

Chapter Three

There are many advantages and some disadvantages in being born Jewish, but it was to be some time before Abraham Lubji 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 existed by buying and selling cattle ~~which~~ produced an annual income which would never require the fillingⁱⁿ of a tax form or the assistance of any accountant. His mother who ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~one~~ ^{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 ^{at the age of 10} a ^{she would} ~~she~~ ^{she} would read any book or newspaper she could lay her hands on. Her family had tried of saying that she had named herself her self.

Lubji's mother ~~she~~ made every attempt she could to pass on to her nine children whatever knowledge she ~~possessed~~ ^{possessed} but only Lubji showed any interest and sat at her feet ^{as she} ~~as she~~ ^{as she} ~~breast~~ ^{breast} feed the ~~latest~~ ^{latest} child, devering her every word.

But ~~at~~ ^{at} the age of three ~~Lubji~~ Lubji discovered the front door ^{and} ~~the moment~~ ^{the moment} his mother after he was ~~swatted~~ ^{swatted} ~~out~~ ^{out} ~~following~~ ^{following} his father into the fields to tend the cattle, one is unable to call two cows ^{at her} Lubji's first visit to the nearest town was at the age of four when he accompanied his father to Slatinske Dole.

To describe Slatinske Dole as a town would perhaps be flattering.

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

Three a year ~~his father~~ ^{parents} would trade his emaciated cows ~~for~~ ^{in return and any other necessities} for grain, food, clothing and once a year a small gift for his wife. ^{he would even purchase} 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~~ ^{old man} indulged him by answering his countless questions. From that day Lubji would ~~go to the shop~~ ^{go to the shop} one 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 shop closed the} ~~and~~ ^{old man} ~~because~~ ^{he had never seen anything like it} he set in ~~the~~ ^{his} 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 Benjamin'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} ~~the house~~ and ran all the way into the town. ~~He~~ and walked around watching the traders set up their stalls, ~~and~~ then listened to the bathermy in several tongues, ^{now} aware that most of ~~the~~ visitors went away with bad deals.

A chicken for a ~~few~~ coin, a chest of drawers for 100 shyls, a cartful of loaves for a dozen candles, and a goat ~~and~~ ~~sheep~~ for a worn out carpet.

Lubji ~~was~~ ^{beginning to learn} ~~the~~ bathermy depended not ^{on the goods} ~~on the goods~~ but your ability to strike a ~~deal~~ ^{bargain}. By the age of seven he ~~was~~ ^{noticed} that those who dealt in colored notes were not ^{only} the best dressed, but ~~those who~~ ^{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 Statuke Dole ~~with~~ ^{his} mother would wear a sparkling brooch — that the old rabbi had left ~~her~~ ^{it} 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~~ ^{market} with the occasional visit to Mr Lush's shop to listen to the ~~great~~ ^{great} man bargain.

when the day of — finally came 4

~~on the day of~~ — Lubji eyes rectly

left his mother or to be more accurate the piece of jewelry she wore on ~~the~~ ~~end~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~source~~ black dress. She was surprised when he ~~eldest~~ son 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 her as she ~~as she~~ ~~watched~~ ~~the~~ ~~him~~ ~~piece~~ ~~of~~ ~~jewelry~~ ~~she~~ ~~stole~~ ~~it~~ for a moment before putting on her new, ~~remains~~ ~~small~~ ~~piece~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~old~~ ~~one~~ ~~she~~ ~~kept~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~ ~~cardboard~~ ~~box~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~floor~~ ~~and~~ ~~plunging~~

Lubji ~~set~~ watched her as she replaced the plank and immediately began to work on ~~the~~ plan. So silent ~~was~~ ~~he~~ ~~became~~ ~~that~~ ~~his~~ mother 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 tummy. He ~~played~~ so that she would not ~~bother~~ ~~him~~ ~~again~~. ~~became~~ ~~anxious~~ ~~again~~.

That night when they ~~at~~ ~~last~~ ~~all~~ ~~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 ~~for~~ ~~only~~ ~~a~~ ~~few~~ ~~minutes~~. Once he was confident everyone was asleep, he crept round the ~~outside~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~room~~ until he reached ~~the~~ ~~side~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~bed~~. His snoring was so ~~loud~~ ~~that~~ ~~Lubji~~ ~~feared~~ ~~that~~ ~~one~~ ~~of~~ ~~his~~ ~~brothers~~ ~~or~~ ~~sisters~~ ~~would~~ ~~surely~~ ~~wake~~.

Lubji ~~held~~ ~~his~~ ~~breath~~ as he ran ~~his~~ ~~hand~~ ~~along~~ ~~the~~ ~~boards~~ ~~trying~~ ~~to~~ ~~discover~~ ~~loud~~

loud

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

As the seconds passed he feared one of the family would ^{surely} wake and he would be discovered, and then ~~suddenly one~~ ~~of the planks shifted slightly~~ ~~the planks were~~ ~~up~~ and lower ~~his hand~~ into the whole feeling the side of the cardboard box. His fingers stretched another few inches until he felt a ~~sharp~~ 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 crouching into his prone.

He remained awake for rest of the night fearing of falling asleep ^{and being} ^{discovered} ^{by} ^{his} ^{brothers} ^{and} ^{sisters}

~~As soon as~~ At the first sign of light - there were no curtains covering the ~~one~~ window - he left the house ~~secretly~~ ^{convinced} 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.

Luigi ran towards the town, not daring to ^{look back} ^{or} ^{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.

unthinkable

or face ~~the~~ consequence, Like every gambler he felt confident the odds ~~would~~ ^{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 ^{that was} and ~~putting~~ ^{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~~ ^{was} ~~able~~ ^{unable} to avoid the ~~obvious~~ ^{obvious} creak. He placed the box on the ground and took even longer closing the door behind him.

cardboard

Lubi clutched the little ~~box~~ box to his chest ~~as he~~ walked away from the cottage. As it was still dark, however, 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 ~~slippery~~ ^{slippery} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Doby~~ ^{Doby} he sat down on a grass verge and studied the contents slowly. There were two more bundles equally wrapped, several buttons, including a large shiny one, ~~and~~ an old coin with the head of the ~~car~~ and the biggest prize of all, the brooch that looked even more magnificent in the morning light.

Lubi began to whistle as he strolled on towards the town, ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~box~~ ^{safety tucked} ~~under~~ ^{under} one arm. Once he was back among the bushes, 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 Lukski never replied to such a
question, always ~~replying~~ ~~to the~~ ~~question~~
with ~~another~~ 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 fink
twelve is what I said, and twelve is what
I meant. He tried he sounded like Mr Lukski.

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~~ ~~called~~ pointing down at the bread
what do you have to offer the
young bride ~~she~~ demanded.

Remain; A bag of grain said the farmer
~~remains~~ a bag from an over laden donkey
and placing to ~~before~~ Lubji.
why do you want it, asked
Lubji remembering another of Mr Lukski's
~~techniques~~ techniques.

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

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

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

And a bag of grain
You must be mad ^{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 concede
the offer ^{He picked up the brooch and studied it}
~~in the family says~~ ~~he said~~ ~~the~~ 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 ^{carrying a sack} ~~the~~ sack was half
~~full~~ empty.

I have changed my mind, I will give
~~you~~ you twelve potatoes for the brooch
once again Lubzi shook his head,

I want fifteen now he told him
But you only wanted twelve an
hour ago

And funny what time you have
traded half ^{for what? Spade} ~~the~~ half.
~~in that trade~~

The man hesitated.

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

The farmer 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 fifteen potatoes.

Lubi 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.

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

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

When he walked into the cottage a few minutes later his mother was setting up the ~~supper~~ ^{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} his brothers and sisters. Did you steal them was all his mother asked solemnly.