



To a greater or smaller extent, Josef's life is now without great joy, but also without any conflicts and dramatic clashes. A quiet and peaceful life has been established in his home. With her brother's return, Gołda's mood has become more serene. All three are employed. On Saturdays and Sundays, they see friends who come to visit them. Sometimes, [they attend] a theatrical performance or concert. Gołda's greatest enjoyment is listening to classical music. At home, the radio never ceases playing the best available classical programmes.

At work, Josef does not feel bad. He is living out his old age in a spiritual manner, surrounded by writers and teachers. East Broadway is still a centre of Jewish spiritual atmosphere. He enjoys sitting at the coffee shop next to the *Forverts* building, listening every day to the conversations of the writers eating at the small tables. He often shares his impressions of what he reads in the paper or the books that reach him.

When he is alone at home - when Gołda and her brother go out somewhere together - Josef remains steeped in thought. He takes an account of himself, his life and the storms through which he has lived, and from which he has emerged in one piece. Weariness and sadness then assail him. What now? Whom has he got in his life nowadays? Yes, he has Gołda and he has Mordche.

Both are an inseparable part of him. He now has Gołda, because Mordche is here - and he has Mordche, because he is a part of Gołda. Strange, what life has led to. True, Gołda and Mordche are in fact his wife and brother-in-law, but they are something more than that. They are also like his children, for whom he must provide. The two of them are inseparable from him - bones of his bones and flesh of his flesh. And he ponders their future, perhaps because he is older than them in years.

But what will happen once he, Josef, is no longer here? Sorrow envelops him, and he thinks, "Have I the right to view them as heirs, as offspring, who are required to walk in my path? Will Gołda and Mordche always follow in my paths? Will the sanctities which I bear in my heart also remain sacred for them? Will they ever make a favourable mention of me, once I'm no longer here - or will they perhaps forget me, as if I had never existed?"

Josef is scared by his own thoughts. He quickly runs down to the street, to the little park next to his house, to rid himself of the gloomy thoughts and think of something else.

Walking down the steps, Josef finds a telegram in his letterbox. In his musings and the dismal thoughts that gripped him this evening, Josef did not hear the doorbell ring. He quickly opens the telegram, and it strikes him a blow in the heart. He reads the words informing him that Rywka, his ex-wife, has died in Paris. Josef cannot discern who has sent him the telegram, as the sender's name is unknown to him.

Holding the telegram in his hand, Josef walked about that evening in the dark alleyways around his house. Something wept inside him – “So that’s how it is - Rywka is also no longer here. She has paid for everything, and paid so dearly”.

A feeling of guilt gripped Josef. Indeed, he owned up to a great deal. Tears came to his eyes. He sat on a bench in the little park, sunk in memories of his life and mourning Rywka’s death. As he did so, he felt that he was also mourning his own life, that something had died inside him. He was assailed by thoughts of death, of departing from this world, of going away and disappearing. In the shadows of the trees, he also saw the shadow of death that was looming over him, wishing to envelop him in darkness, in eternal night.

When he came up from the park late at night, Golda recognised in his face that something sorrowful had happened to him. When he told her the news, she burst out in tears. At that late night-time hour, the small dwelling was filled with silent, wordless grief.

