
The Best of Sholom Aleichem

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I'll bury him, and with both hands feed him dirt! However, there's one loose end—I need a thousand in gold. Therefore, please send. . .'

"There and here . . . and he—Kivke, that is—closed his letter: '*. . . if I don't receive my thousand in gold in eight days, I'll mail your last letter, which you signed in your own hand, 'Reb Nisel Shapiro,' to Valchikov to the Commissioner, and tell him everything from A to Z: how I suffered my stroke, how I rose from the dead, how Simon the leather-puller smuggled me into Brod, and how you've been sending me money to keep me quiet.*'"

"Well how do you like that for regards? As soon as my grandfather, may he rest in peace, finished reading Kivke's sweet message, he felt (don't be offended) dizzy and fainted. The paralysis, may it never happen to us . . . Say, have we stopped? Where are we?"

The conductor called out, "Baranovich! Station Baranovich! and rushed past the window of our car.

As soon as he heard "Baranovich" the Jew from Komink jumped up and wrestled loose his bag, a packsack crammed with odd bulges. Straining, he dragged it behind him toward the door, toppled the bag to the platform, and plunged after it. Jostled and driven by the crush of passengers, he held tight to his bag, sweating, nosing into one face after another and asking, "Baranovich?"

"Baranovich."

The passengers of our compartment, I among them, swarmed after the Kominker, clinging to his sleeve.

"That's not fair!"

"You can't leave us like this!"

"What happened next?"

"Finish the story! We won't let you go until you tell us the end!"

The Kominker struggled to free his sleeve. "What end? It was just the beginning! Take your hands off. You want me to miss my train? Baranovich! This is Station Baranovich! Didn't you hear? Can't you see?"

See? Before we could blink, he was gone.

May Station Baranovich burn to the ground!

Translated by Reuben Bercovitch

The Pot

RABBI! A QUESTION'S what I want to ask you. I don't know if you know me or if you don't know me. Yente's who I am, Yente the dairy-vender. I deal in eggs, see, and also geese, hens, and ducks. I have my steady customers, two-three households—may God give them health and long life, because if they didn't support me, I couldn't buy the bread to make a prayer over. I manage, see—grab a groschen here, grab a groschen there, sometimes here, sometimes there, give a little, take a little—manage, if you can call it that. Of course, if my husband (may he rest in peace) was with me now, in the flesh—*well!* . . . Though to tell the truth, life with him was not what you'd call milk and honey. A wage earner (you should pardon the expression) he wasn't. He'd just sit and study, sit and study, while I slaved away. That's what I'm used to, slaving away—ever since I was a child in my mother's house (may she rest in peace). Batya was her name, see—Batya the candle-fitter. She'd buy up tallow from the butchers and braid the candles. Who'd heard then about gas? Or about lamps with glass tops, that drip all the time? Just last week a glass top of mine burst, and two weeks before that . . .

Now, what were we saying? Yes, you said, *died young* . . . When my Moishe Ben Zion died (may he rest in peace), he was all of twenty-six years old. Huh? Twenty-six? Let's try that again. Nineteen he was at our wedding; eight years it's been since he died; that makes it, altogether, nineteen and eight . . . Seems it's as much as twenty-three! So how did I get twenty-six? Because I forgot about those seven years he was sick. Though as for being sick, he was sick much longer than that. He was always sickly. I mean, he was really *healthy*, except for that cough. It

was the cough, see, that did him in. He was always coughing (may it never happen to you, Rabbi). Not *always*, of course, but at times when the cough got into him he'd start coughing, and once he'd start, he'd cough and cough and cough. The doctors said he had some kind of "spasm"—that is, the kind that if you want to cough, you cough, and if you don't want, you don't. One-two skidoo! Fiddlesticks! Goats should know as much about getting into strange gardens as they know (the doctors, I mean) about what's going on. Take Reb Aaron, the *shochet's* boy, Yockel they call him. He had a toothache, see, and they tried everything, from soup to nuts, but nothing helped. So he went and put garlic in his ear (Yockel, that is). He'd heard that garlic's a cure for toothaches. Well, there he was climbing the walls, and he kept the garlic a secret. So the doctor came and took his pulse. Why his pulse, you idiot? Anyway, if they hadn't carried him off (Yockel, that is) to Yehupetz, do you know where he'd be by now? *There*, with his sister Pearl. Poor thing, her luck left her (God forbid it should happen to you, Rabbi) in childbirth . . .

But what we were saying? Yes, you said, *a widow* . . . I became a widow (may it never happen in this house) when I was still young, a girl you might say, with a small child, and half a house on Pauper's Street, the other half of Lazer the carpenter's place. Do you know it? It's not far from the bathhouse. But you're wondering, aren't you, why only half a house? Actually it's not mine. It belongs to my brother-in-law; Ezriel's his name. You must know him—he's from Vesselikut, some sort of town somewhere, and as for a living, he makes a living from fish, quite a good living, depending on what the river's like. If it's calm outside, fish get caught, and if fish get caught, then the price is cheap. When the wind's out, fish don't get caught, and then the price is high. But things go better if fish get caught. That's what he says, Ezriel I mean. So I asked him, "Where's the logic?" So he said, "The logic is simple logic. If it's calm outside, fish get caught, and if fish get caught, then the price is cheap. When the wind's out, fish don't get caught, and then the price is high. But things go better if fish get caught." So I said to him, "Yes, but where's the *logic*?" So he said, "Simple. If it's calm outside, fish get caught, and if fish get caught, then the price is cheap." "Phooey on you!" I said to him. Go and reason with a clod! . . .

What were we saying, now? Yes, you said, *your own house* . . . Naturally it's better to have a little corner of your own. "What's mine is mine," as they say, "and not anyone else's." So I have my bit of what's

mine, my half a house. I can't complain. But I ask you, why does a poor widow with a one-and-only child need all of half a house? A place to lay my head, that's plenty! Especially when the place needs a roof—it's been years since the house had a decent roof on it. He kept pestering me, my sweet brother-in-law (Ezriel, I mean), that the house needs to be covered by a roof! "It's time," he said, "for it to be covered!" "So cover it," I said. So he said, "Let's cover it!" "Right," I said. "Let's cover it." Cover-cover, cover-shmover—that's how things remained. Because for a roof you need straw, not to mention shingles. Where could I get the money? Well, I rented out two rooms, see. One little room to Chaim Chono, an old man, deaf and already senile. His children pay me five gulden a week for rent, and he eats at their place every second day. That is, one day he eats and one day he fasts. And on the day that he eats, he eats boils and scabs. That's what he says (Chaim Chono, I mean), and maybe it's a lie—maybe old people grumble, you know. No matter how much you give them, it's not enough; wherever you sit them down, the chair's too hard; whatever you do for them, it's the wrong thing. . .

Now, what were we saying? Yes, you said, *boarders* . . . No decent Jew should have to trouble with them! Still, Chaim Chono's deaf, a quiet boarder. As they say, "never seen, never heard." But it was my luck to rent out the other room to Gnessi. She's a flour dealer, see—has a stall for flour. Some piece of goods! But you should have seen her at the start: soft as honey-pie, all sweetness and light, couldn't do enough for me. Butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. What did *she* need, after all? A corner of the oven to heat her pot, that's all; the edge of the board once a week, maybe, to salt her scrap of meat; an inch or two of the table, once in a blue moon, for rolling her strip of noodle dough. "And the children?" I asked her. "Where will you put your children, where? Gnessi, I know you have children, they should be well." So she said, "What are you talking about, Yente darling? Do you know what kind of children they are? *Children*! They're diamonds, not children! Summer, they roam outside all day long. Winter, they climb up on a shelf over the oven, like sweet lambs. You won't hear a peep from them."

A pretty kettle of fish I got myself into—may it happen to all my enemies! Some children! God forgive me for my words, but one brat's worse than the other! A piece of bread isn't enough for them! Day and night they're at it. They scream, they tear and claw, they murder each other. It's hell! What am I saying, *hell*? Hell's paradise, I tell you, compared to them! And that's not all. In fact, that's not even the

problem. Children you can deal with. A whack, a pinch, a smack—after all, they're children! But God sent her a husband. Oyzer's his name. I'm sure you know him, he's the assistant *shammes* in the lower prayer-house. A kosher Jew, poor thing, and no fool either, it seems; but you should hear how she lets him have it, Gnessi I mean. Oyzer, here! Oyzer, there! Oyzer, this! Oyzer, that! Oyzer-Oyzer! And him, either he makes some wisecrack (he's a smart aleck too, on top of everything else), or else he grabs his hat and goes off. I tell you, it's a great success, that marriage—a real winner and that's all! . . .

What were we saying? Yes, you said, *bad neighbors* . . . Bad isn't the word! I hope God Almighty won't think I have an evil tongue. Anyway, I don't have to be the one to spread rumors. What do I have against her? She's a woman who likes to give bread to the poor. But who can figure her out? When she gets into one of her moods, God help and defend us all! It's a shame to talk of it—I wouldn't say it to anyone else, but with you, I know, it'll stay a secret. . . . *Shh* . . . She beats him up—her husband, I mean, when no one's looking! "Oy!" I said to her, "Gnessi, Gnessi! Aren't you afraid of God? Of God, Gnessi, you're not afraid?" So she said, "Go bother your grandmother." So I said, "The devil take it!" So she said, "Whoever keeps an eye on someone else's pot, let that person be the scapegoat!" So I said, "Whoever has nothing better to watch than *that* pot, should have his eyes taken out." So she said, "May every eavesdropper drop dead!" What do you say, Rabbi, to such a big mouth? . . .

But what were we saying? Yes, you said, *I like things clean*. . . . Why should I deny it? I really do like it to be clean in every nook and corner. How does that make me guilty? Maybe it's just that she can't stand it (Gnessi, I mean) that my place is clean, my place is nice and tidy, my place is bright. And by her? You should see—chaos and darkness, everything topsy-turvy, like a hurricane hit it. The chamber pot's always full—up to your neck, Rabbi. Up to your eyes! Phoo! Comes morning, it's thunder and lightning! Call those children? Demons, not children! Just like my Dovidel—as black to white! Because my Dovidel, he should be well, he's in *cheder* all day, see, and as soon as he comes home at night he gets to work: either he prays, see, or else he studies, or else he looks through some book or other. And *her* children—God shouldn't punish me for these words, but if it's not eating, it's crying, or it's banging their heads against the wall. You understand me, Rabbi? Is it my fault that God blessed her with such brats, terrors of the earth, and that me He

gave such a gift, a piece of gold, a jewel, he shouldn't be taken from me (my Dovidel, I mean), because he costs me enough tears, see! Don't think it's that I'm just a woman! A man in my place couldn't bear it! Don't be insulted, Rabbi, but some men, see, are a thousand times worse than women. If they feel the pinch, they don't know if they're coming or going. Do you need examples? Here, take Yosi, Moishe-Avram's boy. As long as Frumme-Neché was alive, he managed; and when she died (may it never happen in this house), he just let go and gave up, body and soul. "Reb Yosi," I said to him, "God help you! All right, your wife died. What's there to do? That's God's business. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away—how's it written there in our Holy Scriptures? You don't have to be told, do you, Rabbi? You probably know it all. . . ."

Now, what were we saying? Yes, you said, *an only son* . . . He's my one and only, as they say—the apple of my eye, Dovidel I mean. You don't know him? He's named after my father-in-law, see, Dovid Hirsch. You should see him, my Dovidel (may he live a long life)—the image of his father, exactly Moishe Ben Zion, even the same height. And that face! Just like *his* (may he rest in peace)—yellowish, exhausted, skin-and-bones, and *weak*, weak and worn out, poor thing, from studying, from the *Gemara*. "Enough is enough," I said to him; "my sweet son, rest a little. Just look at your face, will you! Here, take something to eat, drink something. Have this glass of chicory. Here, take it!" "The chicory," he said, "*you'd* better drink, mother. You work beyond your strength," he said. "I'd do better to help you carry the parcels from market." What an idea! "Do you know what you're talking about?" I said. "What do you mean, you'll carry parcels? My enemies won't live to see the day, and I have plenty of enemies! You have to study," I said, "so study already! Sit and study."

And meanwhile I can't keep my eyes off him, Dovidel I mean. Just like *him* (may he rest in peace). Even the cough's the same, woe is me. Woe and desolation! Every time he coughs it tears my heart out. Because, you know, it almost did me in just to get him to grow up. To begin with, no one believed the child would live (may he live a long life): Whatever the sickness, the plague, the disease, him it hit. If it's measles you want, *he's* got it. You'd like chicken pox? He's got chicken pox. Diphtheria or the measles? He has it. Scarlet fever, the mumps, whooping cough? Why not? *What* not? How many nights I spent at his bedside only God can count. It seems, though, that my tears did the trick (and maybe also his father's spirit, a bit), because I did live to see his *bar mitzvah*, after all.

You think that's that, don't you? Well, listen to this gem. One night, wouldn't you know, he was coming home from *cheder*, it was winter, and he met something, someone, dressed all in white and beating the air with both hands. Naturally the child was scared to death. Poor thing, he fell in a faint on the snow, and they brought him to me half-dead, see, just barely alive. And when he came to, then he really collapsed. Lay there burning with fever for no more or less than six weeks! How I survived is a miracle from heaven. What didn't I do? I made deals with all the angels! I bargained for him a hundred times over, and pulled him back out of the jaws of death! I even tagged another name on him: Chaim, for *life*—Chaim Dovid Hirsch. And tears . . . tears! What's the point of talking about tears? "Dear God," I said, arguing my case with the Almighty. "You want to punish me? Punish! Any way you like, but my child, see, you mustn't take from me!"

After God granted me the gift, made my son well again, Dovidel said to me, "Know what, mother? I've got regards for you from Father. Father came to visit me." Well, I felt the life go out of me and my heart pounding, *bam, bam, bam!* "Let him intercede for us," I said; "it's a sure sign you'll live long, God willing, and be well." That's what I said, with my heart going *bam, bam, bam!* It was only much later, quite a while afterwards, that I found out about the one dressed in white. He was, do you know who? . . . Well, guess, Rabbi. After all, you're a wise man! . . . Reb Lippa, that's who it was, Lippa the water-carrier! Just that day, see, he had to go and buy himself a new fur pelt, a white one yet. And since there was a burning frost outside, he decided he'd like to warm himself, so he stood there clapping one hand against the other. May my troubles come to rest on his head! Did you ever hear of such nerve? That a Jew should suddenly put on a white fur pelt, without rhyme or reason!

Now, what were we saying? Yes, you said, *health*. . . . Health, that's the main thing. That's what our doctor says. He told me I should give him pills (my Dovidel, that is), and cook broths, see, every day a broth, made from at least a quarter chicken. And if I can manage it, he said, I should also feed him with milk and butter, and with chocolate, too, he said, if I can manage *that*. A fine story—if I can manage it! Think, is there anything in the world I couldn't manage for my Dovidel? Just suppose, for some reason, they'd tell me, "Go Yente, dig the earth, chop wood, carry water, knead clay, rob a church, just for Dovidel." Would I find some excuse not to? I'd do it in a split second, even in the middle of the night, in the biggest frost! Look, he took a notion this summer (my

Dovidel I mean) that he wanted certain books, prayer books probably. And since I go into the best houses, see, he asked me could I get him these books, or prayer books, and he wrote me down the books on paper. So I came and showed them the paper and asked for the books, or prayer books . . . once, twice, three times. They laughed at me. "Yente," they said, "why do you need such books? Do you feed the hens with them, or maybe the geese and ducks?" "Laugh, laugh," I thought to myself, "as long as my Dovidel has what to read." All night long, night after night, he looked through those books, or prayer books, and asked me to bring him more and more. Should I begrudge him? I brought those back and took others. And here that doctor came, the wise-guy—"Can you manage, for Dovidel's sake, to make a broth every day, from at least a quarter chicken?" Rabbi, if he'd said three quarters of a chicken, would I have tried to find a way out? Where in the world, I ask you, do such doctors come from? Where do they grow? What sort of yeast do they use to cook them up? What kind of ovens? . . .

What were we saying? Yes, you said *broth*. . . . Every day I've made a broth for him (my Dovidel, I mean) from a quarter chicken, and in the evening, when he comes home from his studies, he eats and I sit opposite him with some work in my hands, and I feel just ready to burst with joy. And I pray to God, God should help me so that tomorrow, God willing, I'll be able to prepare another broth from a quarter chicken. Sometimes he'll say to me, "Mother, why don't you eat with me?" So I say, "Eat and be healthy. I ate already." So he says, "What did you eat?" "What I ate, I ate," I say, "so long as I ate. Eat well." And when he's done with studying the books, or prayer books, it's only then, see, that I'll take a couple of baked potatoes from the oven, or else I'll rub a piece of bread with onion, and make myself a feast. And I swear to you by all that's holy—I should only live so long and see my Dovidel happy—that I get more pleasure from that piece of onion than I'd get from the most delicious meal, because I remember that Dovidel (God preserve him) just ate a broth made from a quarter chicken, and tomorrow, God willing, there'll be another broth made from a quarter chicken.

Still, there's one little problem—that cough he coughs all the time, poor thing. I begged the doctor, see, to get him something for the cough. So he said (the doctor I mean), "How old was your husband when he died, and what did he die of?" So I said, "He died of death. His years ran out, see, and he died. What kind of comparison is that to this?" So he said, "I need to know it. I've examined your son," he said. "You have a

fine son, a fine upstanding boy." "Thank you very much," I said, "that much I know myself. What you'd better give me, see, is a remedy for his cough so he'll stop coughing and coughing." So he said, "That can't be done. You just have to watch that he doesn't study so much." "What else should he do?" I said. So he said, "He should eat a lot, and go for a walk every day. And the main thing," he said, "he mustn't sit at night studying his books. If it's his fate to be a doctor someday, it won't do him any harm to wait a few years longer."

"What I dreamed last night," I thought to myself, "and tonight and every night of the year—may all my worst dreams! . . . But there's something fishy here. He's not talking straight. How come my Dovidel's to be a doctor, of all things? Why shouldn't he become something better, a governor, why not?"

So I went home, see, and told it all to my Dovidel. His face got red as a flame. "Do you know what, mother?" he said to me. "Don't go to the doctor any more, and don't talk to him." So I said, "I can't stand him already. Can't I tell he's a lunatic?" Imagine, a doctor with such habits—prying into a patient's life! "How do you live? From what do you live? Where do you get your living?" What's *his* business? Doesn't he get his half a ruble? Why can't he just take it and write the prescription? . . .

What were we saying? Yes, you said, *a chicken without a head*. . . Of course I run around like a chicken without a head! What else would you expect, with all I've got to worry about—eggs and hens and geese and ducks, and those rich ladies always on my back, each of them wanting to have first pick, each one trembling that maybe the others got the best eggs and fattest hens. I sleep in my street clothes! So when do I have time, tell me yourself, Rabbi, to cook a broth? I'm never at home! But as they say, if you set your mind on it you find a way. Very early, see, before I get off to market, I heat the oven. Then I rush back from the market for a minute to salt the quarter chicken, and then I'm off again to work. And rush back again, to rinse the meat and put on the cooking pot. Then I ask her, that lodger of mine (Gnessi, I mean), to watch my pot. That is, when the pot boils, she should cover it and rake over the ashes. Some big job! How often does it happen that I'll cook a whole supper for her? After all, we're Jews, God help us. We're among people, aren't we, not wandering in the desert! Then in the evening, when I come home from work, I blow up the fire, and warm up the pot, see, and a fresh broth is what he gets to eat (my Dovidel, I mean). So it seems everything's fine, right? But there's the lodger of mine, that big . . . No, I won't say it. Let not the

word be spoken! This morning, of all mornings, she had to go and cook a dairy meal for her children—*halushkas*, or *balabeshkas* with milk. What got into her that she had to make *balabeshkas* with milk? Why all of a sudden this morning out of the clear blue? I should know so much about hard times! She's a strange bird, that flour dealer. With her it's all or nothing. Three days go by and she won't light a fire in the oven. Then suddenly, she'll get in the mood—start up a casserole pot with buckwheat *kasha*. That's what *she* says, but you've got to put on your glasses to see a speck of buckwheat. Or else she'll put on a soup of beans and barley, or a pot of fish-potatoes, and you can smell the onion a mile off, not to mention the pepper she peppered it with. After that, her children can go open-mouthed and empty-bellied for the next half a week, yowling "Hoo-ah! Hoo-ah!" . . .

What were we saying? Yes, you said, *schlimazel*. . . She started in, that lodger of mine, and rolled out a dough of *balabeshkas* from buckwheat flour, and put a pot of milk to boil on the oven. And her children set up such a celebration, such cries of joy—my God! You'd think they'd never seen a drop of milk. Though mind you, all our enemies should earn as much, as there was milk in that pot! Maybe two spoonfuls, the rest water. But for such poor people, I guess, that's something, too. Meanwhile, guess who the wind blew in? The *shammes*! Oyzer must have sniffed all the way out there at his prayer-house that back here a royal feast was cooking. So he came flying home, with a wisecrack as usual: "Happy holidays!" "A miserable, a dark and bitter day to you!" she said. "Why so early?" So he said, "I was afraid. God forbid I should come late for the blessing! Tell me Gnessi, what's cooking there on the oven?" "The plague," she said, "in a little pot, especially for you." So he said, "Why not a big pot? It could be for both of us!" So she said, boiling mad, "Damn you with your wisecracks!" And she reached for the potholder to get the pot. Well, the pot turned over, and the milk—splash! all over the oven! What shrieks and screams! Gnessi was cursing her husband with deadly curses—lucky for him he managed to slip out fast—and the children were yowling as if someone has just killed their father and mother. "A curse on *balabeshkas* with milk," I said. "What if the broth's spoiled? The milk, God forbid, might have made my pot *treyf*!" So she said, "The devil take you, together with your broth and your pot! Maybe my *balabeshkas* with milk," she said, "are just as precious to me as all your pots and all the broths you cook for that precious son of yours!" "I'll tell you what," I

said. "May you all be sacrificed for the smallest fingernail from the smallest finger of my Dovidel!" So she said, "I'll tell *you* what. Your Dovidel should be sacrificed for all of us—he's only one!" What do you say to a slut like that? Shouldn't she have her mouth slapped shut with a wet towel? . . .

What were we saying? Yes, you said, *from dairy and meat on the same oven, no good can come*. . . . So there was the pot, see, upside-down, and the milk spilled all over the oven. Rabbi, I'm afraid that (God forbid) it may *just* have touched my pot, and then I'm a lost soul! Come to think of it, though, how could the milk have reached it? My pot was standing there in a far corner, shoved away somewhere at the opposite end of the oven. But it's the old story—the chicken or the egg? Anything's possible; how can I be sure? Just my rotten luck! What if. . . ? Rabbi, I'll tell you the honest truth, see. Never mind the broth. A broth is a broth. Of course, it breaks my heart—what will Dovidel eat, poor thing? But I'll probably think up something, probably. Yesterday, I bought some geese at the market, made some roasts to sell, so there are a few giblets left for Saturday—heads, innards, this, that. You can make *something* from it! But woe is me, Rabbi, how *can* I, if I don't have a pot? I'm afraid if you say the pot is *treyf*, I'm left without a pot, see; and without a pot, it's like I'm without a hand, because I've only got one pot. That is, as for pots, I used to have three meat pots. But then Gnessi (may she sink into the earth) once borrowed a pot from me, a brand new pot, and then she goes and gives me back a crippled pot. So I said to her, "What kind of pot is this?" So she said, "It's your pot." So I said, "How come I get back a crippled pot when I gave you a brand new pot?" So she said, "Shut it. Don't yell like that, who needs your things? First of all, I gave you back a brand new pot. Second, the pot I took from you was a crippled pot. And third, I never even took a pot from you. I have my own pot, so get off my back!" There's a slut for you! . . .

Now, what were we saying? Yes, you said, *no such thing as having too many pots*. . . . There I was, see, left with two pots, two good pots I mean, and one crippled pot. Two pots. But how can a poor person dare to have two pots? It must have been decreed in heaven that when I came home today from the market with two hens, one hen should get loose and be scared by the cat. I bet you're wondering how a cat got into this. It's *her*, Gnessi and her brats! They got their grimy hands on a cat somewhere, so day and night they torture it to death. "It's a pity," my Dovidel keeps telling them, "a shame and a pity! That's a living thing!"

But try and argue with such rotten, no-good do-nothings. To make a long story short, they tied something to the cat's tail, and she started jumping (the cat I mean), doing cartwheels, standing on her head. So the hen got scared and flew right to the top shelf, and crash, a pot gone to hell! Do you think it was the crippled pot? Of course, what else! If something's got to break, count on it, it'll be the good pot! That's the way it's been since the world began. What I'd like to know, see, is why that is. For example, two people go along, this one goes along and that one goes along. One is an only son, a one-and-only, his mother trembles over him. And the other . . . Rabbi, God be with you! What's the matter with you? . . . *Rebbetsen!* What are you hiding for? Quick, get over here! Hurry up! The Rabbi looks sick! Looks like he's going to faint! . . . Water! *Water!* . . .

Translated by Sacvan Bercovitch