

Chapter Three

There are many advantages and some disadvantages in being born Jewish, but it was to be some time before Abraham Lybgi Hoch was to discover any of the advantages.

Lubji was born in a two room cottage in Ruthenia on the Czech-Romanian border. He was the third of nine children, three boys and six girls. His father - even if it is no longer politically correct to say so - was a peasant who excelled by buying and selling cattle ~~that~~ produced an annual income which would never require the fillingⁱⁿ of a tax form or the assistance of any accountant. His mother who ~~was~~ ^{might} once ~~be~~ ^{thought to} have been beautiful but there was no way of telling was certainly far more intelligent than her husband. Brought up by her uncle a ^{father} ~~father~~ ^{and} ~~her~~ ^{prematurely} ~~she~~ ^{young} would read any book or newspaper she could lay her hands on. Her family had tried of saying that she had married beneath her self.

Luybirmother ~~she~~ made every attempt she could to pass on to her nine children whatever knowledge she ~~possessed~~ but only Lubi showed any interest and sat at her feet as she greeted feed the ~~last~~ child, hearing her every word

But ~~at~~ the age of three ~~years~~ Lubji discovered the first deer and the moment his mother after his ~~he would start~~ ~~first~~ following father into the fields to tend the cattle. One is unable to call two cows. Lubji's first visit to the nearest town was at the age of four when he accompanied his father to Skaturske Doly.

To describe Statute Dole as a town would perhaps be flattering

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for it consisted of a few old houses and only three shops. ^{However} for Lubji it was the largest city on earth and more important it was the place where his father came out the barto.

Three a year ~~his father~~ ^{Papa} would trade his emaciated cows ~~for~~ ^{in return} and any other necessities, food, clothing and once a year a small gift for his wife. ~~that took place~~ Lubji listened intently to the bargaining in several ~~languages~~ and quickly realized the disadvantage his father had by only being able to speak Ruthuanian. By the age of six Lubji had taken over the bargaining as he could already speak ~~five languages~~ a few words in five languages. (P.T.O.)

~~At the age of seven Lubji entered the shop of Benjamin Lugshi and~~ ^{was} ~~impressed by the best of the best~~ ^{the old man} indulged him by answering his countless questions. From that day Lubji would ~~go to the shop~~ ^{go to the ship} once a week - entering only when it was empty - and ask several ^{more} questions. The old man was ~~amazed~~ ^{impressed} by the fact that the child never asked the same question twice. ^{one night when Lubji left the ship} ~~and because~~ ^{the old man} ~~he had never seen anything like it~~ ^{the old man} set in ~~his~~ ^{the} car. He told his mother that night that one day he would own a car. ~~and she~~ ^{she} laughed for the first time in weeks.

The ninth child, his mother swore it would be the last - meant that Lubji could no longer sleep on the mattress occupied by his six sisters. And although they went to bed almost as soon as it was dark Lubji would lay awake for hours thinking about old ~~the~~ ^{his} Lugshi's car, and wondering how he could

possible
(prove his mother wrong.

The next morning he rose with the sun and not needing to dress left ^{the house} quietly. ~~He~~ ran all the way into the town. ~~He~~ and walked around watching the traders set up their stalls, ~~and~~ then listened to the bathering in several tongues, aware that most of ~~the~~ visitors went away with bad deals.

A chicken for a ~~few~~ ^{old} coin, a chest of drawers for 100 ~~shillings~~ ^{shillings}, a cartful of logs for a dozen candles, and a goat ~~and~~ ^{for} a worn oil-cloth.

Lubji ~~was~~ ^{beginning to learn} bathering depended not ^{on the goods} but on your ability to strike a ~~deal~~ ^{bargain}. By the age of seven he ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~taught~~ that those who dealt in colored notes were not only the best dressed, but ~~also~~ ^{also} obtained the best bargain.

But Lubji was painfully aware that he had ~~no~~ ^{no} goods to deal in, so how could he hope to ~~get~~ ^{get} started.

As he lay awake each night wondering how he could solve their problem, he recalled that once a year when the whole family attended — at the synagogue in Skutumpah Dole ~~and~~ ^{his} mother would wear a sparkling brooch — that the old rabbi had left ~~her~~ ^{her} it was never seen again until the following year. — would not take place

~~was not~~ ^{was not} for another six weeks and the impatient Lubji spent the time roaming round the market ^{with the occasional} visit to Mr Luckie's shop to listen to the ~~big~~ ^{great} man bargain.

when the day of — finally came

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~~on the day of~~ - Lubji eyes rectly
 left his mother or to be more accurate the
 piece of jewelry she wore on ~~her~~ ~~black~~ other
 black dress. She was surprised when he ~~at the end of the service~~
 ran clung on to her hand all the way back
 from the synagogue, something he hadn't done
 since the age of three, once they were back
 inside their tiny cottage Lubji sat silently in
 the corner of the room and watched his mother
 as she clipped the tiny piece of jewelry, ~~stare at it~~
 for a moment, before putting it away, ~~he knew,~~
 remains ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~box~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~box~~
 she ~~kept~~ ~~it~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~box~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~box~~
 in a cardboard box ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~box~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~box~~

Lubji ~~sat~~ watched her as she replaced the plank and immediately began to work on ~~her~~ plan. So silent ~~that~~ ^{that he} ~~she~~ ^{became} ~~felt~~ ^{that} ~~her~~ ^{feeling} method inquired if he was not ^{well}. He assured her he was fine and even picked up a book and pretended to ~~start~~ reading it, even turning. He ~~played~~ ^{acted} so that she would not ~~bother him again~~. become anxious again. . . "

That night when they ~~all~~ Ciadall
gone to bed, Lubji remained awake for several
hours until he was sure the whole family
were asleep. With eleven people sleeping in
one room, this was often an occurrence that
lasted only a few minutes. Once he was
certain everyone was asleep, he crept round
the outside of the room until he reached Cui
~~the far end~~ of the bed. His snoring was so
~~loud~~ that Lubji feared that one of Cui
brothers or sisters would surely wake.

Light ~~the~~ held his breath as he ran
his hand along the boards trying to discover
Loud

which one ~~the one that~~ was loose.

As the seconds passed he feared one of the family would wake and he would be discovered, and then suddenly one of the planks shifted slightly. He paused for a moment and lowered his hand into the whole feeling the side of the cardboard box. His finger stretched another few inches until he felt a sharp object. He grabbed it and slowly removed his hand before lowering the plank back in place. His task completed, he remained still until he was sure no one had been disturbed. One of his brothers turned over and three of his sisters groaned. He took advantage of the noise and crawled quickly back around the outside of the room clutching onto his prize.

He remained awake for rest of the night fearing of falling asleep and being discovered.

~~As soon as~~ At the first sign of light, - there were no curtains covering the one window - he left the house ~~content~~ that none of the family would be surprised to find he was not there. And no one ever complained, as it was one less mouth to feed when it came to breakfast, one of the only two meals of the day.

He ran towards the house, not daring to open his clenched fist until he was confident he was out of sight of anyone in the house. Once he had crossed the field and joined the track that led to the town he stopped to catch his breath.

He held up his hand and slowly opened his fingers, unable to hide his disappointment at what he discovered. He stared down at the brass buckle his father had described as useless, only a memento, other he had bartered for it at least a year before. He immediately realized there must be other offers in the box, and although the buckle was hardly a prize worth shouting about, perhaps one of the market dealers would ~~find some use for it~~, be willing to barter for it. When Lubji arrived in the busy market the traders had already set up their stalls. Lubji who had had ~~several offers~~ ^{several offers} moved quickly from stall to stall ~~offering his prize~~ but they showed little interest in the buckle. Lubji didn't even entertain Lubji's shop knowing ~~the answer~~ ^{the answer} would only laugh at him. Once again ~~he~~ ^{he} walked around the stalls, and this time they bartered him for waiting their time. The only offer he managed all morning was six buttons of different shapes and sizes which after hours of haggling he exchanged for ~~a small~~ ^{a small} apple which he devoured on the way home.

Once he had finished eating the apple he began to wonder what would happen if his mother discovered the buckle was missing, but he ~~couldn't~~ ^{still} ~~thought~~ ^{thought} that she looked in the box only once a year.

He knew he would have to return to the cardboard box, it only to discover what other treasures lay in it, aware that before the year was up he would have to return everything in hand

unthinkable

or face ~~the~~ consequence, Like every gambler
he felt confident the odds ~~would always be~~ with him.

Lubi ~~the~~ fell asleep soon after it
was dark, but woke ~~only~~ a few hours later.
Once again he crept round the outside of the
room and waited for only a few moments before
raising the plank ~~and~~ ^{putting} out the cardboard
box. He replaced the plank and crawled ~~slowly~~
over to the door. He opened the door as quietly
as he could, ^{unable to avoid the occasional creak} placed the box on the ground and
took even longer closing the door behind him.

cardboard
Lubi clutched the little ~~stone~~
box to his chest ~~as he~~ walked away from the
cottage. As it was still dark, however, he
he stared down into the box he could
make out very little of its contents.

Lubi ~~the~~ continued on towards the
town but it was another hour before he
could make out all the treasures in the
box. When he reached the outskirts of the
~~slipshod~~ ^{slipshod} ~~he~~ ^{he} sat down on a grass verge and
studied the contents slowly. There were
two more bundles equally writhled, several
buttons, including a large shiny one, ~~and~~
an old coin with the head of the czar
and the biggest prize of all, the watch
that looked even more magnificent in the
morning light.

Lubi began to whistle as
he strolled on towards the town, ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{safety tucked} ~~box~~ ^{under}
one arm. Once he was back among the
hedges, he sat down again and began
to plan how he would go about disposing
of his wares when a man carrying a sack of

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potatoes stepped in front of him and started
down into the box.

what do you want for that he asked,
pointing at the shiny butter. He remembered
that Mr Laski never replied to such a
question, always ~~replying~~ ~~to his~~ ~~question~~
with ~~a question~~ another question.

what do you have to offer.
The farmer loaded his sack onto the
ground.

Six potatoes he ~~said that~~ ^{inches} ~~said~~
Lubji shook his head. Twelve was
all he ~~said~~ replied.

The farmer frowned and considered
the offer. Nine he ~~replied~~ finally offered.

No replied the seven year old finely
twelve is what I said, and twelve is what
I meant. He smiled he sounded like Mr Laski.

The farmer shook his head, picked
up his sack of potatoes and headed towards
the other brides. Lubji wondered if he had
made a bad mistake as he ~~arranged~~ began
to ^{arrange} the objects in the box to their best
advantage.

How much do you want for that
a ~~woman~~ ^{in Hungary} ~~called~~ pointing down at the bread
what do you have to offer the
young bride ~~also~~ demanded.

A bag of grain said the farmer
~~removing~~ a bag from an overladen donkey
and placing it before Lubji.
why do you want it, asked
Lubji remembering another of Mr Laski's
~~techniques~~ techniques.

It's my wife's birthday next week and I
forgot to get her something last year.

and looked ^{back} ^{up} at the farmer and said
I will make this beautiful brooch for the
ring on your finger

But the ring is gold, and your
brooch is only silver

And a bag of grain

You must be ~~hard~~ ^{hard} ^{begin} the farmer
How much do you ^{care} about
your wife. Enough to give her a beautiful
brooch.

The man frowned and after
some thought said - the ring, but not the bag
of grain as well.

Lubzi pretending to consider
the offer. He pulled up the brooch and studied it
in the sunlight. ~~He pulled up the brooch and studied it~~
~~in the sunlight. He pulled up the brooch and studied it~~
~~in the sunlight. He pulled up the brooch and studied it~~
All right then
The man quickly removed the
heavy gold ring from his finger, and exchanged
it for the brooch.

No sooner had the exchange
taken place than the man with the sack
of potatoes returned. ~~His sack was half~~
~~full~~ ^{empty}.

~~He~~ said the Chech
I have changed my mind. I will give
you twelve potatoes for the button
once again. Lubzi shook his head,
I want fifteen now he told him.
But you only wanted twelve an
hour ago

And during that time you have
traded half for ^{what} ^{space}
~~for what space~~ ^{subject} ~~the~~ ^{half}.

The man hesitated.

← Come back in an hour and I will want 10 twenty.

The from returned to the ~~check~~ check's face ~~the~~ but this time he didn't march off.

I accept the deal ~~he~~ he said and placed the bag on the ground and began to remove ~~the~~ potatoes.

Lubji shook his head.

But you just agreed, what can you possibly want this time?

I select the potatoes said the seven year old.

The check shrugged his shoulder and allowed the boy to take his time selecting fifteen potatoes.

Lubji ~~he~~ did not make another deal that day and one the sun ~~became~~ set he ~~sat~~ ^{sat} up his potatoes and started ~~he~~ wandering what he should do with his ~~bag~~ bagging.

Lubji ~~disappeared~~ ^{disappeared} into the forest and selecting a tree that he would recognize ~~the~~ dug a hole and buried his treasure ~~but~~ keeping only few potatoes.

When he walked into the cottage ^{a few minutes later} his mother was setting up the ~~supper~~ ^{supper}, and she might have been a bit more questioning if he had ~~not~~ ^{not} quickly produced the few potatoes.

Screams of delight came from ~~the other children~~ his brothers and sisters. Did you steal them now all his mother asked solemnly.