

## 7. A New Problem

In this chapter titled "A New Problem," we find Moshe grappling with the aftermath of Malachi's abrupt departure from Pottstown, which has left him troubled. A month after Malachi's departure, Moshe is working in the theater when Nate approaches him for a conversation. Moshe reflects on Malachi's disappearance, which led to the sale of his bakery, a situation he finds cumbersome. He recalls receiving letters from Malachi, instructing him on the sale and disposition of the bakery and its tools.

Amidst his thoughts, Moshe reveals his disdain for Malachi's negative view of America, which he perceives as ungrateful given the opportunities presented here compared to Europe. The crux of Moshe's concern lies in Malachi's comment about African Americans, expressing that they have a better sense of identity in this country than they do.

Nate interrupts Moshe's train of thought, expressing his desire to introduce his nephew, Dodo, who is deaf and has had challenges due to an accident. Despite his significant worry regarding the town's doctors, especially Doc Roberts—known for his ties with the Klan—Nate insists that Dodo doesn't need a doctor and wishes to bring him to help at the theater.

The conversation deepens as Nate explains that Dodo's mother recently passed away and the boy currently lives with him and his wife. He seeks Moshe's permission for Dodo to stay in the theater temporarily, at least until a state representative can take him to a special school. Nate reassures Moshe that Dodo will not disturb anyone and suggests he can spend the night in the basement.

Moshe contemplates Nate's request but feels a surge of apprehension at the prospect of government involvement. However, driven by memories of compassion shown by others, he obliges to discuss it with his wife, Chona. Upon sharing this decision with Chona, she expresses her displeasure, emphasizing the neglect Dodo might face in the cold basement.

Chona challenges Moshe on his lack of understanding of children's needs, especially Dodo's emotional distress from his circumstances. In a commanding tone, she insists that Moshe should bring Dodo home, highlighting the warmth of a real home versus the cold, lonely alternative he proposed .