

**A TOWN CALLED
YENEMVELT**

AND OTHER STORIES

BY JUDY GRUENFELD

A Town Called Yenemvelt
By Judy Gruenfeld

Long ago and far away there was a town called Yenemvelt. It was the next town over from another town you may have heard of, but Yenemvelt did not get as much notoriety as this other town.

In Yenemvelt, lived a lady by the name of Mrs. Yenta. Now, Mrs. Yenta was a very nice lady but she just could not seem to mind her own business. Most of the people who lived in Yenemvelt were used to Mrs. Yenta and knew that she meant no harm. That is, all the people except for Mrs. Gantzaknocker, who thought she knew better than everyone else.

One day, Mrs. Yenta and Mrs. Gantzaknocker got into an argument (no one remembers, or cares, what it was about), and they stopped talking to each other. Mrs. Gafairlach would walk around town shaking her head, thinking what a terrible thing it was that the two most well-known ladies in the neighborhood had stopped talking_ to each other.

Mrs. Gafairlach decided to go to a neighbor for some advice as to how to get the ladies to make up.

First, Mrs. Gafairlach knocked on Mrs. Oysgamitchit's door to ask for help. "We've got to do something to get Mrs. Yenta and Mrs. Gantzaknocker speaking again," said Mrs. Gafairlach. This is a terrible situation.

"I'm sorry," said Mrs. Oysgamitchit, but I am much too busy to help you. My children are sick and my husband needs me to mend his clothes."

"I hope your children feel better," said Mrs. Gafairlach, and she went on her way. Mrs. Gafairlach then went to Mrs. Luftkup's house.

"Can you help me get Mrs. Yenta and Mrs. Gantzaknocker to make up?" she said.

"I wouldn't know what to do," said Mrs. Luftkup. "Besides, I'm enjoying watching my grass grow.

Sighing, Mrs. Gafairlach went to the next house on the block where Mrs. Gadainknit lived and knocked on her door. Mrs. Gadainknit promised to go with

Mrs. Gafairlach to talk to the ladies but when the appointed time rolled around, Mrs. Gadainknit forgot to show up.

Mrs. Gafairlach thought about going to Mrs. Tsimmis but then decided that Mrs. Tsimmis might make matters even worse.

As she continued down the street, Mrs. Gafairlach came to Mrs. Incass' house. When Mrs. Incass answered the door, Mrs. Gafairlach said, "Will you help me get Mrs. Yenta and Mrs. Gantzaknocker to make up?"

"I certainly will not," said Mrs. Incass. "I am not speaking to either one of those ladies."

Mrs. Gafairlach was getting more and more upset with each refusal.

When she got to the end of the block, Mrs. Gafairlach noticed that there was only one house she hadn't gone to. Mrs. Gafairlach knocked on the door.

"How nice to see you," said Mrs. Saichel when she opened the door and saw her neighbor standing there.

"Mrs. Saichel," said Mrs. Gafairlach, "Mrs. Yenta and Mrs. Gantzaknocker had a terrible argument and are not speaking to each other. I was wondering if you could help me get the ladies to make up. I just don't know what to do."

"Of course, I will help you," said Mrs. Saichel. "You call Mrs. Yenta and tell her to come to my house. Tell her that Mrs. Gantzaknocker wants to make up with her. I will call Mrs. Gantzaknocker and tell her that Mrs. Yenta wants to make up with her."

"What a great idea!" she said, and ran home to call Mrs. Yenta.

When all the ladies were assembled at Mrs. Saichel's house, Mrs. Saichel said, "Ladies, you are both so knowledgeable about the neighbors and you know everything that goes on in this town. What a shame it is that you are not speaking.

Together, you can do so many mitzvahs and make Yenenvelt a place where more people would like to live and visit.

And so, with the help of Mrs. Saichel and Mrs. Gafairlach, Mrs. Yenta and Mrs. Gantzaknocker renewed their friendship and made sure the town ran smoothly. Yenemvelt assumed its rightful spot on the map and its two "head ladies" checked in on all their neighbors to make sure there was Shalom Bayis everywhere they went.

Mrs. Shtecksheach Buys New Slippers
By Judy Gruenfeld

The sun was setting in early twentieth century Yenemvelt. The men were coming home from shul and work and the women were getting supper ready. Of particular interest, on this particular day, was a kind, gentle man by the name of Mr. Shtecksheach.

Mr. Shtecksheach loved his slippers. Whenever he wore them, he felt as if he were floating on a cloud. Mr. Shtecksheach worked in a factory and stood on his feet all day. By the time he came home, his poor, aching feet were crying for their slippers.

When he walked in the front door, he called to his wife, who told him is supper was ready. He then went to the closet, took out his slippers, dropped them on the floor and gently pushed them with his feet. The slippers stopped right in front of Mr. Shtecksheach's bed in the exact same spot day after day, year after year. Mr. Shtecksheach would then wash up, put on clean clothes, and slide his feet into his beloved slippers.

"A mechaya," he would say. Feeling refreshed, he would then go to the kitchen where he and his wife would eat supper.

After supper, Mr. Shtecksheach would sit in his favorite chair and read the newspaper.

One night, there was a knock on the door. When Mr. Shtecksheach opened the door, he saw Mr. Fleishig, who was out of breath and trying, unsuccessfully, to talk.

"Take deep breaths and try to calm down. Then you can tell me what the problem is," said Mr. Shtecksheach. When Mr. Fleishig finally calmed down and he was able to speak he said,

"You won't believe what just happened," he said. "Mr. Milchig just came to my

house. After fifty years of having nothing to do with me, he wants to be my friend."

"Something doesn't sound kosher to me," said Mr. Shtecksheach.

"That's exactly what I said," said Mr. Fleishig. "Now, he's a very nice man, but we just don't mix. What should I do?"

"Well," said Mr. Shtecksheach, "I would suggest that you tell him just that. He has his place and you have yours. If you pass each other in the street, you can say "hello" but you just cannot mix."

"You are very wise," said Mr. Fleishig, "I will tell him just that."

Mr. Fleishig did what Mr. Shtecksheach suggested. The arrangement worked out very well.

The next day, when Mr. Shtecksheach came home from work, he called to his wife, as he always did, and then went to the closet to get his slippers. When he opened the closet door, he almost had a heart attack. His beloved slippers were not there. Mr. Shtecksheach gave a gishray (scream) and then passed out cold on the floor. When Mrs. Shtecksheach heard the noise, she came rushing over to her husband to find out what had happened. When she saw him passed out on the floor, she also gave a gishray. She then got a washcloth, saturated it with cold water, and began rubbing her husband's face and forehead with the cold cloth. Mr. Shtecksheach regained consciousness in about two minutes. Very weakly, he said,

"Where are my slippers?"

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Shtecksheach, "Your slippers are very old. When I went to the market today, I bought you a new pair."

"You don't understand," said her husband. "My slippers are a part of me. They mold to my feet. They know exactly where to go when I push them towards the bed when I come home from work. I don't want a new pair of slippers. Do you

know how long it took me to train the old slippers? I cannot bear to be without them."

"But, dear," said Mrs. Shtecksheach, "You haven't even seen the new slippers. You might even like them."

"My dear wife," said Mr. Shtecksheach, trying to remain calm, "Remember when Mr. Fleishig came over last night to discuss the problem he was having with Mr. Milchig?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Shtecksheach, "but what does that have to do with us or your slippers?"

"Some things just don't mix, like Mr. Fleishig and Mr. Milchig. New slippers and I just don't mix. Please tell me that you haven't thrown out my old slippers."

"Well, no," she said. "I haven't had a chance yet."

"Oh, Baruch Hashem!" said Mr. Shtecksheach. "Please give them to me."

Mrs. Shtecksheach gave Mr. Shtecksheach his old slippers back.

Mr. Shtecksheach never mentioned the incident again and Mrs. Shtecksheach never again tried to buy her husband a new pair of slippers.

Mrs. Bahld and Mrs. Yetst
By Judy Gruenfeld

Mrs. Yetst was the type of person who took care of things immediately, whether it was mending a hem, paying a bill, or doing one of her many acts of chesed.

Mrs. Bald, on the other hand, was a procrastinator. She would wait till the last minute, whenever anything needed to be done, from laundry, to grocery shopping, to straightening up the house.

So it was no surprise that at eight o'clock on any given Friday morning, Mrs. Yetst was up and cooking and Mrs. Bahld was still in bed.

On this particular Erev Shabbos morning, Mrs. Bahld was sound asleep when her phone rang.

"Hello," she said groggily.

"Mrs. Bahld," said the chipper voice on the other end. "You're not up yet? It's ten o'clock. What are you waiting for?"

"I don't think my Shabbos order has been delivered yet. Besides, Shabbos comes in very late today. It's the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. Say, did you ever try standing an egg up on its tip? You can do that today and it will balance itself. I did that once when the kids were small and I took a picture of it, but I haven't been able to do it since. Remind me to show you the picture one day.

"Mrs. Bahld," said Mrs. Yetst, "There is really no time to talk about egg experiments now. You really have to get moving if you want to get done on time." "I know," said Mrs. Bahld. "I'm getting up." "Good," said Mrs. Yetst, and hung up the phone.

Mrs. Yetst always prepared extra for Shabbos; probably double the amount she needed for her family. She never knew when one of her children would bring a

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friend home, or her husband, a colleague or a Yeshiva bachur, or two. There was also extra for the Bahld family, if necessary, although Mrs. Bahld somehow

seemed to manage to get ready at the very last minute; no time to spare, but ready, nonetheless.

Actually, today was not a very good day for Mrs. Bahld. She had had a migraine since Wednesday and just could not shake it. Her medication did no good, nor did the cold compresses she applied to her head. But, Shabbos would soon be here and she would have to start her preparations eventually.

Mrs. Bahld got out of bed and looked out her living room window. Her entire Shabbos order was on her porch. Slowly, she began to bring all the items into the kitchen. By the time she was done, she was exhausted and her head was pounding.

She called her husband. "Yaakov," she said, "Our Shabbos order was just delivered but I am too sick to cook. My head is pounding and I am nauseous. This is one of the worst migraines I have had in a long time. I know I should have been cooking a little each day for Shabbos, but I didn't expect to feel so bad."

"Don't worry, dear," said Mr. Bahld. I will go to the butcher on my way home from work and pick up ready-made food. It won't be as good as yours, but it will do for this week.

"Thank you," said Mrs. Bahld. "I am really lucky," she thought. "A lot of husbands wouldn't put up with someone who always waits for the last minute to do everything."

She then hung up the phone and went back to sleep. She just could not lift her head off the pillow, it hurt so much.

Mr. Bahld got to the store just as it was about to close. "Please," he said, "My wife is sick and I need food for Shabbos."

"We don't have much left," said the butcher, "but I can give you what we have."

A grateful Mr. Bahld took his packages, paid the butcher, and went home. His wife was still in bed, so he put the items into pots, put the blech on the stove, and put the pots on the blech.

None of the married children were coming this week, and the three boys who still remained at home had already showered and were ready to go to shul. They knew better than to disturb their mother, not that she would be angry, but they were concerned for her welfare.

When they returned, Mrs. Bahld was still in bed but she wasn't sleeping.

"How are you feeling?" said Mr. Bahld.

"A little better," said Mrs. Bahld. "I bentched licht, and I think I can join everyone at the Shabbos table."

"Wonderful," said her husband. "You sit. The boys will serve."

The boys went into the kitchen, happy to be able to assist their mother. Just as they did so, there was a knock at the door. "I'll get it," said Mr. Bahld. To his surprise, three of his most promising bachurs stood outside his house.

"Rebbe," one of the boys said, "We missed out bus home and we have nowhere to stay for Shabbos."

"Come in, come in, now you have a place."

As soon as he said those words, Mr. Bahld remembered that there was not enough food for the three additional young boys with healthy appetites.

An embarrassed Mr. Bahld looked at his wife, whose cheeks were starting to turn red. She stammered a little and said,

"I just remembered, Mrs. Yetst invited us all over the Friday evening meal. I'm sure there will be enough for our three quests, too."

The eight of them went two doors down to the Yetst family and were welcomed like royalty. Not only was there plenty of food, there was plenty of camaraderie and plenty of Yiddishkeit.

I don't know how to thank you," Mrs. Bahld said to her hostess when they were ready to leave, but I can tell you one thing; from now on, I will not allow laziness to get the better of me.

The Chasana
By Judy Gruenfeld

The envelopes were addressed, the stamps were put on the envelopes, and the invitations were ready to be mailed. Mrs. Donnershtik took one more look at the Russian side of the last invitation before sealing it. The invitations read:

Mr. & Mrs. Mordechai Moontik

And

Mr. & Mrs. Dovid Donnershtik Request the Honor of Your presence At the
Marriage of Their Children SHANE YINGEL

AND

SHAYNA MAIDEL

On Tuesday, the Second of September

Two Thousand and Eight

At Six O'clock in the Evening

Shalom Shul

Yenemvelt, Europe

Mrs. Donnershtik felt a tear roll down her cheek as she sealed the last envelope. It was a tear of joy, and part sadness that her little girl had grown up so fast and was leaving the only home she had ever known. Her beautiful daughter was marrying a handsome, young man from a very fine family. It was the up and coming event in Yenemvelt and all its inhabitants were talking about it non-stop.

Soon the replies started coming in. Mr. & Mrs. Kumtahir would attend, as would Mr. & Mrs. Simchagait. Mr. & Mrs. Gayveiter were traveling a long distance just to see Shayna Maidel get married. Mr. & Mrs. Feilekinder were coming with all their children, and Mrs. Rajinkas was coming with Mrs. Mandlin. Unfortunately, Mr. & Mrs. Keinekoyach did not have the strength for such a long trip and had to decline the invitation, as did Mr. & Mrs. Krankeit, who were not well enough to travel. Mrs. Donnershtik would have to call Mrs. Fahrklempenkup because she hadn't heard from her and she was afraid there may have been some sort of mix-up.

The day of the chasana finally arrived. Everyone was all excited.

Mrs. Donnershtik received a phone call from Mrs. Rachmonas. Apparently, Mrs. Veyismir wasn't feeling and Mrs. Rachmonas did not want to leave her alone, so both ladies would not be able to attend the chasana. Mr. & Mrs. Schpatzeer decided to walk to the shul since it was only two blocks from where they lived. Mr. & Mrs. Shpatseemisht drove. Mrs. & Mrs. Shluffengut arrived a little late but, Baruch Hashem, they didn't miss the Chuppah. Mr. & Mrs. Goomisht forgot to bring the present and Mr. & Mrs. Kochleffel checked out everyone's attire. Mr. & Mrs. Essengut went right to the buffet table, Mr. & Mrs. Shicker went to the bar, and Mr. & Mrs. Tantsmaven went to check out the band. Mr. & Mrs. Yenta greeted everyone as they came in. One would have thought it was their simcha. Mrs. Klug looked very smart in her tailored suit and Mr. Vachzenzolstdu wore his new suit. He looked tall and handsome. Mr. & Mrs. Oysgapitst looked elegant. Mr. & Mrs. Zager were right on time but Mr. & Mrs. Farshpatig were detained and did not arrive until right before the Chupah.

Everyone from both sides of the family came, and ate, and danced, and had a wonderful time. All agreed that it was one of the nicest, frailichen chasanas they had ever attended.

The next day, Mrs. Donnershtik called Mrs. Krankeit to see how she was feeling. Mrs. Krankeit said she was feeling a little better and wanted to know all about the chasana.

"What food did you serve?" she asked.

Mrs. Donnershtik told her all about the buffet and the chicken dinner and the delicious desserts.

"Did the neighbors come?" asked Mrs. Krankeit.

"Most of them," answered Mrs. Donnershtik.

"And what about the families? Which family members from both sides came?"

Alla Moontiks and Donnershtiks," said Mrs. Donnershtik.

Mrs. Salz and Mrs. Pfeffer
By Judy Gruenfeld

Mrs. Salz and Mrs. Pfeffer were long time residents of Yememvelt. Each had moved there right after they had gotten married. They were civil towards each other, but they really didn't get along. If Mrs. Salz said something was white, Mrs. Pfeffer would say it was black. If Mrs. Salz said it was daytime, Mrs. Pfeffer would say it was night.

This situation was even more unfortunate because Mrs. Salz's daughter had just married Mrs. Pfeffer's son. Whenever the families got together it would prove to be a well-seasoned evening.

One Erev Shabbos, both sets of parents decided to surprise the young couple and bring their child's favorite food for the evening meal. The newlyweds were a little apprehensive about having both sets of parents over at the same time, but they figured it would happen eventually, so they might as well get it over with. Besides, it was..Shabbos, and everyone was sure to be on his or her best behavior.

Mr. and Mrs. Salz arrived first. Mrs. Salz began to set the table with a beautiful, white linen tablecloth she had purchased just for the occasion. It was their first Shabbos meal at Dena and Moshe's house. When Mr. and Mrs. Pfeffer arrived and saw the sparkling, white tablecloth, Mrs. Pfeffer took out the new black, satin napkins she had bought and put one at each place setting.

"Dinner will be ready as soon as you men return from shul," said Dena.

"We'd better go now," said Moshe. "I'm sure we will all have a lovely Erev Shabbos meal when we return."

After the men left, Mrs. Salz and Mrs. Pfeffer looked at each other.

"What did you bring," asked Mrs. Pfeffer.

"Why, I brought my daughter's favorite thing, my chicken soup," said Mrs. Salz.

"You didn't!" said Mrs. Pfeffer. "I also brought chicken soup. My Moshe prefers

my chicken soup to anyone else's. As a matter of fact, I gave Dena the recipe."

Mrs. Salz felt betrayed by her daughter and would talk to her in private, the first chance she got.

Dena started getting a little nervous and wondered if it was really such a good idea to have invited both sets of parents for the same Shabbos meal. But, it was too late, now. Everyone would just have to make the best of it.

All three ladies bentched licht and sang Lecha Dodi. By the time they had finished, the men had returned from shul.

"Good Shabbos," they all said as they took off their coats.

"Good Shabbos," said the ladies. "Supper is ready. Let's all sit down.

The gefilte fish was already on the table. Mr. Salz made Kiddish, and then everyone went to wash. Mr. Pfeffer said the Motzei and gave everyone a slice of the delicious challah his wife had baked.

After the gefilte fish plates were collected, Dena put out salads. She had made broccoli salad, cucumber salad, and tossed salad. Everyone enjoyed all three.

"So far, so good," thought Dena as she collected the salad plates.

"Moshe," can you please help me in the kitchen?" Dena asked.

"Moshe, seeing the worried look on his wife's face, followed her into the kitchen.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I don't know what to do about the soup," she said. "I know you prefer your mother's, but there so much pepper in it, that when I tasted it, I began to sneeze. And frankly, my mother's soup is much too salty.

"I have an idea," said Moshe. "Why don't we mix them both together? We'll serve it and see what they say."

"That's an excellent idea," said Dena, as she ladled out the soup. Moshe brought each person his or her bowl. When everyone was served, the young couple took their places at the table with a little apprehension.

"The soup is delicious," said Mrs. Salz. "I knew you would serve mine."

"Wait a minute," said Mrs. Pfeffer. "This is my soup." And they started arguing right then and there.

"That's enough," said Moshe. "With all due respect to our parents, we do not want any arguing here, especially on Shabbos."

"As a matter of fact," added Dena, "You're both right. Moshe and I mixed all the soup together. We are one family now and we will have one chicken soup. This way, we get the best of both, and the perfect combination of salt and pepper."

Mrs. Salz and Mrs. Pfeffer looked at each other with remorse.

"Can you ever forgive me?" said Mrs. Salz.

"Of course," said Mrs. Pfeffer, "If you can find it in your heart to forgive me. We've both been acting very foolish and it took our children to show us how wrong we were."

Both ladies became very devoted friends, which was a very good thing because the following year they were blessed with their first ainakle and there was no competition between the two new hubbies.

Mrs. Freilichkeit's Tea Party
By Judy Gruenfeld

It was a beautiful day in Yenemvelt. Mrs. Freilichkeit decided to have a tea party to celebrate the arrival of summer. She thought it would be nice to invite some of the neighbors over on this glorious afternoon. She was a very sociable person and enjoyed being with people. Once she decided on the menu, she started calling the neighbors to see if they would be able to attend.

The first neighbor she called was Mrs. Oygen.

"Mrs. Oygen," said Mrs. Freilichkeit, "Would you like to come to my house for a tea party later this afternoon?"

"I don't think so," said Mrs. Oygen. "I have conjunctivitis and I wouldn't want to infect anyone."

Mrs. Freilichkeit said she hoped she felt better and hung up the phone.

Next Mrs. Freilichkeit called Mrs. Emmes.

"I'm having a tea party at my house this afternoon. Would you like to come'

"To tell you the truth," said Mrs. Emmes, "I would love to come, but I have a previous engagement and won't be able to make it."

Mrs. Freilichkeit then called Mrs. Toiva and asked if she would do her a favor and come to her house for a tea party later that day. Mrs. Toiva said it would be her pleasure.

Mrs. Freilichkeit then called Mrs. Hais.

"Mrs. Hais," she said, "Would you like to come to my house later this afternoon. I'm having a tea party."

"Will you have your air conditioning on?" asked Mrs. Hais.

"Certainly, if it's hot outside."

"Then I will be there," said Mrs. Hais.

Mrs. Freilichkeit started to call Mrs. Pamitchell but decided not to. Mrs. Pamitchell was very hard to please and was always trying to change things. This wasn't good enough, and that wasn't good enough. No, she'd be better off without her, and without Mrs. Kvetch for the same reason.

She also decided not to call Mrs. Gantzagadilla and Mrs. Tsimmes because she figured they would probably make a big deal out of a little tea party.

Mrs. Shpait told Mrs. Freilichkeit that she would love to come but she could not possibly be there at the appointed time.

"That's fine," said Mrs. Freilichkeit. "Come whenever you can."

Next on the list was Mrs. Arbeitnit who was delighted to receive the call from Mrs. Freilichkeit.

"Oh, I'd love to come," she said. "Since I retired, I have plenty of time to visit with neighbors."

Mrs. Krankheit, who had originally said "no" because she had a very bad cold, called Mrs. Freilichkeit back as the day progressed, and said that she was feeling much better and decided that an afternoon with the neighbors was just what the doctor had ordered.

When Mrs. Apfel heard that Mrs. Freilichkeit was serving her famous strudel, she said she wouldn't miss the party for anything.

Mrs. Essengut had just eaten when her phone rang, but fortunately, she still had room left for tea and strudel.

Mrs. Freilichkeit then called Mrs. Tsing. Mrs. Tsing said she would live to come and kept talking and talking, so that by the time Mrs. Freilichkeit got off the phone, it was too late to call anyone else.

She should have called Mrs. Retnisht first. Oh well, there was nothing she could do about it now. She had to get ready for her guests.

Soon, Mrs. Freilichkeit's doorbell began ringing. Mrs. Essengut was the first to arrive.

"Please come in," said Mrs. Freilichkeit. She was about to close the door when she heard a squeaky, little voice say, "Excuse me, but may I come in?" It was Mrs. Klein.

"Of course, you may," said the hostess. "I'm so sorry. I didn't see you standing there behind Mrs. Essengut. And I'm so sorry I forgot to call you. I'm glad you are here."

Mrs. Mensch arrived with some cookies she had baked. She never went to anyone's house without bringing something.

As they sat down to tea, there was a knock on the door. When Mrs. Freilichkeit opened the door, she saw Mrs. Balaydict, who was crying.

"Why wasn't I invited to the party?" she said.

"Oh my," said Mrs. Freilichkeit, "I'm so sorry. It was just an oversight on my part. Please come in."

Mrs. Balaydict wiped away her tears and joined the others.

By three-thirty, everyone had arrived except for two guests, Mrs. Farblunjit and Mrs. Shpait. Soon there was a knock on the door.

"I was never good with directions," said Mrs. Farblunjit. "I went around the wrong corner."

"Never mind," said Mrs. Freilichkeit, "The main thing is that you are both here now. Please come in and join us."

The ladies were having a lovely tea party until Mrs. Narishkeit said, "I don't like this strudel."

Mrs. Yenta told Mrs. Narishkeit that it was impolite to say such things to one's hostess. Mrs. Narishkeit apologized to Mrs. Freilichkeit although she really didn't understand what she had done wrong.

At five o'clock, Mrs. Klein whispered to Mrs. Freilichkeit, "I think it's time we all left."

When Mrs. Freilichkeit looked at her watch, everyone agreed. They all thanked Mrs. Freilichkeit for her hospitality and although they, themselves, were not hungry, that is except for Mrs. Essengut, they all went home to prepare supper for their husbands.

Mrs. Finster's Dream
By Judy Gruenfeld

It was five o'clock in the morning in Yenemvelt when Mrs. Finster woke up and looked out the window. She thought, "Why is it so dark outside?" Normally, Mrs. Finster liked to stay up late at night and sleep late in the morning, so when she saw it was dark outside, she became confused.

Mrs. Finster called her neighbor, Mrs. Zager, whom she thought would be able to help her.

"Good morning, Mrs. Zager," said Mrs. Finster. "It's so dark outside and I am a little confused. Can you tell me what time it is?"

"No," said Mrs. Zager. "It's too dark for me to see my clock. Why don't you call Mrs. Tsayna? And, by the way, I think it would be a good idea if you got your own clock."

"You're probably right," said Mrs. Finster. "In the meantime, I will give Mrs. Tsayna a call. Thank you."

Mrs. Finster called Mrs. Tsayna and asked her if she knew what time it was.

Mrs. Tsayna said, "Fsnknsk."

Mrs. Finster couldn't understand a thing she said. Apparently, Mrs. Tsayna didn't have her teeth in her mouth.

"Thank you, anyway," said Mrs. Finster as she hung up the phone.

Mrs. Finster then tried Mrs. Fahrshtooptinkup.

"Do you know what time it is," she asked.

"Well," said Mrs. Fahrshtooptinkup, "I think it's seven o'clock. No, it's eight o'clock. No, wait a minute, I think it's six o'clock. Actually, I'm not sure."

"Never mind," said Mrs. Finster. "I'll try someone else."

Next, Mrs. Finster called Mrs. Ungarik.

"Do you know what time it is?" she asked

"No, I don't," said Mrs. Ungarik. "Is it time for breakfast? My stomach is growling."

"Oy," said Mrs. Finster. "That doesn't help me. She is always hungry. Maybe I'll try Mrs. Knaidlach."

Mrs. Knaidlach could not even answer the phone. She was an early riser and was busy making matzoh balls for her Shabbos soup..

"What am I going to do?" thought Mrs. Finster." I need to know what time it is. Maybe I'll try Mrs. Shpatseer." But Mrs. Shpatseer didn't answer her phone, either. She was out taking a walk. In the dark!

Mrs. Finster was getting quite upset by now. She decided to call Mrs. Chepamit.

"Do you know what time it is?" she asked.

"I wouldn't touch that question with a ten foot pole," said Mrs. Chepamit.

Mrs. Finster was almost ready to cry. Finally, she called Mrs. Nacht who told her it was not morning yet and she should go back to sleep.

When Mrs. Finster woke up later, it was light outside. "I must have been dreaming," she thought.

She called her friend, Mrs. Platznick and told her about the dream. Mrs. Platznick laughed so hard, she almost burst!

Mr. Vachzenzolstdu Buys a New Suit
By Judy Gruenfeld

Mr. and Mrs. Vachzenzolstdu had just received an invitation in the mail. Their good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Freilach were about to marry of their eldest daughter.

"Oh, what a wonderful wedding this is going to be," said Mrs. Vachzenzolstdu. The Freilachs are such lively people. I bet we'll be dancing all night. I can't wait to see my friend, Mr. Tsvaylinkfees since he had his dancing lessons," said Mr. Vachzenzolstdu. "By the way, dear," said Mrs. Vachzenzolstdu, "I think you need a new suit."

"No, I don't. The old one is just fine."

"Remember," said Mrs. Vachzenzolstdu, "the pants on your old suit are too short. I can't imagine why you keep growing."

"Can you take the pants to Mr. Schneider so he can let the hem down?" Mr. Vachzenzolstdu asked his wife.

"There is no more hem to let down," she said. "Please go to Mr. Schneider and have him make you a new suit."

"I don't think so," said Mr. Vachzenzolstdu. "My friend, Mr. Villnisht, is not getting a new suit."

Two weeks went by and Mr. Vachzenzolstdu still had not gotten his new suit. When Mr. Aroysvaffen came by to collect the garbage, Mrs. Vachzenzolstdu gave him Mr. Vachzenzolstdu's simcha suit. Without a simcha suit, in his closet, her husband would have to buy a new one.

When Mrs. Mrs. Vachzenzolstdu brought up the subject of the new suit to Mr. Vachzenzolstdu, he again replied,

"My friend, Mr. Oxchen, is not buying a new suit. And my friend Mr. Hockmeemisht told his wife to stop nagging him; he wasn't buying a new suit, either. And Mr. Tsusammin said that if we all stick together, we can convince our

wives that we do not need new suits!

By this time, Mrs. Vachzenzolstdu was getting a bit worried. Mr. Vachzenzolstdu did not know that he no longer had his old simcha suit and that if he didn't buy a new one, he would not be able to attend the wedding.

Finally, Mr. Chaparein convinced Mr. Vachzenzolstdu to buy a new suit. The two friends went to Mr. Schneider and said,

"Mr. Schneider, we both want new suits."

"Wonderful, gentlemen," said Mr. Schneider. "Since I am already waiting on a customer, I will have one of my sales people help you. Mr. Meed and Mr. Schwacharbiter are both available."

Mr. Chaparein and Mr. Vachzenzolstdu waited and waited for one of the salesmen to help them but, Mr. Meed was relaxing in the back room and Mr. Schwacharbiter was having a cup of coffee. Finally, Mr. Chaparein went into the back room and said,

"Excuse me, but we are here to buy new suits. Please help us."

Both men slowly got up out of their chairs and started measuring the two customers for suits, but they weren't moving very fast.

When Mr. Schneider was finished with his customer, he came over to the other men. He told Mr. Meed and Mr. Schwacharbiter that Mr. Arbeitnisht did more work than they did and that he would finish measuring both men and, by the way, they were both out of a job.

When Mr. Schneider was done, both men had very nice, new suits. Mr. Vachzenzolstdu knew he had done the right thing when his wife told him how handsome he looked.

They had a wonderful time at the chosana, bring much joy to the chosen and kallah. Mr. Vachzenzolstdu even went over to the chossan, and gave him a little advice.

"Always remember, liebe chosson, if you want to have shalom bayis, you must always remember how important it is to grow together with your kallah!"

Mrs. Batampt and Mrs. Geshmok
By Judy Gruenfeld

Mrs. Batampt and Mrs. Geshmok were next door neighbors. But to say they didn't get along, would be putting it mildly. They were always in competition with each other.

When they made chicken soup, Mrs. Batampt would say to Mrs. Geshmok,

"Mine tastes better than yours."

When they made cholent, Mrs. Geshmok would say to Mrs. Batampt,

"Mine is more delicious than yours."

Their husbands didn't know what to do. They got along fine but neither wife liked to when their husbands would spend time with each other. And Mr. Batampt and Mr. Geshmok loved to learn together.

"Ah," Mr. Batampt would say, "Torah is never as sweet as when I am learning it with you."

"Yes," agreed Mr. Geshmok, "The delicious words of the Torah are even more so when I am learning them with you."

"But what are we going to do with our wives? This cannot go on. They don't even like it if we give each other's wife a compliment on her cooking."

"I have an idea," said Mr. Batampt. "Both wives are excellent cooks. Next Erev Shabbos, why don't we switch pots after our wives have prepared the soup and cholent. When they have eaten each other's cooking and enjoyed it, we will tell them that we switched pots. They will have to agree that they are both equally good cooks."

"What a wonderful idea," said Mr. Geshmok.

Fortunately, both women had identical sets of pots. The switch was made, and

neither woman knew about it.

When they sat down to the meal on Erev Shabbos, Mrs. Batampt said,

"Mmmm, I think I outdid myself this week. I don't remember my chicken soup being so tasty."

Naturally, her husband agreed with her and complimented her on her exceptional cooking prowess.

On Shabbos afternoon, when Mr. Geshmok returned from shul, Mrs. Geshmok put out the cholent.

When she tasted it, Mrs. Geshmok said,

"Mmmm, the cholent came out absolutely delicious this week. I don't ever remember it tasting so good."

Naturally, her husband also complimented her on the delicious meal.

After Havdalah, Mr. Batampt said,

"Why don't we take a walk? It's a beautiful night."

As they started walking down the street, they noticed Mr. and Mrs. Geshmok coming out of their house.

"Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. Geshmok," said Mr. Batampt. "We're going for a walk. Won't you join us?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Geshmok.

As they started walking, Mrs. Batampt said,

"I made the tastiest chicken soup this Shabbos."

"Well," said Mrs. Geshmok, "My cholent was absolutely delicious."

Mr. Batampt and Mr. Geshmok told their wives that before Shabbos, they had switched pots and they had each eaten the other's cooking.

Mrs. Batampt and Mrs. Geshmok looked at each other. They felt very sorry for acting so childish and hurting each other's feelings.

They both agreed that from now on, one would make chicken soup and the other would make cholent. They would switch each week. This way, each on would only have to prepare one dish instead of two.

Mrs. Gafairlach and Mr. Genugshoin
By Judy Gruenfeld

One day, Mrs. Gafairlach was on her way to the grocery store when she tripped and fell on the sidewalk.

"Oy," she said. "Ever since my dear husband passed away two years ago, nothing has gone right for me."

Fortunately, she had her cell phone in her purse, the one her children had bought her, even though she made it clear she did not want one.

"What do I need with a cell phone?" said Mrs. Gafairlach. "I am an old lady. Whom am I going to call?"

"We want you to keep it with you at all times," said her children. "You never know when it will come in handy." Now, she was glad she had it.

Mrs. Gafairlach took the cell phone out of her purse, silently thanking her children, and G-d, and called Hatzolah. Within minutes, the ambulance came and drove Mrs. Gafairlach to the hospital. She was in excruciating pain and the doctors had a tough time taking the x-rays, but it had to be done.

Only a year ago, Mrs. Gafairlach had fallen and broken her hip and her thigh. Both were now held together by metal plates and pins. They only vulnerable part of her right side was her pelvis. Now, it, too, was broken.

Mrs. Gafairlach's children came rushing to the hospital to be with their mother. Her eldest daughter, Channie, spoke to the doctor.

"There is really nothing we can do for a broken pelvis," he said. "It will heal by itself. But, remember, she needs to move. She can't stay in bed all day and she must have physical therapy."

Mrs. Gafairlach's children all looked at each other. They knew how stubborn their mother was and how low her tolerance was for pain.

"What are we going to do?" Channie said to her brother Dovid. "We'll never get Mom up and about if she is in too much pain, and if she stays in bed all day she won't heal."

"I'll have a talk with her," Dovid said. "I don't want her to follow in Tanta Bracha's footsteps, pardon my choice of words." Tanta Bracha had fallen and broken her hip three years ago and had never recovered. They would not let this happen to their mother.

"Mama," said Dovid, "You must cooperate with the doctors and therapists or you won't get better."

"I'm in too much pain," said Mrs. Gefairlach. "How can they expect me to get out of bed and move around when I am suffering so much just lying here?"

"I know," said Dovid, "But that is the key to your recovery. Why don't I ask the doctor if he can give you some pain pills before your therapy? Maybe that will help." Reluctantly, Mrs. Gefairlach agreed.

The next day, the nurse gave her some pain medication and took her for a physical therapy session half an hour later.

On her way to the therapy room, Mrs. Gefairlach met Mr. Genugshoin, who was recovering from a heart attack and by-pass surgery. The men's time was over and it was now time for the women to begin their therapy.

"How long have you been in the hospital?" asked Mrs. Gefairlach.

"It's been two weeks, now," said Mr. Genugshoin. "I push myself to do as much as I can and I may be discharged in two days. I will be going home to my daughter's house and continue my rehab on an outpatient basis until I am well enough to go home."

"That's wonderful," said Mrs. Gefairlach, "And where is your wife?"

"Oh, I'm a widower," said Mr. Genugshoin. "My wife died almost two years ago. I'm so lonely, and I still miss her."

"That's about the same time my husband passed away," said Mrs. Gefairlach.

The two continued to chat until it was time for Mrs. Gefairlach to go in for her therapy, and for the next two days, until Mr. Genugshoin was released from the hospital.

Four months later, Mrs. Gefairlach and Mr. Genugshoin stood under the chuppah, to the delight of both families. Mrs. Gefairlach, who is now Mrs. Genugshoin, needs a walker to get around but she is confident that no more terrible things are going to happen. Her husband said they both have had enough problems and are looking forward to spending their golden years together.

Mr. Gross and Miss Klein
By Judy Gruenfeld

It looked like it was going to be a beautiful day in Yenemvelt. A bright, yellow ball was rising from behind the mountains, when Mrs. Klein heard the klippity-klop of the dairyman's wagon approaching her house. Mrs. Klein went out to greet him.

"Good morning, Mr. Milchiker," said Mrs. Klein. "How are you doing, this glorious day?"

"Never better," said Mr. Milchiker, "What can I get for you today?"

"Actually," said Mrs. Klein, "I will be needing a little cream. My daughter has been going out with Mr. Gross' son from the next town over, for a while, and they are going to announce their engagement today. I will be having the Gross family over this evening to plan the vort and the chassana."

"Mazal Tov!" said Mr. Milchiker. "This is, indeed, a day to celebrate."

Mrs. Klein took her cream, paid the dairyman, and returned to her house. She had a lot of work to do, what with the cleaning and baking. She wanted to make a good impression on the Gross family. After all, they would be her machatunum.

Mrs. Yenta had done a fine job when suggesting the match. There was only one thing that bothered the families - the height of both the chossan and the kallah. While Mr. Gross' son, Yankel, was well over six feet tall, Mr. Klein's daughter, Gittel, was barely five feet tall.

There was quite a bit of discussion on the matter when the two walked along the main road in Yenemvelt. Yankel tried to slow down his pace, but Gittel often found it hard to keep up with him and would get out of breath.

"I'm going too fast for you, again," Yankel would say. "I'm sorry, Gittel."

"That's okay," Gittel would reply. "The exercise is good for me."

Mrs. Laibadik felt that Gittel should try harder to keep up with her chossan, while Mrs. Meed felt that Yankel should most definitely slow down. Mrs. Yung felt that with a little more practice, Gittel would have no problem keeping up, while Mrs. Alt said that eventually, Yankel would slow down of his own accord. Everyone seemed to have an opinion.

Mrs. Klein went back inside and started baking. She was famous in town for her ruggalach and all her bite-size pastries.

Mrs. Gross was bringing a honey cake, and when Mrs. Gross baked a cake, it was always triple the size that was needed.

As the sun began to set, both families sat down to supper in their respective homes.

After supper, Mrs. Gross said, "I think it's time to go."

Yankel looked a little nervous.

"Everything will be fine," said Mrs. Gross. "I'm sure we will all get along very nicely."

"But, Mama," said Yankel, "Some people stare at us when we walk down the road together. It's a very uncomfortable feeling."

"I'm sure it is," said Mrs. Gross, "But if you feel Gittel is your bashert, pay no attention to what others think. You can't please everyone and you shouldn't even try. Just do what you feel is right. There are also some people who will make insensitive comments about anything. Do not let someone who doesn't know any better spoil things for you."

"You're right, of course, Mama," said Yankel as he hugged his mother.

"Come," said Mr. Gross. "If we don't leave now, we will be late and we want to make a good impression on the Klein's."

Everyone climbed into the wagon and they were on their way.

A few minutes later, they were greeted warmly at the Kline residence. Mrs. Klein made some tea and they all sat around the table making plans for the upcoming events. The vort would be next week and the chassana, a month later.

Gittel was a beautiful bride. The entire town came to the wedding and danced and ate for hours. It was the beginning of a wonderful life for Gittel and Yankel.

As far as the difference in their heights is concerned, Yankel, unfortunately, developed problems with his knees and could not bend down. Gittel got everything on all the lower shelves in the house and Yankel was able to reach everything on the higher shelves.

We don't see the whole picture, but Hashem, in His infinite wisdom, sees all!

Chedva Babbler
By Judy Gruenfeld

It appeared to be another nice day in nineteenth century Yenemvelt. The roosters were awakening the good citizens as the sun slowly rose above the nighttime divide in the sky.

There was much work to be done in this small town, and there was no time to waste, if everyone wanted to eke out his or her living and keep Yenemvelt afloat.

The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, the dairyman, the greengrocer, the ragman, the blacksmith, the tailor, etc. all washed, dressed, and went to shul, while their wives began collecting eggs and making rolls for breakfast. After breakfast, the men went to their respective jobs.

The women cleaned their houses and then went to the market for supplies they needed for the day. Sometimes money was exchanged for goods and sometimes the barter system was used.

The women did some socializing while at the market, being very careful not to overstep the bounds of loshon hora, before they went home to prepare supper. That is, all but one woman- Chedva Babbler.

One could not help but feel sorry for Mrs. Babbler, and all attributed her inappropriate speech to the fact that she really had no nachas.

After almost twenty years of marriage, the Babblers remained childless, and Mr. Babbler had to supplement his income by accepting charity from his friends and neighbors.

The good people of Yenemvelt barely had enough for themselves, but they knew how hard it was for Mr. Babbler to ask them for charity, so they never refused. Even if there was only one kopek to spare, the neighbor would give it to him.

When Mr. Babbler came home one Erev Shabbos, he expected to find his wife preparing the meager rations of food they had, as she usually did. However, to his surprise, there was no food on the stove and his wife was in bed with a damp cloth

on her head.

"What is the matter, my dear?" said Mr. Babble.

"I'm not feeling well," said Mrs. Babbler.

"I can see that," he said, "But what is wrong?"

"I am very upset," said Mrs. Babbler. "I overheard some women at the marketplace speaking ill of me."

"How can that be?" said Mr. Babbler. "You know the fine ladies of this town are very careful with their speech. What did they say?"

"They were saying that I am always minding everyone else's business."

At this point, Mrs. Babbler began to cry.

Mr. Babbler did not know what to do to ease his wife's pain. He knew the truth, but was afraid to confront his wife about it, because she was so unhappy. He also figured, and rightly so, that this would only make matters worse. He needed time to think.

"I'll prepare Shabbos this week," he said. "You rest."

Fortunately, the challah was already done. Mr. Babbler put two small pieces of chicken in the oven and potatoes and beans in a pot to simmer for the meal on Shabbos afternoon. They would eat that with herring.

Mr. Babbler then went over to his wife. "I'm going to shul. You rest. When I get back and we bring in the Shabbos, I'm sure you will feel much better."

On his way to shul, looking very preoccupies, Mr. Babbler met his friend, Mr. Sachel.

"Why so glum, my friend?" said Mr. Sachel.

Mr. Babbler looked at his watch. "I guess I have time to tell you before Shabbos starts," and he told Mr. Sachel what had happened when he returned home from work that evening.

"Don't worry," said Mr. Sachel. "I will take care of everything."

Motzei Shabbos, Mr. Sachel got in touch with all of the townspeople and made a Melava Maika. The Babblers had a wonderful time, as did everyone else, and Mrs. Babbler got a new perspective on her neighbors.

She asked forgiveness for all the loshon hora she spoke, and, naturally, everyone was eager to forgive her.

"They are all very nice people," Mrs. Babbler said to her husband on their way home. "There is no reason for me to be jealous. Hashem has given me a lot, and you, dear husband, are the most precious gift of all."

Mr. Babbler made a mental note to thank Mr. Sachel. He knew his wife loved him but he had no idea that she held him in such high esteem.

Life for the Babblers was significantly better from then on. All we have to do is appreciate what we have.

Mrs. Umglick and Mrs. Mazal
By Judy Gruenfeld

Mrs. Umglick and Mrs. Mazal were best friends. Mrs. Umglick lived in a tiny, little, dilapidated house in the poor section of Yenemvelt, while Mrs. Mazal lived in an elegant mansion in the elegant section of town.

They had known each other since they were children. When they were girls, Mrs. Umglick and Mrs. Mazal would make arrangements to meet after school although neither parents, Mr. and Mrs. Shaynapumin, nor Mr. and Mrs. Umglick, respectively, wanted them to play together because of a long time feud between the families. The girls' teacher, Mrs. Klugeskup, explained to the girls that outside appearances and social status were not important. What was important was what was in a person's heart and soul. Mrs. Klugeskup would stay after school with the girls so they could play together, as neither girl was allowed at the other's house.

Time flew by, and soon it was time to find a shidduch for both girls. Shidduch after shidduch was proposed for both girls but all were rejected. Mr. Kindershliel did not seem ready to take on the responsibility of a wife and family. Mr. Koyach spent too much time building his muscles and not enough time learning Torah. Mr. Langalux was just too tall. Mr. Basabrimmin seemed to have hair growing all over his forehead. Mr. Finster seemed very depressed and no one wanted to take a chance that his or her children or grandchildren would be like him. Mr. Maven was a snob. He thought he knew everything about everything, when in truth, he knew nothing, and Mr. Nebuch, though he spent many hours a day learning Torah and working hard, did not learn or earn very much.

One day, Miss Meeskeit who, as her name suggests, was not very good looking, and Miss Shaynapunim, who was very pretty, bumped into each other while at the market. They hadn't seen each other for quite some time since they were both very busy working and looking for a husband.

"Why don't we go for a cup of coffee," said Miss Meeskeit. "There's a kosher coffee shop a few stores down."

"That sounds like a great idea," said Miss Shaynapunim. "It will give us a chance to catch up on each other's lives."

When they went into the coffee shop, the waiter came over to their table to take their order. He was a nice looking young man who worked part time at the coffee shop while learning Torah full time.

When he saw Miss Shaynapunim, he decided to ask her for a date and she accepted. They went out for a while and then decided to become engaged.

In the meantime, at the next table, sat another fine looking young man. This young man worked full time and learned Torah at night. He and Miss Meeskeit kept looking at each other. To her surprise, the young man came over to her and asked her for a date. They also went out for a while and soon announced their engagement.

And thus, Miss Shaynapunim became Mrs. Umglick and Miss Meeskeit became Mrs. Mazal.

The girls got married two weeks apart so they could attend each other's Sheva Brachas. Both settled in Yenemvelt and began their new lives.

Unfortunately, they did not get to see much of each other because both girls worked outside the home and had to tend to a lot of chores at home.

One day, Mr. Mazal came home and announced to his wife that he had gotten a very good job and they were moving to a nicer neighborhood. The two girls promised they would always remain friends and would keep in contact with each other. But, as things go, each was very busy with household chores and soon they were out of touch. Mrs. Mazal had made other friends in her new neighborhood and, after a while, she all but forgot about Mrs. Umglick.

Several years went by. Mr. and Mrs. Umglick were blessed with four lovely children, two girls and two boys, while Mr. and Mrs. Mazal remained childless. Nothing they did seemed to help their situation. It was truly a shame. By this time, Mr. Mazal was earning a very large salary and certainly could afford to support any children they would be fortunate enough to have. But, for some reason, Hashem did not give them any. And, as for Mr. and Mrs. Umglick, they could barely make ends meet. The children wore tattered clothes and the family

could only afford one small chicken for Erev Shabbos and mostly only bones for their Shabbos cholent.

One day, Mrs. Umglick decided that she was going to get a job. The children were in cheder all day and she could work part-time.

While looking in the paper, Mrs. Umglick saw an ad for a cleaning lady. When she called the number in the ad, the lady on the other end of the phone gave her directions to her home. She had an appointment for the next at ten o'clock in the morning.

Mrs. Umglick washed and pressed her best Shabbos dress and then went to the address she had been given. When she rang the bell, the lady of the house answered the door.

When the door opened, both ladies stood there in shock.

"Is that you?" they both shouted, as they fell into each other's arms and cried.

"Come in, come in. I'll make some tea," said Mrs. Mazal.

The two ladies started talking, one discovering that the other had no children, and the other discovering that the one had no money.

"I will give you the job on one condition," said Mrs. Mazal. "That you promise to spend at least every other Shabbos with us. I don't know how we stayed apart for so long but we were best friends and it's time we were back in each other's lives."

"It's a deal," said Mrs. Umglick.

They became very close again. Mrs. Umglick felt very fortunate that she now had some money to spend on necessities and Mrs. Mazal felt fortunate that she and her husband had become like an aunt and an uncle to the four Umglick children.

So you see, we are all fortunate. We are given exactly what we need, exactly when we need it.

Mrs. Machayah and Mrs. Kvetch
By Judy Gruenfeld

Another day had just dawned in modern day Yemvult. The thin, white, hazy cloud covering the sun made it look like a fried egg cooked "over easy".

Mrs. Machayah stretched, said, "Modeh Ani", and got out of bed. She looked at the sky and thought, "I know that cloud will move away from the sun and it will be a beautiful day." She was definitely a glass-half-full kind of person.

On the other side of town, Mrs. Kvetch was also waking up. She also stretched, said "Modeh Ani" and got out of bed. But that is where the similarity ended. When Mrs. Kvetch looked out the window, she wouldn't help but bristle.

"Oy," she said. "If only that cloud would move away from the sun, I would be able to enjoy the day." Mrs. Kvetch always seemed to forget that Hashem created the clouds, too. She was definitely a glass-half-empty kind of person.

In spite of their very different outlooks on life, Mrs. Machayah and Mrs. Kvetch were very good friends. Mrs. Machayah felt it incumbent upon her to teach her friend to appreciate all things in life, including rainy days, whether literal or figurative. She felt that Mrs. Kvetch became too depressed when things were not going her way and she did not take the time to realize that all things happen for the good and that things could improve at any moment.

Mrs. Kvetch, however, felt it her duty to get her friend to see things more realistically. She felt nothing good could come out of perceiving things through rose-colored glasses. Mrs. Kvetch felt her friend tended to avoid all things unpleasant and not face the truth.

Mrs. Machayah made herself a cup of steaming hot coffee, added one teaspoon of sugar and a little milk and made the appropriate bracha. "Ah, how sweet," she thought as she took her first sip. Before she realized it, the coffee was gone and the phone was ringing. Mrs. Machayah pushed the button on the cordless phone that was just within her reach.

"Hello."

"No wonder you're home," said Mrs. Kvetch to her friend. "How are you doing on this gloomy day?"

"I'm fine, thank you. The sun is about to peek through the clouds any moment now and I just finished my coffee. Why don't you come over for breakfast and we can decide if we want to do anything today. I don't feel like sitting around the house. Maybe we can go to the park. How about you? How are you doing?"

"To be honest with you, not very well. I feel a migraine coming on and my whole body aches from Arthritis. On top of that, I broke a tooth and I have to go to the dentist."

"Why don't you get out of the house?" said Mrs. Machayah. "I'm sure that will make you feel much better."

"I doubt it, but I don't think this will be a park day, anyway. Why don't we go to the mall? My nephew is getting married next month and I need to find a dress to wear. That is, if I feel well enough to go to the wedding."

"That's fine with me," said Mrs. Machaya. "Why don't you come over and we'll be on our way."

"Okay," said Mrs. Kvetch but I'll just grab something to eat at home and then I'll be over." Mrs. Kvetch didn't like her friend's cooking, even if it was only breakfast, but she certainly did not want to insult her.

Soon the two were off to the mall. Mrs. Kvetch tried on dress after dress but none seemed to satisfy her. She thought the color of the first one clashed with her eyes. The second one had too many ruffles. Mrs. Kvetch was not a ruffle person. The neck was too tight on the third one and she couldn't breathe. The neck was too loose on the fourth one and Mrs. Kvetch felt it was not tzeniusdik. By the time she tried on the fifth dress, Mrs. Kvetch began to feel she wouldn't find the right one at all.

"Oh, why do I have to go to this Chassunah, anyway?" she moaned. "It's a three hour schlep and if I find a dress, then I will have to go looking for shoes, too."

"Let's try another store," said Mrs. Machayah. "We haven't exhausted all our efforts yet. I know just the right place."

"Okay," said Mrs. Kvetch, allowing herself to be led to another dress shop.

"Let me see if I can pick something out for you," said Mrs. Machayah.

"You can try," said Mrs. Kvetch, as she thought to herself, "She has such awful taste. She will never find anything I like."

Mrs. Machayah picked a dress off the rack and handed it to her friend. She had to admit it was a nice dress. The color seemed perfect as did the neckline and there were no ruffles. It was elegant without being ostentatious.

Mrs. Kvetch went into the fitting room while Mrs. Machayah waited right outside. A few minutes later Mrs. Kvetch came out wearing the dress, and a smile on her face.

"I like it," she said. "What do you think?"

"I think you look beautiful," said Mrs. Machayah.

"Good," said Mrs. Kvetch. "I'll take it, and I already have a pair of shoes at home that will go very nicely with it."

Mrs. Kvetch went back into the dressing room to change back into her clothes. Mrs. Machayah was waiting for her when she came out.

"I'd say we've had a pretty nice day, so far," she said.

The ladies went out to lunch and then started heading home. As they approached the mall exit, they saw that it had started to rain.

"I knew the day would be nasty," said Mrs. Kvetch.

"How can you say that?" said Mrs. Machayah. "You got a beautiful new dress and

saved money because you don't need to buy shoes. Now we will each have to buy an umbrella, so it's a good day for umbrella manufacturers, too."

As the ladies got back into the secure feeling of the dry car, Mrs. Machayah turned to Mrs. Kvetch. "You know, my friend, reality is how you perceive it. Try to remember that the next time you see half a glass of water."

Mrs. Johliva's Luncheon
By Judy Gruenfeld

Mrs. Johliva and Mrs. Fargeenen were sisters. When Mrs. Fargeenen's husband passed away, she moved in with her sister, Mrs. Johliva, who was already a widow. They were very close and always did everything together.

One day, Mrs. Johliva said to Mrs. Farheenen, "Why don't we have a luncheon so you can meet all the neighbors?"

"I'd like that very much," said Mrs. Fargeenen. "Let's start planning it right now. Whom shall we invite and what shall we serve?"

"Well," said Mrs. Johliva, "First let's see who will come and then we can plan our menu."

The sisters got right to work and started calling the neighbors.

First they called Mrs. Fachtig.

"Would you like to come to our house next Tuesday for a luncheon?" they asked.

"Thank you very much for the invitation," said Mrs. Fachtig, "But I'm done with luncheons for now. I've been to so many recently that I just don't think I can attend another one. Maybe some other time."

Mrs. Fargeenen was disappointed but Mrs. Johliva told her not to be discouraged.

"We'll just continue down the list," she said. "I'm sure others will come."

Next they called Mrs. Chazar.

"Would you like to come to a luncheon at our house next Tuesday?" they asked.

"I'd love to," said Mrs. Chazar. "What will you be serving?"

"We haven't decided on the menu yet, but please be here at twelve o'clock."

"I certainly will," said Mrs. Chazar, and then hung up the phone.

Then they called Mrs. Simcha, who said she was always delighted to attend parties.

The next person to be called was Mrs. Farshpatig.

"I'd love to come," said Mrs. Farshpatig, "But I don't think I can be there until one o'clock."

"That's fine," said the sisters, "As long as you come."

"How about Mrs. Effsher?" said Mrs. Fargeenen.

When they called her, Mrs. Effsher said that she wasn't sure whether or not she would be able to make it but she said that she would try.

Mrs. Johlava then called Mrs. Kuchengut.

"I'd love to come to your luncheon," she said. "What can I bring?"

"Nothing," said Mrs. Johliva. "We're taking care of the menu."

"Well," said Mrs. Kuchengut, "Maybe I'll just bring a little something, if that's all right with you?"

"That's fine," said Mrs. Johliva, and she hung up the phone.

There was one more person they wanted to invite - Mrs. Hubnishtkeintseit. When the sisters called her, Mrs. Hubnishtkeintseit very politely said,

"I would love to come to your luncheon, but I am much too busy and I just don't have the time."

Now it was time to plan the menu. Mrs. Johliva and Mrs. Fargeenen got a pencil and paper and began to write.

"Let's see. There will be seven people including us and Mrs. Effsher, if she comes. Mrs. Johliva then came up with the following menu:

7 luncheon rolls
7 slices of turkey breast
7 pickles
7 tea bags
7 cookies

"Please don't be angry with me, sister," said Mrs. Fargeenen, "But I don't think that will be enough food for seven people."

"Of course that will be enough. Everyone is watching her weight. That is, everyone except Mrs. Chazaar, of course."

On the day of the luncheon, both sisters went to the store to purchase the items they needed. Mrs. Fargeenen didn't want to upset her sister so she didn't say anything about the amount of food they purchased.

When they got home, they set the table with a pretty floral tablecloth. Then they carefully laid out seven plates and put one roll, one slice of turkey breast, and one pickle on each plate. They put a cup by each plate and put a teabag in each cup. A cookie was laid carefully by each cup. It was now eleven fifty-five. Their guests would be arriving any minute.

Mrs. Chazar was the first to arrive. "I'm starving," she said. "When do we eat?"

"As soon as everyone arrives," said Mrs. Fargeenen, with a knot in her stomach. She should have insisted they buy more food for the luncheon.

Mrs. Effsher decided to come and even Mrs. Farshpatig was on time.

Most of the ladies had arrived and seated themselves at the table. When they saw the amount of food, they all thought to themselves,

"I'm really quite hungry. I don't think this will be enough." But they didn't want to offend their hostesses so, of course, they said nothing.

At that very moment, the last guest arrived - Mrs. Kughengut.

"I'm sorry I'm late," she said, "But I could not walk very fast with this big heavy pot."

Mrs. Kughengut put the pot on the table and took the lid off. Inside the pot was steaming hot chicken soup with huge chunks of chicken and vegetables. Matzoh balls floated on top.

Naturally, the guests, not wanting to hurt their hostesses' feelings, ate the roll and turkey first. Then, Mrs. Fargeenen brought out soup bowls and spoons. All the ladies ate so much that none of them could eat their dinner that night.

Mrs. Shpatzeer Takes a Walk
By Judy Gruenfeld

"What a beautiful, warm, breezy spring day it is. I think I'll take a walk," Mrs. Shpatzeer said to herself. "But I don't feel like going alone. I think I'll call on some of my neighbors to join me."

Mrs. Shpatzeer was on her way. The first house she came to was that of Mrs. Oysgalicht. All was dark and Mrs. Shpatzeer figured that her neighbor was probably still sleeping. Besides, Mrs. Oysgalicht was not a very smart lady and her conversations were boring. She also had trouble putting one foot in front of the other. "No," thought Mrs. Shpatzeer, "taking a walk with Mrs. Oysgalicht would not be much fun."

Mrs. Shpatzeer continued along her way until she came to Mrs. Shpatzeemisht's house. They were actually related but, Mr. Shpatzeer had shortened his name before they were married.

"Would you like to go for a walk with me, cousin," Mrs. Shpatzeer said to Mrs. Shpatzeemisht as she approached her house and saw her reading on the porch.

"Oh, good morning," said Mrs. Shpatzeemisht. "No, I don't think so. I would prefer to stay on my porch and finish my book. But, you have a nice walk."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Shpatzeer, as she continued on her way.

The next house she came to was that of Mrs. Shluffengut. She knocked and knocked, but nobody answered the door. Finally, Mrs. Shluffengut peeked out the window and told Mrs. Shpatzeer that she was still sleeping and did not wish to be disturbed.

"I know," said Mrs. Shpatzeer, "I'll see if my friend, Mrs. Schvairarbiter will come for a walk with me."

When she knocked on the door, Mr. Schvairarbiter said, "I'm sorry, I can't go with you. I have too much work to do."

Well, by this time, Mrs. Shpatzeer was getting a little hot under the collar. "Oh, maybe Mrs. Schvitz will come with me," she thought. Then she remembered that Mrs. Schvitz was on vacation in Florida.

She continued walking down the street, when she saw Mrs. Zitsdu on her lounge chair.

"How about coming for a walk with me?" she said.

"Thank you for the offer but I think I'll just sit here on my lounge chair today. I just love looking at my garden."

A little disheartened, Mrs. Shpatzeer continued on her way. She was getting her walk in, after all, even though it would be nicer to have some company.

She then noticed Mrs. Famachtenpisk walking towards her. When they approached each other, Mrs. Shpatzeer said,

"Do you mind if I walk with you?" But Mrs. Famachtenpisk said nothing. Everyone thought she was a snob, but she was really quite shy. Mrs. Shpatzeer made a mental note of trying to draw her out one day. But not today. Today she wanted to walk!

Soon she passed Mrs. Balaboosta's house. Mrs. Balaboosta was sweeping her porch and said that she had too much housework and cooking to do and had no time for a walk.

By the time, Mrs. Shpatzeer saw Mrs. Kochleffel, she had a very visible frown on her face.

"Why are you so sad?" asked Mrs. Kochleffel.

"No one wants to take a walk with me and I really would prefer not going alone.

"I'll fix that," said Mrs. Kochleffel. She went in the house and called all the neighbors, and invited them to tea at Mrs. Balaboosta's house.

"But, before we have tea," said Mrs. Kochleffel, "we must all go for a walk with Mrs. Shpatzeer. We are her neighbors and she is counting on us."

And, so it was, that Mrs. Shpatzeer, thanks to Mrs. Kochleffel and Mrs. Balaboosta, had a lovely walk, a delicious cup of tea, and, most important, an afternoon with friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Tsvaylinkfees
By Judy Gruenfeld

Mr. and Mrs. Tsvaylinkfees were getting ready to go to a chassana. Mr. Tsvaylinkfees had a new suit and Mrs. Tsvaylinkfees had a new dress. They also had new pairs of shoes. They would joke about their shoes because they both felt that they had two left feet.

When they attend chassanas, they both enjoy the food but neither can keep up with the dancing.

"What's the matter?" said Mr. Tsvaylinkfees when he saw the frown on his wife's face.

"Sometimes I wish we could dance. Both the men and the women have such a good time, but I feel as if I am either stepping on my own feet or someone else's. Nobody says anything. They are too polite, but I know I am causing some bruises."

"Would you like to take simcha dancing lessons?" asked Mr. Tsvaylinkfees. I know of an instructor in town. Her name is Mrs. Tantsmaven."

"Do you think I could?" said Mrs. Tsvaylinkfees. "I would love to be able to keep up with the other ladies on the dance floor."

"It won't help us tonight, but, in the future, you will be able to dance along with all the other ladies, I promise," said Mr. Tsvaylinkfees. "I will get her phone number for you from my friend Mr. Helfen. He is always happy to help in any he can. As a matter of fact, he will be at the chassana tonight."

Mrs. Tsvaylinkfees had a good time at the chassana but she was looking forward to dancing at the next one they were invited to. So, the very next morning, she called Mrs. Tansmaven.

"I would like to take simcha dancing lessons," she said. I have trouble keeping up with the other ladies when we go to simchas."

"No problem," said Mrs. Tantsmaven. "You can start today, if you want. I have an opening at eleven o'clock."

Mrs. Tsvaylinkfees was both nervous and excited at the same time but she agreed to the appointment. She hoped she would not make a fool of herself and that Mrs. Tantsmaven would have patience with her.

As it turned out, she had nothing to worry about. Mrs. Tantsmaven was a lovely lady.

"We'll take it one step at a time," she said, trying not to laugh at her own little inside joke. "We'll start with the Hora and we can proceed from there."

"Okay," said Mrs. Tsvaylinkfees.

"Let's start with the right foot. Move it to the side away from your left foot."

Mrs. Tsvaylinkfees looked as if she were about to cry.

"What's the matter?" asked Mrs. Tantsmaven.

"I don't have a right foot," said Mrs. Tsvaylinkfees. "I have two left feet."

"Of course you have a right foot," said Mrs. Tantsmaven. "You must believe in yourself if you are going to succeed."

After only ten dancing lessons, Mrs. Tsvaylinkfees was not only doing the Hora like a pro, but she knew all the other sincha dances.

Whenever she passed a young person she knew on the street, she would say, "I'm Yirtsi Hashem, I will dance at your chassana."

Mr. Harrik Gets a Haircut
By Judy Gruenfeld

Mr. Harrik was a long time resident of Yenemvelt. He was mostly known for his bushy, black curls that would fly all over his head. He was constantly putting his hand on his head to make sure his yarmulke was still in place.

Most of the townsmen envied Mr. Harrik, his head of hair, because, for the most part, the men in Yenemvelt didn't have much hair.

The payos were fine. They didn't interfere with anything. But the hair on his head, oy vey! What a sight! And what a job to manage!

Most of the credit for doing so would have to go to Mrs. Harrik. She tried to brush it, comb it, cut it, wash it, but nothing seemed to tame the wild beast on top of Mr. Harrik's head.

"Dear," Mrs. Harrik said one day to her husband. "Why don't you get a haircut at the barbershop>as most of the men in town do."

"Remember, I tried that once" said Mr. Harrik. "The barber told me not to come back. He said there was nothing he could do with my "bushy mane" as he called it."

"I know," said his wife, "But there are new things today. Maybe new scissors, electric razors, creams, gels, something that would tame it for you. And the old barber is long gone."

"Okay," said Mr. Harrik. "I will see what I can do."

First, Mr. Harrik went to his friend, Mr. Shnayden. "Can you please help me?" he said. "My wife is tired of taking care of my hair. Can you cut it for me?"

"I can try," said Mr. Shnayden, "But I haven't held a scissor in my hand for a very long time. I am retired, you know. I might make it look worse than it already is."

"Never mind," said Mr. Harrik. "I appreciate your concern but I don't want to ask

you to do something that would make you uncomfortable."

Next, Mr. Harrik decided to go to Mr. Langelux, who turned him down flatly! "Are you serious, Mr. Harrik? "You want to cut off your beautiful curls? Certainly not your payos, I hope."

"No, no, of course not my payos. Just this mop on top of my head. We can't deal with it any longer."

"I'm sorry, my friend," said Mr. Langelux. "But, I just can't do it. It would hurt me to cut your beautiful hair. Please reconsider."

"Thank you, anyway," said Mr. Harrik. "I will have to find someone else."

Mr. Harrik then decided to go to Mr. Schneider. When he told Mr. Schneider his plan, Mr. Schneider burst out laughing.

"Mr. Harrik," he said. "I am a tailor. I cut material and sew it together. I don't cut hair! There is no way I can help you!"

Mr. Harrik was feeling somewhat dejected by now. What was he going to do? His wife could no longer manage his hair and he certainly was not up for the job, and a job, it was!

There was one possibility left. A new family had moved into town, the Sheerers. He would introduce himself to Mr. Sheerer and see if he could help him.

Mr. Harrik walked into Mr. Sheerer's shop.

"How do you do," he was greeted by the owner. I am Mr. Sheerer and this is my shop. Pardon me for being presumptuous, but I think I can help you."

"You can!" shouted Mr. Harrik.

"Yes, I most certainly can," said Mr. Sheerer. "Please have a seat in my chair."

Mr. Harrik did as he was told.

Mr. Sheerer put a large, black cape on Mr. Harrik and picked up a scissor in one hand and a razor in the other.

"Snip, snip, buzz, buzz!"

Mr. Harrik could not look in the mirror as Mr. Sheerer did his job. His eyes were tightly closed and he was afraid to open them.

Half an hour passed...slowly, and quickly, at the same time.

"You can open your eyes, now," said Mr. Sheerer.

Little by little, Mr. Harrik opened his eyes, slowly, one at a time. He didn't recognize himself when he finally did look in the mirror. Really! He didn't think it was him! He began moving. As he moved, so did the man in the mirror, first a finger, then a hand, then an arm. It was Mr. Harrik, alright! And he didn't look half bad, either. His payos were intact, which was the main thing, and the rest of his hair, well, it actually looked good short.

He plopped his yarmulke on top of his head. It didn't move. Mr. Harrik wondered how long it would take for him to get used to not feeling for it every couple of minutes.

He paid Mr. Sneerer, thanked him, and headed home.

When he walked in the door, his wife also didn't recognize him.

"It's me," he said, "Your husband."

"Yes," said Mrs. Harrik. "You look so handsome."

Since no one in the town recognized him, Mr. and Mrs. Harrik had a really good time with Mr. Harrik's new look, before telling everyone who he really was.

Mr. Goornisht and Miss Bubkas
By Judy Gruenfeld

Once upon a time, in a cozy little Yenemvelt, there lived a lovely young lady named Miss Bubkas. She had long, golden blond hair and deep blue eyes. She was, by far, the fairest maiden for miles around, and all the young men wanted a shidduch with her.

There was only one problem. The family had no money. None of the bachurs' parents wanted their Talmudi Chachamim to be matched with such a poor family. After all, they all wanted their sons to remain in a learning institution and learn Torah all day. This would not be possible if the kallah's parents could not support them.

So, Miss Bubkas, though a very fair young lady, remained unmarried. She would cry herself to sleep many a night, her sobs tearing her parents' hearts right out of their chests.

One day, a merchant came to town, selling his wares. He was a nice looking young man, tall and slender. He had pots, pans, lanterns, rags, and all manner of dry goods.

When he got to the Bubkas' house, Mrs. Bubkas stepped outside to see what he was selling. When she saw the young man, Mrs. Buskas' thoughts went right from the merchandize to the merchant.

"Hello," she said. "I'm Mrs. Bubkas."

"Hello," said the young man. "My name is Yaakov Goornisht, and I am selling all kinds of goods. Please have a look in my wagon."

With that, Mrs. Bubkas went around the wagon, looking at all the merchandize with one eye and keeping the other eye on the merchant.

"You must be very hot," she said. "Would you like to come in for a glass of iced tea or lemonade?"

"Thank you, ma'am, but if you wouldn't mind bringing it outside, I would love a cold drink."

With that, Mrs. Bubkas went inside and brought the young man a nice, tall glass of cold lemonade, for which he thanked her.

As he was drinking his lemonade, and Mrs. Bubkas was checking out the wagonload, Mr. Goomisht caught sight of Miss Bubkas standing in the doorway. He couldn't help but stare.

"Excuse me, ma'am, he said, "But who is that standing at your front door?"

"Why, that is my daughter, Shaindel," said Mrs. Bubkas.

"I don't mean to be forward," said Yaakov, "But may I please be introduced to her?"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Bubkas, and she motioned for Shaindel to come to the wagon.

"Ma'am," said Mr. Goomisht, "My name is Yaakov Goornisht. I am very pleased to meet you."

"Thank you," said Miss Bubkas, "I am pleased to meet you, too."

At this point, Yaakov forgot about his mission and began, instead, focusing his attention on Miss Bubkas. The two were conversing for quite a while, when Mr. Bubkas came home for lunch.

"Excuse me, sir," said Yaakov. "But may I take your lovely daughter for a walk?"

Mr. and Mrs. Bubkas looked at each other. "Of course, young man, but do not be too long," said Mr. Bubkas.

"No sir," said Yaakov.

Yaakov and Shaindel began walking down the road, which was the beginning of

their journey through life together. They had three girls...hardly bubkas, and three boys...hardly goomisht, and lots and lots of nachas.