

The Order From Himself



Illustration coming soon

For ages 15-18



Chapter 1: His Best Customer

The first order has Yedidyah's name on it.

He covers the name with his thumb when his friend looks over.

"One already?"

"Yes."

Yedidyah is eighteen. He designs paper dividers for study folders, with subject labels and narrow spaces for dates. He likes a page that tells a person where to begin. He likes, even more, the thought of making something people choose to pay for.

The supervised school sale permits his small table after the responsible adults approve the materials, price information, and arrangement. Tatty helps him set a limited supply budget. No machinery or sharp equipment is part of his assigned work. The adult organizer handles the actual payment arrangement.

Yedidyah prepares the dividers at home using approved materials. The first batch takes three evenings. He imagines the second will be faster, though he does not check how much faster it needs to be.

At the sale, two visitors admire the labels. Neither buys.

He waits.





Then he chooses a set for his own folder and pays for it under the organizer's arrangement with the personal money he is permitted to use.

He writes ORDER 1 at the top of the sheet.

The name beneath it is his.

His friend says, "That's a start."

Yedidyah moves his thumb.





Chapter 2: More Than a Start

His friend reads the name.

"You bought it?"

"I need a set."

That is true. Yedidyah has a folder at home whose papers he wants to organize.

"Then you can say you use it."

"I did buy it."

"I know. I thought someone else ordered."

Yedidyah looks down at the sheet. The word customer does not appear. He has never said customer. He has merely let the friend arrive there comfortably.

"I didn't say that."

His friend steps back.

"All right."

It is not the all right Yedidyah wants. It leaves the distinction on the table.





For the rest of the sale, he tells visitors one set is already ordered. He does not name the buyer. The claim is narrow enough to defend and wide enough to give the wrong impression.

One visitor asks whether he has sold any to students.

Yedidyah hesitates.

The adult organizer is beside him.

"Just to myself so far," he says.

The visitor nods and goes to another table.

Yedidyah feels as if the admission chases him away. He does not know that. The visitor may never need a folder divider.





Chapter 3: The Table Comes Home

At home, Yedidyah puts the unsold sets beside the original supplies.

Tatty asks how the sale went.

"One set. Mine."

"Did you like using it?"

"I haven't put it in the folder yet."

Tatty waits.

Yedidyah describes the afternoon. He admits the way he used

ORDER 1.

"I wanted it to look as if somebody thought it was worth buying."

"You thought it was worth using. Those aren't the same question."

Yedidyah considers the stock. Each label is written by hand. He can recite the subjects in his sleep after making them so often.

"Maybe the price is too high."

"Maybe. What does each set cost you?"

Yedidyah knows the paper cost. He does not know the cost of each set's time, because he has never put a number beside the evenings.





Tatty asks him to write the actual figures they can check, not invent a price that will feel successful.

They put the personal purchase on a separate line. It moves money from his permitted personal spending to the project. It does not show that an outside customer wants the product.

The stock still exists. So does the work already done.

The page does not become more cheerful when they label it accurately.





Chapter 4: The Next Batch That Will Save It

Yedidyah wants a second batch.

This one will have more colors and a wider date section. He begins drawing the improved label before Tatty finishes reviewing the first cost sheet.

"More materials?" Tatty asks.

"Only a little."

"Within the existing approved budget?"

Yedidyah has not counted. There is a small amount left. He wants to treat it as permission to keep going until someone buys.

Tatty does not approve another purchase.

"First, let's understand the version you have."

Yedidyah hates that. Understanding the version means admitting how little happens at the table. A new version would give him something better to announce.

"If I stop now, the first batch is wasted."

"Would buying more change what you already spent?"





"No. But it might make people want them."

"It might. What tells you these changes are what they need?"

Yedidyah has compliments. He has imagined buyers. He has one order from himself.

He does not yet have that answer.





Chapter 5: Questions Instead of Customers

With the organizer's agreement, Yedidyah speaks to a few interested boys during an appropriate school break. It is an optional conversation about a paper product, not pressure to buy.

Nobody's private study results are collected.

He asks what they use to keep their folders organized and whether his sample solves a problem they actually have.

One uses plain tabs that cost less. One likes the date section but does not want handwritten subject names. Another finds the divider too narrow for his folder.

Yedidyah hears each answer as a door closing.

Then he looks at the questions on the page. They are supposed to find something out. Answers that confirm his plan are not the only answers that count.

He writes the limitations without changing them into praise.

His friend tries the sample in his own empty folder, with permission.

"It catches on the ring here."

Yedidyah wants to show that his friend put it in wrong.





His friend has followed the sample's arrangement. The tab catches.

"Yes," Yedidyah says. "That part needs changing."

The boy does not owe him a purchase for helping identify it.





Chapter 6: A Smaller Record

Yedidyah goes back to the adult organizer.

"I said one was ordered. That was my own purchase. I let it sound as if there was demand from somebody else."

The organizer listens.

"Where did that claim go?"

Yedidyah names the friend and the sale-table conversations he remembers. The organizer helps decide whether any further correction is needed under the actual event arrangement. No order depends on the claim, and no other buyer has paid for a set.

They correct the sale record so a personal purchase is not presented as external sales. Yedidyah speaks plainly to his friend too.

"You were right about using and selling. I was trying to make the first one sound like the second."

"I know."

The friend does not promise to become the second customer.





Yedidyah is grateful he does not. A mercy purchase would give him another number he cannot interpret.

At home, he and Tatty check the actual remaining budget and materials. They decide not to make another batch in this form. No new money is spent.

The decision feels like closing the sale twice.





Chapter 7: Useful Does Not Mean Saleable

Yedidyah puts his own set into his folder.

One tab catches. He marks the problem and uses the folder as the adults permit. He does not sell, distribute, or call the corrected version tested just because he can use a personal sample.

The dividers help him find three sections. The handwritten labels look clear.

He is pleased.

Then he wonders whether he is allowed to be pleased with a product that does not sell.

Tatty asks him to show the folder.

"It works for some of what I need," Yedidyah says. "It doesn't make sense to produce it like this."

"Those can both be findings."

Yedidyah makes a short list of what he learns: check folder fit; compare real alternatives; count time; keep personal use separate from customer demand; do not spend more to repair embarrassment.





The list is not a new business launch. It can inform another project if he chooses one later.

For now, they agree how to store the remaining materials. The adult organizer confirms what can be withdrawn from the sale arrangement. Yedidyah handles no unsettled customer order because there is none.





Chapter 8: The Name Stays Visible

His friend comes over for an ordinary visit arranged by their families.

The project boxes are stacked beside Yedidyah's desk.

"Are you making the new version?"

"Not now."

"Giving it up?"

"This version, yes. Another one, I don't know."

The answer feels incomplete. Yedidyah lets it be.

They work on a word puzzle. He finds the correct section in his newly organized folder while looking for a blank sheet.

"You still use them," the friend says.

"Some of them."

The personal order sheet is in the project folder. Yedidyah takes it out when they finish the puzzle and checks that the account matches the organizer's corrected record.





The top line now says PERSONAL PURCHASE. His name is fully visible.

He puts the page back, labels the box REMAINING MATERIALS, and closes the lid.

