Uprising Summaries

Introduction (p. 1 – 5):

Yiddish– Language spoken by European Jews.

Suffrage– The right to vote.

It is 16 years after the Triangle Factory fire. Harriet comes to visit Mrs. Livingston. Harriet is the daughter of one of the Triangle Factory owners. Mrs. Livingston used to work at the Triangle Factory. Harriet wants Mrs. Livingston to tell her about the fire. Both Harriet and Mrs. Livingston were at the factory and survived the fire, but Harriet was too young to remember. Mrs. Livingston had two friends who did not survive the fire.

Bella (p. 7 – 31):

Boarders – A person who rents a room from another person.

Bella arrives in NYC from Italy. She has come to get a job so she can send money back to her family in Italy who are starving. Her distant cousin, Pietro, has found her a place to live and a job. She moves in with the Luciano family and gets a job at the Triangle Factory. On her first day of work, the workers walk out on strike. Bella doesn’t understand what’s going on and she goes out with them. Pietro explains what has happened so she doesn’t lose her job.

Yetta (p. 32 – 37):

Socialist – A person who wants no rich or no poor people. Everyone has an equal amount.

Revolutionary– A person who wants to change the type of government to another type.

Yetta is a Jew Immigrant from Russia. She has been in America for two months. She lives with her sister, Rahel, and works at the Triangle Factory. She is sick of being treated like a slave and wants to strike for better working conditions.

Jane (p. 38 – 43):

Society – The Upper Class. A group of people that have more money and power than others.

Jane is a rich, society girl. She has a chaperone and servants who look after her. On her way to meet other society girls for tea, she sees the factory girls striking. She is curious about these girls. At tea she learns about some society girls who are attending college. She is also curious about these college girls.

Bella (p. 44 – 57):

Padrone – A man who pays for Italian immigrants to come to America and finds them jobs, but then he takes their pay.

Bella continues to work at the Triangle Factory. She daydreams of the food her family can buy with the money she is having sent to them. She also daydreams about Pietro. She is offered a new job at the factory running a sewing machine. She is tricked into getting less money. She is also harassed while she is being searched. She cannot do anything about these things or she will lose her job. Pietro does not show up to take her home. Yetta and Rahel see her and offer to walk her home. When she gets home she learns that Pietro’s padrone has made him go to South Carolina to work.

Yetta (p. 58 – 62):

 Union – A group of workers who join together to fight for workers’ rights.

Shtetl – Small Jewish villages in Eastern Europe.

Yetta and Rahel go home after walking Bella home. They talk about the union and going on strike. Yetta wishes she would have talked to Bella about the union. Rahel gets distracted when they see Mr. Cohen, a man in her English class.

Jane (p. 63 – 69):

 Preposterous – Foolish; Silly; Unthinkable.

Jane comes home after attending a lecture on women’s rights with some college girls. Her father questions her about where she was. He talks to her about the importance of choosing a man to marry. They must choose a husband for her that would be good for her father’s business. He also mentions that women going to college or giving women the right to vote are preposterous, or foolish.

Bella (p. 70 – 79):

 Rabblerousers – Troublemakers

Signor Luciano walks Bella to work. He hits her and is hardly ever nice to her. The only time he is nice to her is when she gives him the money to send to her family in Italy. Bella is not allowed to send the money herself because when are not allowed in the banks. When they arrive at the Triangle Factory, they discover it is closed. Bella’s boss, Signor Carlotti offers to take Bella home. He tells her not to worry, that the factory will only be closed for one day to get rid of the rabblerousers, or troublemakers.

Yetta (p. 80-90):

 Scab – Workers who do not go on strike. They continue to work.

Yetta and several other workers at the Triangle Factory are on strike. They stand outside the factory to protest. Some workers are still going to work. These workers are called scabs. While Yetta is protesting a law student comes up to her and talks to her about the strike. He doesn’t understand why they are striking. He thinks that the girls have boyfriends and parents who take care of them. Yetta tries to explain, but he walks away. Prostitutes show up and start a fight with the strikers. The police arrest the strikers for disorderly conduct even though they did not start the fight. Rahel has to bail the strikers out of jail.

Jane (p. 91 – 94):

Jane has been depressed ever since Eleanor returned to college. She’s also upset because she wants to go to college, but her father says it is preposterous. Miss Millhouse tries to cheer her up by telling her about Wilbur Wright and his airplane. Eleanor has tried to cheer her up by inviting her to go to Europe. At first, Jane is excited, but then she realizes it would be more watching and seeing things. She wants to be doing things!!

Bella (p. 95 – 102):

 Phonograph– Machine that plays music.

Scab – Workers who do not go on strike. They continue to work.

Bella is still working at the factory. A lot of other workers, including Yetta, have gone on strike. The strikers call Bella and the other factory girls, “Scabs.” The factory owners are trying to keep the workers happy so they won’t join the strikers. They play music for them and let them dance at lunchtime. When Bella leaves for work, one of the strikers hits her. Yetta comes to her defense, but the policeman arrests Yetta. Bella has Rocco try to explain the truth, but the policeman threatens to arrest Rocco too. Bella and Rocco run home.

Yetta (p. 103 – 110):

General Strike – A strike by every factory in an entire industry.

Hastily – Too quickly

 Oath – Promise

Yetta and Rahel are attending a big union meeting for shirtwaist workers from all over the city. Thousands or workers have shown up for the meeting. Yetta is excited because she thinks the union leaders will call for a general strike. After two hours of speeches, the union leaders are telling the workers to be calm. She is upset that they are not calling for a general strike. Then, a young worker, Clara Lemlich, rushes the stage. She cries out that she has no more patience for talk and that she moves for a general strike. All the shirtwaist workers cheer and agree that all of them will go on strike together.

Jane (p. 111 – 121):

 Chauffer– Person who drives you somewhere.

Eleanor calls Jane and invites her to go walk with the strikers. Jane agrees. When they get there, they are told the rules. They are to walk with the strikers and talk to them about the strike. Jane is a little scared, but she gets out of the car. She goes up to Yetta and begins talking to her. Jane is impressed with how strong Yetta is. She is impressed that she is trying to unite the workers so they are more than just one girl. A man comes up to Yetta and spits in her face. Jane is scared and runs back to the car. She sees Yetta getting arrested. She is impressed that even when she is getting arrested she appears strong.

Bella (p. 122 – 131):

 Poltice– A medicine

The Luciano baby is sick and Signora Luciano says she wants to use Bella’s money to take the baby to a doctor. Bella doesn’t understand and asks what money. She learns that Signor Luciano has not been sending her money to her family and he has been keeping it. She also learns that her family has died. She is so upset she runs out of the apartment and wanders around NYC all night. In the morning she goes to the Triangle Factory. Rocco Luciano is there waiting for her. He apologizes for his parents stealing her money. He also gives her a letter from Italy about her family. She doesn’t trust him. The only person she trusts is Yetta.

Yetta (p. 132-137):

 Picket Line – Where the strikers picket. When they picket, they stand in a line with signs, protesting or telling people what they don’t like and what they want changed.

Yetta is striking at the factory again. Jane is also there. While they are walking the picket line, Bella yells for Yetta and runs across the street to get to her. While she is running, she gets hit by a car. Bella gets up and continues to run for Yetta. She gives Yetta her letter from Italy and asks her to read it. Yetta doesn’t know Italian, but Jane does so Yetta gives the letter to Jane. Jane translates it and tells Bella that her family is dead. Bella is so upset she falls to the ground crying. Jane decides to take Bella home with her.

Jane (p. 138-144):

 Ragamuffin & Urchin – Poor child often seen on the streets.

 Dialect – Part of a Language.

Jane has her chauffer, Mr. Corrigan, put Bella in the car and drive her home. Miss Milhouse disapproves, but Jane insists that Bella take a bath, change into some of Jane’s clothes, and sleep in Jane’s bed. Jane is shocked to see how dirty and skinny Bella is.

Bella (p. 145 – 148):

Bella is in and out of sleep for days. When she finally wakes, she realizes that she probably lost her job in the factory. She is sad for her family’s death, but she believes they are now in heaven. She wants Jane to give her the letter about her family. Jane doesn’t know what she is saying, but promises Yetta will come to calm her down.

Yetta (p. 149 – 165):

 Pogroms – Massacres of Jewish people who live in Eastern European shtetls.

 Suffragists – Women who want suffrage, the right to vote.

 Dialect – Part of a Language.

 Avenge – Get Revenge for someone else.

The strikers have joined with the suffragists to have a parade. Yetta gets to ride in a rich woman’s car for the parade. During the parade, Jane’s chauffer, Mr. Corrigan, comes to get Yetta. He takes her back to Jane’s house. Bella tells Yetta that she wants Jane to give her back her letter. Bella thinks she’s learned English, but she’s learned Yiddish from being around so many Jewish factory workers. Bella decides to join the strike to avenge her family’s death. Bella and Yetta go to leave. Jane’s servant, Miss Milhouse, is very rude to them. Jane apologizes and gives Bella new clothes and money. Yetta invites Bella to live with her and Rahel.

Jane (p. 166 – 167):

 Indiscretions – Acts that are not proper or ladylike.

Jane is sick of feeling useless. She decides to be strong and help. She is going to get coats and food for Bella and Yetta. She is also going to go down to the picket line and carry a sign. She is going to try to convince her father to help.

Bella (p. 168 – 176):

 Padrone – A man who pays for Italian immigrants to come to America and finds them jobs, but then he takes their pay.

Bella has moved in with Yetta and Rahel. She has also joined the strike and likes being part of something. On Christmas Day, Rocco comes to their house and gives Bella a Christmas present. He also tells Bella that his baby brother has died. He tells her that Pietro took her money to pay off the padrone for her ticket to America.

Yetta (p. 177 – 188):

Closed Shop – A factory that only hires union workers.

Yetta doesn’t want the strike to end until the factory owners agree to recognize the union and agree to a closed shop. The strikers have been striking for a long time and are tired and hunger. Because of this, they settle and the strikers agree to go back to work. Rahel is not going back to work. She is going to marry Mr. Cohen and work in his store. Yetta is mad about this and refuses to move in with Mr Cohen and Rahel or work at Mr. Cohen’s grocery store. She is going to continue to live with Bella, go back to work at the Triangle Factory, and try to make it better.

Jane (p. 189 – 203):

Strikebreaker – A person who beats up on strikers.

Jane feels like a prisoner. Miss Milhouse won’t let Jane go anywhere she wants and she has no money to buy the things she wants. When her father gets home, she tries to talk to him about helping the strikers, but her father won’t listen. Jane learns that her father has hired strikebreakers before. Jane is so upset she leaves the house and runs away from home. She goes to the Triangle Factory.

Bella (p. 204 – 206):

Bella and Yetta are walking home from the factory. On their way home, Jane runs up to them. She looks wild and a little crazy. She tells them that she wants to join their strike. She is shocked to learn it is over. She tells the girls that she ran away from home for their strike. Bella invites her to live with them.

Yetta (p. 207 – 211):

Goyim – Non-Jewish people

Governess – A woman paid to teach the children of a wealthy family.

Yetta doesn’t like being back in the factory. She also doesn’t like Jane living with them. She is sick of Jane living at their apartment and eating their food without paying any money. A cutter at the factory suggests to Yetta that Jane could apply to be a governess for Mr. Blanck’s daughters.

Jane (p. 212 – 228):

Subversive – Quietly going against authority.

Espionage – Spying

Jane is living with Yetta and Bella. She misses her father’s money and wants to earn her money, but she doesn’t know how to. Yetta suggests she apply to be a governess for the Blanck family. Not only can Jane earn money, but she can also spy on Mr. Blanck and find out what he is planning for his factory. Jane goes to meet Mrs. Blanck and apply for the governess job. Mrs. Blanck is very impressed that Jane knows so much about society. Jane decides that she can help the Blanck daughters, Millicent and Harriet, grow up knowing there are more important things than being rich and marrying well.

Bella (p. 229 – 234):

Bella, Yetta, and Jane are walking home from work. Bella and Yetta are still working in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. Jane has been working as a governess for Millicent and Harriet Blanck for about a month. As they walk home they talk about the things they want. More than anything Bella wants to learn how to read. Jane offers to teach her how to read and to teach Yetta how to read in English. They make a pact to always learn more. They also pledge to be friends that are closer than family members, calling themselves *Comari di Triangle*.

Yetta (p. 235 – 251):

 Pogroms – Massacres of Jewish people who live in Eastern European shtetls.

 Czar – Ruler/King of Russia.

After work, Yetta stops a law student, Charles Livingston, and asks him if there are any laws to make the factory owners honor their promises from the strike. Charles Livingston doesn’t know. Yetta is so upset about the broken promises that she rushes back home to the tenement. When she gets there, her sister, Rahel, is there. She tells Yetta that she is going to have a baby. Yetta doesn’t care. All she cares about is changing things and making the world better. Yetta, Bella, and Jane learn about a suffrage parade. They decide to go. Jane has to take Harriet Blanck with them. At the suffrage parade, Yetta decides to continue to fight for suffrage. She believes that is one thing she can do to make the world better.

Jane (p. 252 – 262):

Jane is waiting Bella and Yetta outside the factory. She first talks to Charles Livingston. He comes up to her and tells her that because the striker agreement was a verbal agreement, the workers have no way of making the owners enforce their promises. Then she talks to her father’s chauffer, Mr. Corrigan. Mr. Corrigan is happy to see her and happy to learn she is safe. Jane learns that her father hasn’t been looking for her, but he has been worried about her. Jane promises to write her father a letter and tell him she’s okay.

Bella (p. 263 – 268):

The winter is making the girls feel hopeless. To cheer them up, Bella goes downtown and buys a rose for their apartment. The rose brightens their day and gives them hope that lasts throughout the winter.

Yetta (p. 269 – 276):

As Yetta is watching Jacob finish up his work, she sees a small fire start. The fire soon spreads quickly throughout the 8th floor. The workers are panicking and trying to get out. Some of them leave by the elevator and some of them climb out on the fire escape. Yetta and Jacob run into the Greene Street stairwell. They are about to run down to safety when Yetta realizes that no one has told the 9th floor about the fire. She knows a lot of workers are up there, including Bella, so she runs the stairs instead of down to safety.

Jane (p. 277 – 286):

Jane is at the factory to drop off Millicent and Harriet. She takes the girls to the 10th floor and has them wait in their father’s office. She then goes down to the 9th floor to look for Mr. Blanck. While she’s on the 9th floor she sees Bella. They begin talking and then see that Yetta is also on the 9th floor. Yetta is yelling at the workers, but they can’t hear what she is saying. Then, all of a sudden, several girls start screaming and there is a great burst of fire that appears on the 9th floor.

Bella (p. 287 – 291):

Bella and Jane see the fire and run for the fire escape. They are about to climb out onto the fire escape, when it collapses and the girls on it fall. Yetta runs up to them and tells them to go to the Greene Street stairwell. Yetta doesn’t go with them because she’s still trying to help other workers. As Bella and Jane run toward the stairwell, they get separated by a wall of fire. Jane asks Bella to go to the 10th floor to help Millicent and Harriet.

Yetta (p. 292 – 298):

Yetta arrives on the 9th floor and begins to yell, “Fire.” She realizes that Jacob has followed her to the 9th floor and is helping her try to save the workers. She sees Bella and Jane and tells them to go to the Greene Street stairwell. She wants to go with them, but she knows that she has to try to save more workers. She soon realizes that her and Jacob are trapped. She doesn’t want to burn alive so her and Jacob climb out the window. They decide to jump, hoping that the firemen will catch them in the net. They jump and land on the net, but it breaks. Both Yetta and Jacob die.

Jane (p. 299 – 304):

Jane can’t follow Bella to the stairwell because the fire has blocked her path. She decides to go back to the elevator. When she gets there, there are too many people in front of her. The elevator loads up and leaves for the last time. The workers left on the 9th floor huddle around the elevator doors. Jane does not want to die. At first she thinks she is too young to die – that she has barely lived, but she soon realizes that she has lived – she has mattered. These are her last thoughts before she dies.

Bella (p. 305-315):

Bella arrives on the 10th floor. She sees Millicent, Harriet, and Mr. Blanck. They decide to go to the roof. Once everyone is on the roof, they decide to climb onto the roof of the building next door. It is the law library. Several law students show up to help them across to the next roof. Charles Livingston is among the law students. He helps Bella get to safety. He then goes down to the sidewalk with her to wait for Yetta and Jane. Bella soon realizes that Yetta and Jane have died in the fire. She stays on the sidewalk crying. Charles Livingston stays with her. Soon, Rocco and Rahel have arrived. They try to comfort each other.

Mrs. Livingston (p 316 – 330):

After the fire, Bella went to work for Rahel and her husband. She eventually married Rocco. After his family had kicked him out, Charles Livingston’s family adopted him. Bella and Rocco had two daughters. They named them Yetta and Jane. Bella teaches her girls to be smart, strong, and useful girls. Harriet wants to know if she can take her fathers money, even though it is blood money made off of the deaths of shirtwaist workers. Bella tells Harriet if she takes the money she must use it for good. She must use it to help other girls be smart, strong, and useful.