

# Chapter 3: Twelve

Chapter 3: Twelve opens with Moshe reflecting on his recent personal and professional triumphs. His marriage to Chona has been a turning point, providing him with a renewed sense of optimism. One day, while interacting with Nate, who is dismantling the theater's facade, they have a conversation that reveals the deep-rooted struggles within the community. Moshe listens intently as Nate describes the lack of opportunities for Black patrons who seek entertainment but are often turned away due to segregation. Inspired by Nate's words, Moshe contemplates the possibility of opening the theater to Black performers. However, he is apprehensive about how this decision will be received, especially by Chona, who shares concerns about the potential fallout from their predominantly white audience.

Chona, with her spirited American character, encourages Moshe to challenge societal norms. She dismisses his worries, emphasizing that money is money, no matter the color of the patrons, and everyone deserves a chance to experience the arts. Her optimism and refusal to accept limitations inspire Moshe to move forward with his idea. Encouraged by Chona's unwavering support, Moshe organizes a performance by Chick Webb, a popular Black performer. The event draws a lively and diverse crowd from Pottstown's Black community, signaling a cultural shift within the town and a personal success for Moshe. The concert becomes a symbol of social inclusion, as the previously subdued audience embraces the music with passion, joy, and enthusiasm. Their exuberant response highlights the segregation and exclusion they had endured, now finally being acknowledged and celebrated in the very space that had previously been closed off to them.

The success of the concert marks a turning point for the theater, but it also brings new challenges. As the theater flourishes and Moshe's business grows, rival theater owners begin to retaliate. Their actions are laced with racist undertones, accusing Moshe of

undermining their businesses and violating social norms. The backlash comes in the form of fines and public accusations, creating an atmosphere of tension and hostility. However, Moshe, ever resourceful, navigates these challenges with cunning. He uses bribery and strategic business deals to overcome the opposition, ensuring the survival and success of his theater. His ability to think on his feet allows him to buy the theater outright, solidifying his ownership and expanding his business. With his newfound financial stability, Moshe is able to improve his family's standard of living, making a significant impact on their future.

While Moshe's business is thriving, Chona remains deeply connected to the community. Her love for the neighbors in Chicken Hill is evident, as she continues to run the grocery store, valuing the relationships she has built over the years. However, as the Jewish community begins to shift out of Chicken Hill, Moshe impulsively pushes for a relocation to a more affluent area, believing that it would offer better financial prospects. Chona, however, stands firm, refusing to abandon their roots. She draws on her emotional ties to the community, valuing the connections and history they have established. Her decision to remain in Chicken Hill reflects her deep loyalty to the people who have supported her and her family through thick and thin. This decision becomes a point of tension between Moshe and Chona, as their differing views on financial success and community bonds begin to clash.

As Moshe navigates his personal and professional challenges, he is also wrestling with deeper internal conflicts. He is haunted by visions of "Moses," which represent his struggles with superstitions and the traditions he holds dear. These visions stir his internal struggle between holding onto his cultural heritage and adapting to the new American ideals that are shaping his life. Moshe is unsure whether his desire for financial success is clouding his ability to see the value in meaningful, lasting connections. Chona's unexpected health decline brings Moshe's fears to the surface, making him reflect on the choices they have made together. As Chona's condition worsens, Moshe finds himself questioning the consequences of their pursuit of wealth and success, and whether they have lost sight of the importance of family and

community. This uncertainty marks a turning point in Moshe's journey, forcing him to confront his values and the true meaning of success.

The chapter explores themes of community, identity, and the complexities of personal and societal growth. Through Moshe's struggles, readers are invited to reflect on the tension between financial success and personal connections. The dynamic between Moshe and Chona exemplifies how individuals must navigate their evolving roles in both their families and communities. The events also highlight the challenges of maintaining a balance between tradition and modernity, as well as the importance of loyalty in shaping personal and business decisions. Moshe's journey reveals the complexity of these choices, offering a nuanced exploration of how people adapt to the changing world around them while grappling with the weight of their past and future aspirations.