

3. Twelve

The day after a notable visit from the Hasid, Moshe, now in an upbeat mood due to his financial success and recent marriage, offers money to Nate, his theater cleaner, who declines out of concern for Moshe's financial recklessness. Despite Moshe's generosity, Nate shares his preference for stable employment over quick money, reminiscing about his younger days earning well at a dance hall which is now a funeral home, a conversation leading Moshe to consider opening his theater to African Americans.

Chona, Moshe's American-born wife, supports Moshe's idea, dismissing worries about potential backlash from the white community with her typically spirited outlook. With this decision, Moshe takes a significant step four weeks later by booking Chick Webb, a well-known African American entertainer. This event transforms Moshe's theater into a haven of joy for the local African American community, marking a departure from the exclusive entertainment venues in Pottstown.

Moshe's venture into inclusive entertainment not only boosts his finances but also challenges the societal norms of the time, eliciting mixed reactions from the community. Despite facing legal and social backlash, including fines and threats from various city officials and his own synagogue, Moshe perseveres with support from his cousin Isaac and clever negotiations with the building owner and city officials. Chona's persistent engagement with community and social causes further cements their commitment to inclusivity and justice.

However, Chona's deteriorating health becomes a central concern, leading Moshe into a desperate search for medical solutions while grappling with his own superstitions and fears linked to a dream of success in twelves—a motif that has influenced his life decisions and luck. As Chona's condition worsens, the support from the African American community of Chicken Hill solidifies, displaying deep respect and affection

for her contributions to their lives.

Moshe's refusal to relocate despite Chona's illness reflects a deep commitment to their shared values and the community they've nurtured. The narrative culminates in a reflective confrontation with Isaac, emphasizing Moshe's dedication to Chona and their life together, tirelessly seeking a miracle for her recovery amidst the backdrop of a community bridging racial divides through shared moments of humanity and cultural celebration.