. Since Shaya agrees, Asriel is informed that Flora has agreed to be Shaya's sweetheart, and they celebrate their betrothal. After Asriel learns that Shaya is studying to be a doctor, he forbids Flora to see Shaya again, but Flora sneaks away and elopes with Shaya. Asriel, resigned, agrees to hold a Jewish ceremony the next day. When Flora tells Shaya the good news, he seems more interested in the books that his Christian American friends are reading, and Flora becomes jealous of Shaya's love for books and begins to feel excluded from his future.

The feminine aspect of Rouvke's life is missing until recently. In Kropovetz, he works for Peretz and is infatuated with Peretz's only daughter, Hanele. Rouvke is sad when Feive, the matchmaker, arrives to negotiate Hanele's marriage. However, the negotiations are called off and many suitors are dismissed until the year Rouvke's name appears in the military roll call and he moves to America. The memory of Hanele plagues Rouvke in America, and he does not interact with females like the other peddlers, trying to avoid such uncomfortable encounters as being introduced to young ladies. By the time Rouvke reaches twenty-five years old, his heart and eyes begin to wander to women, dwelling on the ladies he is introduced to. Rouvke begins inquiring for details about how marriages are negotiated and fanaticizes about his own future marriage.

At the "Sons of Kropovetz" synagogue, Rouvke encounters Feive who negotiates his marriage with Hanele, whose father is now poor, since Rouvke is frightened of American girls. Rouvke has now been changed from a bochor into a choson, a young man placed on the matrimonial market. When Hanele arrives in America, Rouvke is shocked to see her being escorted by a young man in the overcoat of a Russian collegian who Hanele introduces Gospodin Levinsky, her choson. Hanele and Gospodin met in steerage and fell in love during their journey. In "A Sweatshop Romance," David thinks Beile looks sweet. As Beile looks at David, she thinks about her relationship with Heyman. Heyman has not even hinted at marriage, and Beile's mother wants Beile to demand a promise from Heyman or sue him for breach of promise, but Beile refuses. According to Meyer's wife, Beile loves Heyman, but Beile is disappointed because she feels love should be a much sweeter thing. Beile contemplates whether Heyman is too stingy to support a wife. Heyman is actually not delayed from proposing to Beile due to pecuniary concerns; he



simply lacks the strength to discuss the matter with her, constantly telling himself that he will settle it the next day.

After David and Beile quit the Lipmans' shop, Heyman is too frightened to visit Beile that day, and it takes two weeks for him to summon the courage to appear at her home. Inside, Heyman can hear an engagement party for David and Beile taking place, so he retreats hastily. After the fiasco, Beile can only think of Heyman as a cowering figure during the fight, and she is sure she hates him. Beile considers allowing her mother to talk to the lawyer about a breach of promise, but David's pluckier image comes to her mind. David finds work for Beile and visits her everyday, often treating her to candy and coffee, something Heyman never did. David proposes after ten days, and the engagement party is held the next night.

Tatyana meets Boris not long after graduating from the female gymnasium, while he is a law student, and they marry shortly after he graduates. Tatyana forbids Boris from reading until after dinner because she wants to spend time with him. Tatyana loves Boris too much to notice that his shabby work clothes diminish his intellectual appearance. Tatyana objects to acquiring a boarder because she wants to be alone with Boris without a boarder because she wants no one else in the world. Boris and Tatyana begin to argue very often, and she realizes that she is a married woman in love with another man, her boarder, Dalsky. Dalsky decides to leave the Luries' household because he notices the fights between the couple and thinks that Tatyana may be interested in him. He considers the adventure of reciprocating Tatyana's feelings but announces his intent to move the next day. Tatyana is lonely after Dalsky leaves.

After a particularly unpleasant altercation with Boris, Tatyana admits to her husband that she is in love with Dalsky. Tatyana and Boris separate. Tatyana hates her job so much that she is tempted to return to Boris and beg forgiveness, but the image of Dalsky prevents it. The emptiness of their rooms torment Boris, and hit with the impact of what has happened, Boris cries, calling Tatyana's name over and over. Nathan and Goldy's wedding is perpetually delayed due to their extreme poverty. After financial matters become more stable from Nathan's peddling, Goldy suggests they have a nice wedding and rely on getting furniture as gifts instead of worrying about buying furniture, and Nathan agrees. Goldy is disappointed in her expectations. After her wedding, Goldy feels different and blames herself for the waste of a nice wedding and the fact that now they do not have furniture. Nathan comforts Goldy, and they celebrate their marriage. As Nathan and Goldy walk through the ghetto, a gang of loafers mock them, but Goldy restrains Nathan from confronting the gang. All of the negative events fade into the background as Nathan and Goldy realize that they are finally married and are overwhelmed with happiness.

Social Status and Financial Concerns

One recurring theme throughout the six stories is social status, especially how it is impacted by financial affluence or poverty. Jake's boss is able to obtain work that no other boss could acquire. Jake has not seen his parents in three years because he



cannot afford to return to his hometown. Jake prices tickets frequently, but it takes three years for him to be able to afford them. When Gitl asks about Mamie's finery, Jake explains that Mamie is probably going to a ball. When Jake asks Mamie to run away with him, Mamie checks her accounts and reveals that she has a lot of money set aside. Mamie agrees to pay for and arrange Jake's divorce. After he is divorced, Jake and Mamie will marry and open a dance school. Although she cries, Gitl is actually happy since Mr. Bernstein plans to marry her, care for Yossele and open a grocery store together.

In "The Imported Bridegroom," Asriel is rich. Flora is eager to become the wife of a doctor since she craves a more refined atmosphere. When Asriel goes to Pravly, he is willing to pay any amount to have the honor of reading the third section of the Pentateuch. After Reb Lippe offends him, he sees Pravly only as a medium to fill with the rays of his financial success, and he determines that he will show them all who Asriel Stroon is. An auction is held with Shaya, the prodigy, as the prize, and Asriel wins. Flora will only agree to be Shaya's sweetheart if he agrees to study to become a doctor. After Flora elopes with Shaya despite her father's disapprobation, Asriel wants to marry Tamara, give Tamara half of his property, sell the rest, and live out the rest of his days in the Holy Land with Tamara. Flora does not see Shaya reading with the other men in the teacher's apartment as the elegant world of doctors, and she is jealous of Shaya's love for books and begins to feel excluded from his future.

Rouvke pays his bills promptly and is punctual. In Kropovetz, he is infatuated with his employer's daughter, Hanele. Feive earns his learns by being a matchmaker. Rouvke works as a peddler in America and by the time Rouvke reaches twenty-five years old, he has over three thousand dollars in the bank. He plans to open his own peddler's supply store. When Rouvke encounters Feive at the "Sons of Kropovetz" synagogue, he learns that Peretz is in reduced circumstances. Although Rouvke pities Peretz, he also feels triumphant since he is now richer than his former master. He even considers sending money to Peretz out of pity. Rouvke yearns to return to Kropovetz and flaunt his acquired wealth. Initially, Rouvke rejects the idea of a match with Hanele because she is poor now, but then he overhears Mrs. Kohen's outraged conversation with Feive about the absurdity of Rouvke marrying Hanele. Insulted, Rouvke knocks and asks Feive if he truly believes Peretz will have him as a son-in-law, determined to marry Hanele now if only to spite Mrs. Kohen. Initially, Peretz is offended at Feive's suggestion but begins to see it as a providential affair. Feive negotiates the marriage, and Rouvke receives many congratulations from the other peddlers.

When Hanele introduces Gospodin Levinsky, Gospodin promises to pay Rouvke back the marriage fees for Hanele. David asks if Lipman is going to raise Beile's wages, and Beile says yes, though David still earns more than she does. The workers are actually paid by piece not weekly. Meyer asks how David makes so much more than the rest of them, and David explains that a day does not consist of twenty-four hours but of twelve coats for him; he only considers it a new day after he has completed twelve coats. Beile contemplates whether Heyman is too stingy to support a wife. Heyman is actually not delayed from proposing to Beile due to pecuniary concerns; he simply lacks the strength to discuss the matter with her. After Zlate's rudeness to Beile, David informs the Avroms



that the Lipmans' carpet was bought on an installment plan and that they have nearly defaulted several times. He also tells the Lipmans to have their wages and arrears ready on Friday as he and Beile leave. David finds work for Beile and visits her everyday, often treating her to candy and coffee, something Heyman never did.

In "Circumstances," even though he has studied to be a lawyer, Boris must work in a pearl-button factory which destroys him. Tatyana loves Boris too much to notice that his shabby work clothes diminish his intellectual appearance. Since rent is their biggest expense, Boris suggests that they keep a boarder, but Tatyana objects, even offering to work herself. After Boris is laid off for two weeks, Tatyana relents. When Tatyana admits to her husband that she is in love with Dalsky, she suggests separating and insists that she will work to support herself. Tatyana works hard at Silberman's shop and is nearly able to become oblivious to her heart pain. Nathan and Goldy do not make much money, so Nathan peddles for extra money. Their wedding date is perpetually postponed until they can save the necessary funds. Although Nathan wants to have a modest wedding, Goldy objects to a slipshod wedding and cries that Nathan wants to make her a figure of ridicule. Nathan agrees to have a nice wedding, but their wedding keeps getting postponed because of financial hardship.

After Nathan begins peddling, their finances look better and their reduced savings account increases. Goldy wants to accumulate just enough for a slipshod wedding and an establishment. Goldy suggests they have a nice wedding and rely on getting furniture as gifts instead of worrying about buying furniture. Goldy is disappointed with the few gifts that arrive as well as the few guests that attend their wedding. After the ceremony, Goldy feels different and blames herself for the waste of a nice wedding and the fact that now they do not have furniture. Nathan wants to borrow a few dollars from a friend so that they can take a carriage home as befits a newly married couple; however, Goldy insists upon walking as a form of self-chastisement for her extravagance.

Style

Point of View

In "Yekl," the point of view is third person and omniscient, as well as reliable. This is proven by the fact that the narrator knows the thoughts and actions of all the characters. This allows the reader to anticipate the characters' actions and know what causes them. There is a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue. In "The Imported Bridegroom," the point of view is third person, omniscient, and reliable. This is proven by the fact that the narrator can convey all of the characters' thoughts as well as actions. This is important because it permits readers to predict the characters' actions and reactions while knowing the reasoning behind it. This story contains more exposition but also a fair amount of dialogue.

In "A Providential Match," the point of view is third person and omniscient, as well as reliable. This is proven by the fact that the narrator reveals the thoughts and actions of each character; this is important since it makes it possible for the reader to predict the actions of the characters in the story. The story is written mostly using exposition with a small scattering of dialogue.

In "A Sweatshop Romance," the point of view is third person, omniscient, and reliable. This is proven through the narrator's knowledge of the characters' thoughts as well as their actions. It is important because it allows readers to understand the reasons behind characters' actions. There is a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue in this story. In "Circumstances," the point of view is third person and omniscient, as well as reliable. This is proven by the fact that the narrator knows the thoughts and actions of all the characters. This allows the reader to anticipate the characters' actions and know what causes them. There is a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue. In "A Ghetto Wedding," the point of view is third person and omniscient, as well as reliable. This is proven by the fact that the narrator reveals the thoughts and actions of each character; this is important since it makes it possible for the reader to predict the actions of the characters in the story. The story is written mostly using exposition with a small amount of dialogue throughout.

Setting

"Yekl" is set in the real world. The characters speak English and Americanized Yiddish. The coherency of their English distinguishes the newly arrived immigrants from the more established immigrants as opposed to the Americans by birth. The immigrants are identified and classified according to their language. This story occurs in New York City, primarily in three locations: the shop, the dance school, and Jake and Gitl's home.

"The Imported Bridegroom" occurs in the real world where the characters speak English and different forms of Yiddish which distinguishes their social status and backgrounds.



The story occurs in New York City and Pravyly. Most of the story occurs in Asriel's home on Mott Street. In "A Providential Match," the story is set in the real world where the characters speak different versions of English and Yiddish which distinguishes their social status, specifically the poor immigrant who gains riches in America compared to the rich Jew who becomes poor in Kropovetz.

"A Sweatshop Romance" takes place in the real world where the characters' comprehension of English and Yiddish distinguishes their status as poor immigrants. The story occurs in New York City, specifically in the Lipmans' shop on Essex Street and in Beile's home. "Circumstances" occurs in the real world where Dalsky's comprehension of English identifies him as an educated scholar. The story takes place in New York City in the Luries' home on Madison Street. In "A Ghetto Wedding," the action occurs in the real world of New York City. The poor immigrants are identified by their comprehension of English and Yiddish. Nathan peddles on Grand Street and rents rooms on Cherry Street. The wedding is held in a hall, and Nathan and Goldy live and walk through a ghetto neighborhood on their way home from the wedding.

Language and Meaning

The language used in "Yekl" is casual and informal. The sentences are constructed improperly in the broken dialogue but grammatically correct in the narration. It is easy to read and aids understanding. The language Gitl uses identifies her as an immigrant, and the general language of the story distinguishes immigrants from American-born citizens. The language used in "The Imported Bridegroom" is casual and informal. The sentences are constructed improperly in the broken dialogue but grammatically correct in the narration. It is easy to read and aids understanding. The language clarifies characters' status, specifically Shaya's broken English appalls Flora. The immigrants are characterized by their language. The language used in "A Providential Match" is casual and informal. The sentences are constructed improperly in the broken dialogue but grammatically correct in the narration. It is easy to read and aids understanding. The language used identifies the characters as immigrants, and the general language of the story distinguishes immigrants from American-born citizens.

The language used in "A Sweatshop Romance" is casual, informal and modern. The sentences are constructed clearly and coherently. It is easy to read and aids understanding. The language used identifies the characters as immigrants, and the general language of the story distinguishes immigrants from American-born citizens. The language used in "Circumstances" is casual, informal and modern. The sentences are constructed clearly and coherently, compared to the broken English which signifies characters' social status. It is easy to read and aids understanding. The language used identifies the characters as immigrants, and the general language of the story signifies the social status of the characters. The language used in "A Ghetto Wedding" is casual and informal. The sentences are constructed clearly and coherently. It is easy to read and aids understanding. The language used identifies the characters as immigrants, and the general language of the story distinguishes immigrants from American-born citizens.

Structure

The story "Yekl" consists of ten chapters, approximately ten pages each, which are titled to reflect the action. The entire story is eighty-nine pages long. The story begins with long and descriptive passages which changes to short and vague in the last few chapters. There are no subplots, and the plot focuses on Yekl bringing Gitl to America and divorcing her to marry Mamie. The pace is slow at the beginning but much quicker towards the end of the story. The story is mostly linear with few flashbacks as Yekl recalls his life before immigrating to America. The story is easy to read and engrossing. "The Imported Bridegroom" consists of seventy pages and twelve numbered chapters averaging eight pages each. The story is long and descriptive and paced slow until the last two chapters which are considerably quicker. There are no subplots. The plot of the story centers around Asriel bringing Shaya to America to marry Flora, but Flora convinces Shaya to study to become a doctor. The only flashbacks that occur are when Asriel visits Pravly and recalls his youth. The story is easy to read and engrossing.

"A Providential Match" contains twenty-five pages but is not broken into chapters. It is short and descriptive, quick-paced, easy to read and engrossing. There are no subplots, and flashbacks occur when Rouvke thinks about his home and Hanele. The plot surrounds Rouvke searching for a wife and sending for Hanele from Kropovetz. "A Sweatshop Romance" contains fifteen pages, and there are no chapters. It is short, descriptive, quick-paced, linear, easy to read and engrossing. There are no subplots, and the plot consists of Beile quitting her job, ending her romance with Heyman and marrying David. "Circumstances" contains twenty-one pages and six numbered chapters that average three pages each. It is short, descriptive, quick-paced, easy to read and engrossing. The only flashback occurs at the beginning of the story to provide background information about Boris and Tatyana's marriage. There are no subplots, and the plot of the story focuses on the decision to take a boarder due to financial problems. Tatyana falls in love with the boarder and separates from her husband. "A Ghetto Wedding" contains seventeen pages and no chapters. It is short, descriptive, quick-paced, linear, easy to read and engrossing. There are no subplots, and the plot is planning a wedding amidst extreme poverty.



Quotes

"Jake's answer to the question carried him into a minute exposition of 'right-handers,' 'left-handers,' 'sending to sleep,' 'first blood,' and other commodities of the fistic business. He must have treated the subject rather too scientifically, however, for his female listeners obviously paid more attention to what he did in the course of the boxing match, which he had now and then, by way of illustrations, with the thick air of the room, than to the verbal part of his lecture. Nay, even the performances of his brawny arms and magnificent form did not charm them as much as thought they did. For a display of manly force, when connected- even though in a purely imaginary way- with acts of violence, has little attraction for a 'daughter of the Ghetto.' Much more interest did those arms and form command on their own merits. Nor was his chubby high-colored face neglected. True, there was a suggestion of the bulldog in its make up; but this effect was lost upon the feminine portion of Jake's audience, for his features, illuminated by a pair of eager eyes of a hazel hue, and shaded by a thick crop of dark hair, were, after all, rather pleasing than otherwise. Strongly Semitic naturally, they became still more so each time they were brightened up by his good-natured boyish smile. Indeed, Jake's very nose, which was fleshy and pear-shaped and decidedly not Jewish (although not decidedly anything else), seemed to join the Mosaic faith, and even his shaven upper lip looked penitent, as soon as that smile of his made its appearance." Yekl, chapter 1, page 2-3

"Three years had intervened since he had first set foot on American soil, and the thought of ever having been a Yekl would bring to Jake's lips a smile of patronizing commiseration for his former self. As to his Russian family name, which was Podkovnik, Jake's friends had such rare use for it that by mere negligence it had been left intact." Yekl, chapter 1, page 12

"Who, me? Vy should I be jealous? On my part let them both go to —. You must be jealous. Here, here! See how your eyes are creeping out looking! Here, here!" Miss Jacobs, Yekl, chapter 2, page 21

"The latter alone was hers, and she felt like crying to the image to come back to her and let her be his wife." Yekl, chapter 4, page 36

"May he know evil no better than he knows what he is laughing at." Jake, Yekl, chapter 5, page 47

"The truth must be told, however, that she was now continuing her lamentations by the mere force of inertia, and as if enjoying the very process of the thing. For, indeed, at the bottom of her heart she felt herself far from desolate, being conscious of the existence of a man who was to take care of her and her child, and even relishing the prospect of the new life in store for her. Already on her way from the rabbi's house, while her soul was full of Jake and the Polish girl, there had fluttered through her imagination a picture of the grocery business which she and Bernstein were to start with the money paid to her by Jake." Yekl, chapter 10, pages 88-89



"What if he should now dash into Gitl's apartments and, declaring his authority as husband, father, and lord of the house, fiercely eject the strangers, take Yosele in his arms, and sternly command Gitl to mind her household duties? But the distance between him and the mayor's office was dwindling fast. Each time the car came to a halt he wished the pause could be prolonged indefinitely; and when it resumed its progress, the violent lurch it gave was accompanied by a corresponding sensation in his heart." Yekl, chapter 10, page 89

"Flora pictured a clean-shaven, high-hatted, spectacled gentleman jumping out of a buggy, and the image became a fixture in her mind. 'I won't marry anybody except a doctor,' she would declare, with conscious avoidance of bad grammar, as it behooved a doctor's wife." The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 1, page 94

"What for? That she might make fun of our ways there, or that the pious people should point their fingers at her and call her Gentile girl, hey? She will stay with you and collect rent. I did not have her in Pravly, and I want to be there as I used to. I feel like taking a peep at the graves of my folks. It is pulling me by the heart, Tamara." Asriel, The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 1, page 97

"With the townspeople of his time Asriel's experience was somewhat different from what he felt in the case of inanimate Pravly. As he confronted them some faces lighted up with their identity at once; and there were even some younger people in whom he instantly recognized the transcribed images of their deceased parents. But many a countenance was slow to catch the reflection of the past which shone out of his eyes; and in a few instances it was not until the name was revealed to Asriel that the retrospective likeness would begin to struggle through the unfamiliar features before him." The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 3, pages 103-104

"I'll show them who they are and who Asriel is." Asriel, The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 4, page 111

"She will have to marry him, and that settles it, and don't you disturb my joy. It's for her good as well as for mine." Asriel, The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 5, page 115

"American is a fine country, is it not? But it can't hold a candle to Flora. Wait till you see her. You just try to be a good boy; stick to your Talmud, and don't give a peper for anything else, and all God has given me shall be yours. I have no son to say Kaddish for my soul when I am dead. Will you be my Kaddish, Shaya? Will you observe the anniversary of my death?...Will you? May you live long for it. In palaces will I house you, like the eye in my head will I cherish you. I am only a boor, but she is my daughter, my only child, and my whole life in this world." Asriel, The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 6, pages 119-120

"In the old country a girl like you would be glad to marry such a child of the Law. It is only here that we are sinners and girls marry none but worldly men. May every daughter of Israel be blessed with such a match." Tamara, The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 6, pages 124-125



"[Flora] had an impulse to withdraw her face, but felt benumbed. He went on patting her, until, meeting with no resistance, his lips touched her cheek, in a gingerly kiss. Both lowered their eyes. They were silent, but their hearts, each conscious of the other's beatings, throbbed wildly." The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 8, page 138

"I may as well tell you what lies like a heavy stone on my heart. Your Shaya is going to the bad. He is an appikoros." Reb Tzalel, The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 9, page 147

"Why should I? This is not your house. It is God's dwelling. Here I am richer than you. I only wanted to say that it is not you I pity. You have been a boor, and that's what you are and will be. But the boy was about to become a great man in Israel, and you have brought him over here for bedeviled America to turn him into an appikoros. Woe! Woe! Woe!" Reb Tzalel, The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 9, page 148

"A terrific pang smote Asriel's heart. It was as if he saw his temple, the embodiment of many years of labor, the object of his fondest cares, just completed and ready to be dedicated, suddenly enveloped in flames. The prodigy, his prodigy, his Kaddish, his glory in this and the other world, plunged into the very thick of impurity!" The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 10, page 152

"A nightmare of desolation and jealousy choked her- jealousy of the Scotchman's book, of the Little-Russian shirt, of the empty tea-glasses with the slices of lemon on their bottoms, of the whole excited crowd, and of Shaya's entire future, from which she seemed excluded." The Imported Bridegroom, chapter 12, page 162

"To Hanele, his master's only daughter, Rouvke used to serve tea with more alacrity than to the rest of the family; and when Feive, the matchmaker, made his first appearance and the first suitor was introduced, Rouvke's appetite for sour cream and rye bread somehow disappeared for a few days, while Rouvke himself moved about as if out of gear, and on one occasion caught a slap in the face, because, upon being ordered to fetch a pail of water, he stood staring as if he did understand Yiddish. But this seemed of no consequence, and Rouvke himself could not, for the life of him, explain this sudden disappearance both of his appetite and presence of mind. Indeed, how could he have dared to connect Hanele with it? What could there have been in common between the relish for sour cream of a mere driver, and the pet daughter of Reb Peretz, the distiller, the son of Rabbi Berele, and the first citizen of Kropovetz?" A Providential Match, pages 165-166

"Robert, bear in mind that you are Rouvke no longer; the chances are that in a year or two you may open a peddler's supply-store of your own: now, you know that the owner of a store who cannot read and write is in danger of being robbed by his bookkeeper... Robert, remember those ladies have nothing but sneers for a gentleman who does not know how to read a newspaper." A Providential Match, page 169

"Pooh, nonsense! America makes a new man of every young fellow. There had not been a more miserable wretch than Tevke, the watchman; and yet when he recently



came back from America for a visit, he looked like a prince. Let her go and be a mother of children, as behooves a daughter of Israel. We must trust to God. The match does look like a Providential affair." Reb Peretz, *A Providential Match*, page 181

"Do you begrudge me? Then I am willing to swap wages with you. I'll let you have my five dollars, and I'll take your twelve dollars every week." Beile, *A Providential Match*, page 191

"She loved him. She liked his blooming face, his gentlemanlike mustache, the quaint jerk of his head, as he walked; she was fond of his company; she was sure she was in love with him; her confidant, her fellow country girl and playmate, who had recently married Meyer, the presser, had told her so. But somehow she felt disappointed. She had imagined love to be a much sweeter thing. She had thought that a girl in love admired everything in the object of her affections, and was blind to all his faults. She had heard that love was something like a perpetual blissful fluttering of the heart." *A Sweatshop Romance*, page 194

"I'll tell you were you are-guess... Here, in my heart, and keeping me awake nights, too. Say, Beile, what have I ever done to you to have my rest disturbed by you in that manner?... Fun? Do you want me to cry? I will, gladly, if I only know that you will agree to have an engagement party." David, *A Sweatshop Romance*, page 202

"Boris's shabby working clothes, his few days' growth of beard and general appearance of physical exhaustion vainly combined, as it were, to extinguish the light of culture and intellectuality from his looks; they only succeeded in adding the tinge of martyrdom to them. As to Tatyana, she had got so far habituated to the change that she was only occasionally aware of it. And when she was, it would move her to pity and quicken her love for him. At such moments his poor workaday clothes would appear to her as something akin to the prison garb of the exiled student in Siberia." *Circumstances*, page 206

"I want no strangers to hang around the house all the time; I want to be with you alone, I want nobody, nobody, nobody else in the world!" Tatyana, *Circumstances*, page 210

"Well, was there any ground for making so much ado? We are as much alone as ever, and you are not lonely all day, into the bargain." Boris, *Circumstances*, page 213

"I am your best friend in the world. I have been thinking, and thinking, and have arrived at the conclusion that the best thing for us to do is to part for a time. I do not blame anybody but myself, but I cannot help it. I have no moral right to live with you as long as my mind is constantly occupied with somebody else. I have struggled hard to keep out the thoughts of him, but it is of no avail." Tatyana, *Circumstances*, page 220

"Goldy! What brings you here? You know I hate you to see me peddling." Nathan, *A Ghetto Wedding*, page 227

"I am not the Goldy I used to be. I am a married woman, like mamma, or auntie, or Mrs. Volpiansky. And we have spent every cent we had on this grand wedding, and now we



are left without money for furniture, and there are no guests to send us any, and the supper will be thrown out, and everything is lost, and I am to blame for it all!" Goldy, *A Ghetto Wedding*, pages 236-237

"So happy were they that the gang behind them, and the bare rooms toward which they were directing their steps, and the miserable failure of the wedding, all suddenly appeared too insignificant to engage their attention- paltry matters alien to their new life, remote from the enchanted world in which they now dwelt. The very notion of a relentless void abruptly turned to a beatific sense of their own seclusion, of there being only themselves in the universe, to live and to delight in each other." *A Ghetto Wedding*, page 240



Topics for Discussion

Compare and contrast Yekl's life before and after Gitl and Yossele arrive in New York City.

Compare and contrast Yekl and Gitl's inward and outward reactions to their divorce. How are these ironic?

How does Flora get her wish to marry a doctor at the same time that Asriel obtains his goal of having his daughter marry a prodigy? How is this ironic?

Explain Flora's feeling of exclusion from Shaya's future.

Do either Flora or Asriel truly get their desire in "The Imported Bridegroom?" How obtains their desire the most?

How can Hanele's betrothal to Rouvke be seen as Providential despite the fact that she choose to marry another? How do you think her father will view this change of husbands?

Why does Beile marry David instead of Heyman?

Compare and contrast Boris and Dalsky.

How are "Yekl" and "Circumstances similar? How are they different?

Compare and contrast Goldy's idea of a slipshod wedding versus a respectable wedding. What category does her wedding fall under? How does this affect her future?