

The Wise Shoemaker of Studena

Characters:

Yosi, the wise shoemaker of Studena
Samuel, Yosi's wealth friend and benefactor
Rivka, Yosi's wife
Asher, the rich man
Bride
Narrator
Villagers
Guests at wedding

Scene 1 Yosi's shop in Studena

Characters: Yosi, Samuel, villagers, Rivka

- Yosi (*Yosi is sitting and working in his shop.*) I have learned the skill of making and mending shoes, but I wonder if that is why people come to my shop.
- Narrator Yosi was a shoemaker who lived in the tiny village of Studena in Hungary. He was an excellent shoemaker, but he was even better at giving advice and teaching Torah. People crowded into his shop, to tell him their problems and hear what he had to say.
- Villager #1 Yosi, I have brought you my shoes to repair. What do you think I should do? My wife is sick and needs constant care, and my sister cannot find work to pay her rent. I cannot take care of everyone!
- Yosi You are in a bind, my friend. Here's what you do: Hire your sister to take care of your wife. Your sister will have work and your wife will have companionship and care.
- Villager #2 Yosi, will you please repair my work boots? And did I tell you about my son, the eldest? He is so lazy! I cannot get him to lift a finger around the house, let alone go out and work. What am I to do?
- Yosi The Torah teaches us to love our children for they are gifts from God. Go home and tell your son how much you love him and how capable you believe he is.
- Narrator One day, a carriage drove up to Yosi's shop and a fine gentleman got out and came into Yosi's shop.

Samuel My name is Samuel. I live in Budapest. I have heard what a fine shoemaker you are, and what a wise man. I wish to order a new pair of shoes and make the acquaintance of the wise shoemaker of Studena. *(Yosi and Asher talk in whispers, then Asher leaves.)*

Narrator Yosi and Samuel quickly became friends.

 One day, Yosi received a most unusual letter from a man named Asher, a rich merchant from Budapest.

Asher *(reading his letter from the side of the stage)* "Dear Yosi, My name is Asher. My daughter is to be married next month. It will be a fine wedding and I wish to invite you to be my guest. My friends will envy me when they see I am the first man in all of Budapest to host the Wise Shoemaker of Studena. I have heard of your wisdom; indeed everyone in Budapest has heard of your wisdom. Please say you will come."

Narrator Yosi was delighted to have an opportunity to visit the big city of Budapest. He immediately made plans to go. *(Yosi and Rivka are talking quietly to one another.)*

Rivka Yosi, you should have a new suit of clothes for so fancy an affair.

Yosi Why should I worry what I wear? A goat has a beard, but that doesn't make him a rabbi.

Scene 2 A street in Budapest, outside the wedding hall

Characters: Yosi, Asher, guests at wedding

Narrator *(Yosi is wandering around the city of Budapest, looking amazed at everything he sees. Other people are walking through the streets, as well.)* When Yosi arrived in Budapest the day of the wedding, he was amazed by all the sights he saw. The buildings were huge. The people wore splendid clothes. Carriages crowded the narrow streets. Yosi was so busy looking up at the tall buildings, that he tripped and slipped into a mud puddle.

Yosi Oh, dear. Ah, well Asher will certainly understand. Well, here is the place where the wedding will take place.

Asher *(standing in doorway)* What are you doing here, Beggar? Go away! I don't want any beggars at my daughter's fine wedding.

Yosi But, I'm not a beggar, I'm.... *(Asher grabs Yosi by the collar and pushes him out into the street.)*

Asher Away with you, Beggar. I can't spend more time on you. I'm expecting a very important guest, today. The Wise Shoemaker of Studena is coming to my daughter's wedding.

Narrator Yosi was surprised and dazed, but he thought quickly and rushed off to the home of his friend, Samuel.

Scene 3 Samuel's house in Budapest

Characters: Yosi, Samuel

(Yosi knocks on Samuel's door.)

Samuel Yosi, what a pleasant surprise! What brings you to Budapest?

Yosi I am so glad to see you Samuel. What a day I have had! Let me tell you about it! *(Samuel escorts Yosi in to sit down.)*

Narrator So Yosi told Samuel all that had happened to him when he had arrived at the wedding of Asher's daughter.

Yosi I would like to borrow some clothing from you Samuel, the best you have. You see, I am going to teach Asher a lesson. Here's what I plan to do... *(Yosi whispers in Samuel's ear.)*

Narrator Samuel agreed to help his friend, Yosi. He brought out his finest clothes: a white silk shirt with ruffles, brown leather boots, fine wool pants, and a brocade jacket. Samuel gave Yosi a fine top hat and cane to finish off the outfit.

Samuel Yosi, you look splendid. And it is a great pleasure to help you. I wish you the best of luck, my friend. If your plan works, you are even wiser than people say.

Yosi *(looking at himself in a mirror)* This will do perfectly, my friend. Thank you for your help.

Scene 4 The Wedding

Characters: Yosi, Samuel, bride, groom, guests

- Narrator Yosi returned to the wedding hall. Once again, Asher greeted him at the doorway. This time, the greeting was completely different, however.
- Asher The great and wise shoemaker of Studena has arrived! You must be he, for look how elegantly you are dressed! Please, please, come in and be seated in a place of honor, next to the bride.
- Bride I am so pleased and honored that you have come, Yosi the Wise Shoemaker of Studena. My father has told me so much about you. And I see that everything that has been said about your wisdom must be true, for you are dressed like a true gentleman.
- Asher Come, come, sit down. The toasts are about to begin. Yosi, I invite you to offer a toast to the bride and groom.
- Yosi *(standing up and holding up a cup of wine)* To the bride and groom! To your health and happiness!
- (Yosi pulls the front of his trousers away from his stomach and pours the wine down them.)*
- Crowd *(whispers of surprise and amazement)*
- (Yosi picks up the bowl of soup, takes off one boot, and pours it into the boot.)*
- Crowd *(louder whispers of surprise and amazement)*
- (Yosi picks up food from his plate and smears it up and down the front of his shirt.)*
- Crowd *(People begin to make comments of surprise and annoyance.)*
- (Yosi removes his hat, turns it upside down, and pours food into it.)*
- Crowd *(Louder comments of disapproval.)*
- Narrator One by one, Yosi took all the food from his plate and poured it into, or smeared it onto, his clothing. The guests at the wedding were

astonished. No one knew what to do or say. They went from being uncomfortable to being angry.

(Yosi takes his apple strudel and mashes it into his chest.)

Narrator Finally, Yosi took his apple strudel and mashed it into his chest. Asher could stand the spectacle no longer.

Asher *(angrily)* What is the meaning of this outrage? I invited you to honor my daughter because you are known for your wisdom. I expected you to teach us something, but instead you behave like a madman!

Yosi Ah, but I have been teaching you, Asher. You see, I was the man you threw out earlier. You mistook me for a beggar because my clothes were dirty and torn. But when I arrived in these rich clothes, you welcomed me as a honored guest. It appears that you did not want *me* here at all; you only wanted *my clothes*. So... I am feeding *them*!

Narrator And with that, Yosi picked up his cup of coffee and poured it into his pocket, patting it and smiling.

Scene 5 Yosi's home in Studena

Characters: Yosi, Rivka

Rivka So, dear, how was the wedding? Did you have a good time? Did you teach the people of Budapest some Torah?

Yosi I did indeed, my dear.

Rivka What did you teach them, Yosi?

Yosi I taught them that fools judge people by their clothing, but the wise judge people by their goodness.

Narrator Yosi never visited Budapest again. He stayed in his beloved village of Studena, where he made and mended shoes, dispensed advice, and taught Torah.