

The Place That Isn't His



Illustration coming soon

For ages 15-18



Chapter 1: The Letter He Wants

The letter has Chananel's name at the top.

Underneath is the sentence he keeps imagining for a week: a place in the small supervised writing program.

He is seventeen. He writes essays and funny stories, most of which are longer than the people in his family think necessary. This program includes individual feedback from a teacher he wants to learn from. There are limited places, and one category reserves places for applicants from participating schools.

Chananel's school is not one of them.

He knows that before he opens the letter. He also knows he marked that category on the application because he misunderstood the field at first. Later, reading the guidance again, he noticed the problem.

He meant to ask.

Instead, he finished the writing sample and put the question aside. He wanted the coordinator to see the work before seeing the wrong box.

Now the application receives a place.





At the bottom of the letter, the coordinator asks him to confirm the school nomination before accepting under that category.

Chananel folds the page above the sentence.

His name and the place remain visible.





Chapter 2: A Very Good Sample

Tatty reads the top half.

"That's encouraging."

"It is."

"What do they need next?"

Chananel opens the fold reluctantly.

Tatty reads the confirmation request.

"Has your school nominated you?"

"No."

"Then how did this category get on the application?"

Chananel tells him about the first misunderstanding. He leaves out the second reading for a moment, then adds it.

"I saw the wording later. I thought maybe they would decide from the sample anyway."

Tatty looks at the essay beside the letter.

"They may like the sample. That doesn't make the school category accurate."





"I didn't copy anything. I wrote all of it."

"I know. Those are different questions."

Chananel wants his work to be good enough to make the box irrelevant. A box is such a small shape compared with five pages of writing.

Its consequences are not small.

He takes the letter back.





Chapter 3: The Teacher's Name

At school, Chananel asks his teacher whether the program has any connection with them.

The teacher checks the information through the actual program sources. The school does not participate in the category named in the letter.

"Could you write that you approve my sample?" Chananel asks.

"I can comment on your work if that is useful and permitted. I can't confirm a nomination that doesn't exist."

Chananel nods.

He does not ask the teacher to use a different word for nomination.

After class, his friend sees the letter.

"Did you get in?"

"There is a problem with the category."

"But they chose you."

"Under a school arrangement I'm not in."

The friend reads the first sentence.





"Ask them to move it."

That may be possible. It may not. Chananel likes the suggestion because it sounds as if the correction can be made without changing the good news.

He writes the coordinator's name in his notebook.

Under it, he writes the question he should ask before accepting.





Chapter 4: The Draft That Hides the Second Reading

Chananel drafts a short note at home with Tatty's help reviewing it.

The first version says he made an innocent application error and hopes the place can be confirmed.

Tatty reads it.

"What does innocent mean here?"

"I misunderstood the box."

"At first. Then?"

Chananel looks at the note.

If he includes the second reading, the mistake will no longer arrive dressed as a problem he discovers only today.

"I noticed the category later and didn't ask before submitting."

"Does the coordinator need that part to understand what happened?"

"Yes."

He starts again.





He says which box is wrong, what his school actually does not supply, and when he noticed the difference. He asks whether there is an eligible application route and understands that the offered category may not apply.

He does not write that his sample deserves an exception. He can ask about the rules without awarding himself the answer.

Tatty checks that the note does not include a false nomination or an unsupported claim about another school. Chananel reviews it, and the family sends it through the appropriate program channel before any acceptance or payment.

The folded letter stays on the desk overnight.

Chananel does not show the top half to anyone else.





Chapter 5: The Answer With No Soft Edge

The coordinator responds through the family-approved route.

She appreciates the correction. She also explains that the offered place belongs to the participating-school category. It cannot be confirmed on Chananel's application as it stands.

There is another eligible application route. Its selection is separate and does not guarantee a place. The adults verify the actual requirements and dates before deciding whether he can apply.

Chananel reads the answer.

"So I don't get it."

"Not that offered place," Tatty says.

"Because I told them."

Tatty waits.

Chananel hears himself asking the correction to become the cause of the false eligibility.

The category is wrong before the note. The note makes the wrong category visible to the people responsible for deciding.

"I know," he says. "I hate it anyway."





"You can hate losing the place."

Tatty does not call the loss a wonderful lesson. Chananel does not find it wonderful.

He puts the letter flat beside the reply.

Both sentences can be read now.





Chapter 6: No Prize for Reporting

His friend asks how the program question turns out.

"They withdrew that place. I can apply another way if I meet the requirements."

"Couldn't they make room because you told them yourself?"

Chananel wonders the same thing. He likes a story where the coordinator sees his honesty and gives him an extra place. It would make the conversation easy to recount.

"The restricted place isn't mine to give back for a reward," he says. The sentence is blunt. He has to think about whether he believes it beyond the words.

His friend offers to read a new sample if Chananel applies through the other route.

Chananel says not yet.

For one afternoon, he does not want another application. He wants to be disappointed without making a second project immediately.

He tells Tatty that too.





They check the real deadline. He has time to pause before deciding. Pausing does not secretly extend the deadline, so Tatty helps him put the date where he can find it.

Chananel goes to his ordinary lesson.





Chapter 7: The Sample Still Exists

On Sunday, he opens the old essay.

It is not fraudulent writing. The category is wrong. Both facts survive the coordinator's reply.

Chananel reads the first paragraph and sees one sentence he wants to shorten. At first he is annoyed that the page can still interest him after everything attached to it changes.

Then he takes out a pencil.

He asks his teacher for the normal permitted feedback on the work, not a replacement nomination. The teacher points to a paragraph where the argument outruns its example.

Chananel revises it.

The correction does not produce a new admission letter. It produces a clearer paragraph.

Later, he and Tatty review the eligible route's verified requirements. Chananel decides to apply, using only categories he actually meets. They check that any cost or commitment will wait for the family's actual approval.





He fills the form slowly. When one field is unclear, he asks through the appropriate channel rather than putting the answer he hopes fits.

This time, the question goes out before the application.





Chapter 8: The Whole Page

The new application is submitted through the agreed family arrangement after its details are checked. The outcome is pending at the end of this story.

Chananel dislikes pending. He dislikes it less than an accepted place folded so one sentence cannot be seen.

His friend returns the revised essay.

"The beginning is better. I still don't like the last example."

"Which part?"

The friend points. Chananel reads it aloud and hears the weakness.

They work on that paragraph for a few minutes, then put it away for the next lesson.

At home, Chananel files the old offer, the correction, and the reply together. He labels the separate application with its actual route and date.

The original letter goes into the folder without a fold covering the condition.

