



After Mordche moved out of Josef's house, Gołda's mood changed. Josef missed Mordche, too – he lacked his presence in the evenings. He perceived in Gołda's brother as a crutch of sorts, who maintained his life with Gołda in peaceful harmony. He knew that, when Mordche was here, Gołda was more good-humoured, more cheerful and her doleful thoughts, which frequently assailed her in the evenings, cleared up as soon as she saw her brother before her eyes.

When she served food at the table to Josef and Mordche and saw her brother eating with an appetite, she gained a little wellbeing. She forgot the dark thoughts which gave her no peace since leaving the camps. And it was like that every day.

But now, once again, Gołda is gripped by a grief from which she cannot free herself. Not having too much work at home, she has time to think. Since Mordche moved out, she gets done with the housework quickly. She switches on the radio and, in the evening, the television - but none of these programmes afford her any joy. She asks Josef to turn off the TV. She prefers to talk, to get things off her heart - perhaps it will make it easier for her. But it does not become any easier for her. The more Josef speaks to her and begs of her not to sit all day at home on her own, but to go out instead, and devote herself to some sort of spiritual work - let her study music, learn singing and develop the musical talent she possesses - and the more he rains compliments on her, all the more nervous she becomes. She has no faith in his words. [She thinks,] "He wants to talk me around in order to make me feel better".

She says to him, "But I warned you, Josef, that it would be bitter with me, Do you remember?" She suddenly feels great compassion for Josef. How is he to blame if she is nervous and unscrewed from the years in the camps, and cannot find a moment of peace?

"How is it his fault?", Gołda thinks as she looks at him, at his sad, worried face, and into his teary eyes, which gaze upon her with commiseration and pity.

"Alright, alright", Josef says, "If you don't wish to sing, then get a job at some cultural institution. I can easily arrange that for you. Maybe the work as secretary will help you forget all the sorrowful experiences and will give your life new content. Do as I say, Gołda, listen to me".

"Leave me alone with your suggestions, Josef - you're only making it worse for me with what you say."

Josef said nothing. Silence now reigned in the room, where the two of them were sitting. Gołda felt that she should not have hurt Josef. But it was already too late. Her mouth would spout out words she never meant to utter, but they said themselves of their own account. She was not unhappy with Josef, Heaven forbid!

“He’s good to me”, she thought, “but the dark moods that constantly seize me are like an evil entity inside me, pushing me to say things and hurt him, Josef”.

Josef rose and said to her, “Gołda, this is not good. As far as I am concerned, I’ll soon have nothing to lose. Soon, the years I live will be a gift. Well, so I didn’t succeed. If I can’t get you to calm down and feel happy, then that’s too bad. But you, Gołda darling, are still young. If you want to be free of me, please - the earlier the better. I want to tell you something, Gołda, listen”.

*“Shut up, Josef! Shut up and don’t say such things!”* Gołda yelled, not in her own voice, and burst out crying hysterically, falling on his neck and started kissing him as she wept with warm tears. Josef sensed that, after crying her heart out, it became easier for Gołda.

That night, the two of them slept a heavy sleep until late in the morning. On the following day, Josef left late for work.