

I.L. Peretz

MONISH

"In the kingdom of Poland
where the border is drawn
stands a shtetl
as big as a yawn
The place doesn't matter,
it's rarely mentioned,
houses like nutshells,
prayers are their mansions!
The Jews drift around
as if these were their last days,
with nothing to eat,
Living on fast days.
No business to do,
And so Torah can flourish,
And all the genius
Its study can nourish."

Excerpt from long satirical Ballad published 1888

Welcome to the enigmatic world of *Sons and Daughters*:

The above excerpt from Peretz's Ballad gives us a taste of the shtetl life we find ourselves in when reading Chaim Grade's novel *Sons and Daughters*. The central cast of characters revolves around Rabbi Sholem Katzenellenbogen and Henna'le's family and their 5 children: Naftali, Bentzion, Refael'ke, Tilza and Bluma Rivtcha.

I suggest you use the two glossaries in the novel that are meant to make the unfamiliar familiar. In the beginning of the novel there is a *Cast of Characters* that will help you determine which family they belong to; at the end of the novel there is an extensive *Glossary* that clarifies references to the Orthodox world you will find indispensable. I Xeroxed the glossary because I got tired of constantly turning to the back of the book. You might want to do that as well. In time the Morehdalye characters will begin to feel like your own family.

I am including our **syllabus** with the breakdown of assigned readings for each class. **For our first class you will be reading the first 80 pages of *Sons and Daughters***, so we can get right into a discussion of the novel. We are about to enter the far away village of Morehdalye and to meet its colorful inhabitants who live their daily lives by the commands of the Torah.

Feel free to get in touch if you have questions: ann.kimmage@gmail.com
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