

# Chapter - 3 A Wedding In Brownsville

## Understanding The Text

### Question 1.

What do you understand of Dr. Margolin's past? How does it affect his present life?

### Answer:

Dr. Margolin's past was a mixture of recognition and grief. As a child, he was declared a prodigy. Everyone thought he would grow up to be a genius. But he also faced hardships. His entire family had been tortured, burned and gassed. He had lost his one true love, Raizel. All this shaped Dr. Margolin's present state of mind. He had grown aloof from the Senciminers after the loss of his family. He suffered from hypochondria and fear of death. The death of his family and his love in the reign of Hitler made him lose faith in humanity. However, on the other hand, he had a good career. He was a success in his profession. He had an office in West End Avenue and wealthy patients. He was highly respected by his colleagues and everyone else.

### Question 2.

What was Dr. Margolin's attitude towards his profession?

### Answer:

Dr. Margolin has always been loyal towards his profession. He had never broken the Hippocratic Oath and had always been honourable with his patients. He was an enormous success in his field and is highly respected. Although he has wealthy patients, he treated rabbis, refugees and Jewish writers without any charge, and even supplied them with medicines and a hospital bed, if necessary. However, Hitler's reign and the brutal death of his family and his community made him despise the matrons who came to him for petty ills while millions faced horrible deaths.

### Question 3.

What is Dr. Margolin's view of the kind of life the American Jewish community leads?

### Answer:

The kind of life the American Jewish community led was not appreciated by Dr. Margolin. According to him, Jewish laws and customs were completely distorted. Those who had no regard for Jewishness wore skullcaps. He even found their celebrations irritating, the Anglicised Yiddish, the Yiddishised English, the ear-splitting music and unruly dances. He was ashamed whenever he took his wife to a wedding or a Bar Mitzvah.

**Question 4.**

What were the personality traits that endeared Dr. Margolin to others in his community?

**Answer:**

Dr. Margolin was a self-taught man, a son of a poor teacher of Talmud. As a child, he was declared as a prodigy, reciting long passages of the bible and studying Talmud and commentaries on his own. He even taught himself geometry and algebra. At the age of seventeen, he attempted a translation. He was referred to as great and illustrious.

**Question 5.**

Why do you think Dr. Margolin had the curious experience at the wedding hall?

**Answer:**

Dr. Margolin's experience at the wedding hall was a result of his death. He met with an accident on the way to the wedding. His curious and mysterious encounter with Raizel could probably be explained through his past. Raizel was his one true love who he never had a chance to marry. She was given away to someone else and was later shot by the Nazis.

**Question 6.**

Was the encounter with Raizel an illusion or was the carousing at the wedding-hall illusory? Was Dr. Margolin the victim of the accident and was his astral body hovering in the world of twilight?

**Answer:**

The carousing at the wedding-hall was illusionary. Raizel herself has been dead for long and her encounter with Dr. Margolin was because of his own death. He was the victim of the accident and his astral body was hovering in the world of twilight. Both were missing a physical dimension, and in fact, were spirits.

## Appreciation

**Question 1.**

Surrealism was an artistic and literary movement in France between the two World Wars. Its basic idea is that the automatic, illogical and uncontrolled associations of the mind represent a higher reality than the world of practical life and ordinary literature. Do you think this story could be loosely classified as surrealist? What elements in this story would support the idea?

**Answer:**

Yes, this story could be loosely classified as surrealistic. The ending is an element of such surrealism. Dr. Margolin is in absence of a physical dimension and yet the story shows him to be participating in the wedding, dancing, drinking, chatting with guests, etc. His encounter with Raizel, his one true love who was shot by Nazis also stands out to explain surrealism.

**Question 2.**

Comment on the technique used by the author to convey the gruesome realities of the war and its devastating effect on the psyche of human beings through an intense personal experience.

**Answer:**

The author uses banter at the wedding and the conversation between the guests to portray the realities of the war. At the wedding party, people are shown to be conversing with each other and with Dr. Margolin about the deaths of their family and the destruction of their community. Through this, the author used an unusual and an uncommon way of showcasing the realities of the war in the story.

## Task

**Question 1.**

Examine the paragraph beginning 'Some time later the taxi started moving again...' for variety in sentence length and sentence structure.

**Answer:**

(1) Sometime later the taxi started moving again. (2) Solomon Margolin was now driving through streets he had never seen before. (3) It was New York, but it might just as well have been Chicago or Cleveland. (4) They passed through an industrial district with factory buildings, warehouses of coal, lumber, scrap iron. (5) Negroes, strangely black, stood about on the sidewalks, staring ahead, their great dark eyes full of gloomy hopelessness. (6) Occasionally the car would pass a tavern. (7) The people at the bar seemed to have something unearthly about them as if they were being punished here for sins committed in another incarnation. (8) Just when Solomon Margolin was beginning to suspect that the driver, who had remained stubbornly silent the whole time, had gotten lost or else was deliberately taking him out of his way, the taxi entered a thickly populated neighbourhood. (9) They passed a synagogue, a funeral parlour, and there, ahead, was the wedding hall, all lit up, with its neon Jewish sign and Star of David. (10) Dr. Margolin gave the driver a dollar tip and the man took it without uttering a word.

Sentence 1. Simple sentence

Sentence 2. Simple sentence

Sentence 3. Simple sentence

Sentence 4. Simple sentence with description separated by commas

Sentence 5. Complex sentence consisting of one subject with subclauses

Sentence 6. Simple sentence

Sentence 7. Complex sentence consisting of one main clause and a subclause

Sentence 8. Compound-Complex sentence consisting of two independent clauses separated by a comma; the first clause has several subclauses joined with 'who' and 'had'

Sentence 9. Compound-Complex sentence consisting of two independent clauses joined by 'and'; the second clause has a subclause joined with 'with'

Sentence 10. Simple sentence

## **Stop And Think Page-25**

### **Question 1.**

Who were the Senciminers?

### **Answer:**

Senciminers were the native Jewish inhabitants of the town Sencimin. They were however forced to leave the town because it was destroyed by the Germans. Many Senciminers were tortured, burned and gassed, however, few survived and escaped to America from the camps.

### **Question 2.**

Why did Dr. Margolin not particularly want his wife to accompany him to the wedding?

### **Answer:**

Dr. Margolin didn't want his wife to accompany him to the wedding because he was ashamed of the mess that the American Judaism was. Every time he took his wife to a wedding or a Bar Mitzvah, he had to make apologies to her. However, this time he was relieved of it.

## **Stop And Think Page-29**

### **Question 1.**

What is the Hippocratic oath?

### **Answer:**

The Hippocratic Oath is an oath usually taken by doctors to swear their loyalty to their profession. The protagonist, being a doctor himself, says that he has never broken the oath and that he has always been honourable towards his patients.

### **Question 2.**

What topic does the merry banter the wedding invariably lead to?

### **Answer:**

The merry banter at the wedding invariably lead to the mentioning of the deaths of the Senciminers. Every conversation eventually led to that and occasionally, the protagonist found himself being asked about his own family and their death.

## **Stop And Think Page-34**

### **Question 1.**

Who was the woman that Dr Margolin suddenly encountered at the wedding?

### **Answer:**

The woman that Dr Margolin encountered was his one great love, Raizel, the daughter of Melekh the watchman. He, however, had no luck with her and couldn't marry her. The last time Dr Margolin heard of her was that she married someone else and was later shot by the Nazis.

**Question 2.**

What were the events that led to his confused state of mind?

**Answer:**

Dr Margolin started to realize that something is wrong when he noticed that his wallet was missing but wasn't sure how he could have lost it. He also couldn't understand the fact that Raizel looked too young and he thought that maybe she was her daughter, trying to mock him.