

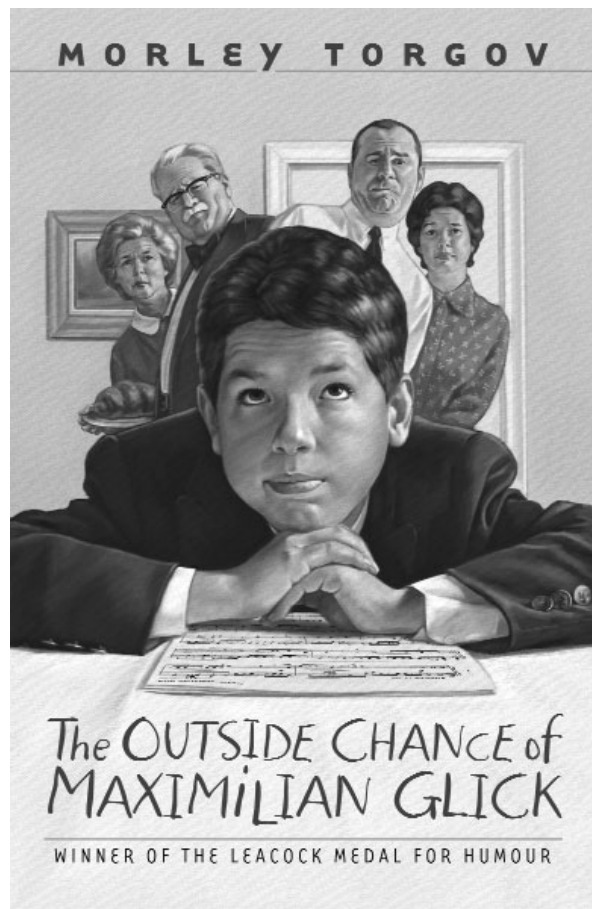
The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick

by Morley Torgov

AGES 12 AND UP • GRADE LEVEL 6 TO 9

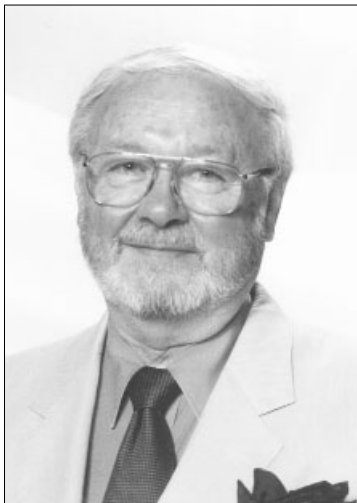
ABOUT THE BOOK

Maximilian Glick is a thirteen-year-old only child smothered by the doting affections of his overprotective parents — a boy eager to leave behind the small northern Ontario town of Steelton for the lure of New York and the promise of a career in music. But when his elders object, urging Max to pursue a career in medicine, law or science, Max enlists the help of three formidable but flawed mentors: Rabbi Kaminsky, a wise but embittered leader who has disowned his daughter; Rabbi Teitelman, a fiery holy man with a secret desire to be a stand-up comic; and Derek Blackthorn, a music teacher rumoured to be a spy. Torgov has painted an unforgettable portrait of a boy poised on the brink of adulthood who is about to take the biggest risk of his life.



1-55192-548-6 • \$12.95 CDN • 230 PP

YOUNG ADULT FICTION



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Morley Torgov is the author of *A Good Place to Come From*, which was made into a CBC mini-series and three plays for stage by Israel Horovitz, and played on and off Broadway in the mid-80s. This title was also a CLA and Book of the Month Club selection. He is also the author of *The Abramsky Variations*, *Stickler and Me*, *St. Farb's Day* and *The War To End All Wars*. He has written plays for CBC radio and television, and he has twice won the Leacock Medal for Humour. Torgov has written articles for numerous periodicals including *The Globe & Mail*, *Montreal Gazette*, and the *New York Times*. He lives in Toronto where he practices law.

BEFORE THE BOOK • Words You Need to Know

truce	contention	prowess	preposterous	ferment	edicts
bibulous	extolling	dexterity	beneficiary	articulating	languorously

• Activities

1. What do you think it would be like to grow up in a Jewish family? Share your ideas with a partner. Make a web including everything you can think of that might be different from growing up in a non-Jewish family.
2. What ideas do you have about your career choices? Does your family influence these ideas? If so, how?
3. Think about a time when you were involved in a public performance of some kind. It might be a music recital, play, sports event or answering a question in class. How did you feel before the event? During? After?
4. For each of the following statements decide whether you agree or disagree. Discuss your decisions with a partner.
 - Parents and grandparents have a responsibility to guide the direction of a child's life.
 - It is a good thing not to take life too seriously.
 - Unusual habits of dress or behaviour are not a reliable indicator of character.
 - Hard work and perseverance are necessary for success.
 - Tidiness and talent go hand in hand.
 - It is wise to choose to fight only those battles that you know you can win.

EXPLORING THE BOOK • Chapter Questions and Activities

CHAPTER ONE

1. Who were the members of Max's immediate family?
2. What did Max get for his eighth birthday?
3. Describe the town of Steelton.

CHAPTER TWO

1. What were Sarah's objections to Derek Blackthorn as a piano teacher?
2. What was cheder?
3. Why did Sarah finally give in to Bryna?

CHAPTER THREE

1. Why did Derek Blackthorn try to avoid war and water?
2. Why did Max admire Sandy Siltaanen?
3. What did Max decide to do in order to become a Somebody?

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Why does Max win the piano competition?
2. Explain the final sentence in the chapter, "Two miracles in one night."

CHAPTER FIVE

1. What is Derek Blackthorn's next challenge for Celia and Max?
2. Read Max's description of being Jewish and compare it with the web you did earlier. Add to your web using a different colour.



CHAPTER SIX

1. Why did Max have lessons with Rabbi Kaminsky?
2. What is shiva?
3. How did the non-Jewish community feel about the death of Rabbi Kaminsky?

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. How was the new rabbi different from Rabbi Kaminsky?
2. Why was the Jewish congregation unhappy with their new rabbi?

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Describe Rabbi Teitelman's lifestyle.
2. How did Max feel about the new rabbi?

CHAPTER NINE

1. Who is Buckner Finsterwald?
2. Why did Rabbi Teitelman call Max a cynic?

CHAPTER TEN

1. What was Steelton Community Day?
2. How did the Jewish community feel about the rabbi's performance?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. What was the problem with Max developing a relationship with Celia?
2. Why did Max walk along the street with the Rabbi Teitelman?

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. According to the rabbi what is the difference between a fool and a real sage?
2. How did Mr. Kerkorian get back at Mr. Moskover?
3. What do you think of Mr. Moskover's sense of humour?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. How do all the Lubavitchers end up eating at the Glick's?
2. What does the rabbi do that betrays his friendship with Max?
3. Create a readers' theatre presentation of the scene with the stalled van (pages 145-151). Read the words spoken by each of the characters and have a narrator fill in the rest.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. What do you think Derek Blackthorn means when he says, "Life is a really sloppy business"?
2. What was the message Derek Blackthorn was trying to get across in his story of his life?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1. How did Mr. Brzjinski find out about Max and Celia's plans.
2. What do you think is the meaning of Max's dream?



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. What do you think happened to Rabbi Teitelman's clothes?
2. Where do you think the rabbi has gone?

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1. Why does Max stop playing the piano?
2. Which of the many stories about where the rabbi has gone do you think is true?

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. Why does Max decide to go back to playing the piano?
2. What do you think Max will do with his life?

BEYOND THE BOOK • Activities

1. Look back at your web on Jewish life and make changes and additions based on what you have read.
2. Create a sociogram for this story. Arrange the names of the important characters around the central character, Max. Use arrows to connect the characters showing the direction of the relationships and label them with the nature of the relationship; e.g. Max $\xleftarrow{\text{grandfather}}$ Augustus Glick
3. Prepare a readers' theatre presentation of one of the arguments between Bryna and Sarah Glick. Read the words spoken by each of the characters and have a narrator fill in the rest.
4. Choose one of the statements in the pre-reading exercise and write an explanation of why you agree or disagree. Use examples from the story to support your opinion.

• Curriculum Extensions

SOCIAL STUDIES *Comparative Religions — Judaism* • Write a report on the beliefs and practices of the Lubavitcher Jews.
Make a poster showing the basic elements of the Jewish faith.

CAPP *Setting Goals* • Think of a competition that you would be interested in such as a sports championship, music festival, poster or poetry competition, etc. Outline the goals you would need to set in order to be successful.
Choose a career and describe the path you would take to get there.

FINE ARTS *Music Appreciation* • Write a short biography of Mozart or Liszt.
Listen to Mozart's Sonata #3 in C Major. Paint, draw or write something with this music as your inspiration.

LANGUAGE ARTS *Humour* • Write a short script for a comedy routine such as Rabbi Teitelman might perform.



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The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick Teacher's Guide (1-55192-541-9) and other learning resources for Raincoast titles are also available at www.raincoast.com. Many of these activities are inspired by the Reading 44 document published by the North Vancouver School District. Raincoast Books grants teachers permission to photocopy this guide for classroom use.

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