



His Hands Go Too Fast

Ages 9-12



Chapter 1: The Paper Fan

By the time Binyomin finishes explaining, his brother has a finished fan.

It is Binyomin's fan. Binyomin folds it himself while speaking.

Seven-year-old Chaim holds an untouched rectangle of paper.

"Now you," Binyomin says.

Chaim folds one narrow strip. Then he folds another in the same direction.

"No. Back the other way."

Chaim tries again.

Binyomin reaches across, takes the paper, and makes three quick folds.

"Like this. It's easy."

Chaim puts his hands under the table.

Chapter 2: Finished, but Not Taught

Binyomin is good at making paper decorations. He can fold little fans almost without watching his fingers.

Mama asks if he can show Chaim while she prepares the table for their aunt's visit. Her green sheitel covers all her hair.

He expects to be good at showing too.



Instead, he now has two fans and a brother who says he would rather put out the spoons.

"You didn't even listen," Binyomin says.

"I listened. Your hands went too fast."

"I explained every bit."

Chaim points to the second fan.

"You did every bit."

That isn't quite true. Chaim folded two strips. It is true enough to make Binyomin uncomfortable.

Chapter 3: The Invisible Step

After supper, Tatty asks about the fans.

Binyomin describes how Chaim keeps folding the wrong way.

Tatty takes a fresh sheet.

"Show me. Slowly."

Binyomin begins.

Tatty stops him after the first fold.

"Now which side faces me?"

"The same side. You turn it over."



Tatty looks at him.

Binyomin looks at the paper in his own hands. He does turn it over. He turns it so quickly he hasn't said anything about turning.

He has been explaining the steps he notices, not all the steps he does.

Tatty tries from the beginning. Binyomin waits while he makes the first crease.

It feels much slower than making a fan.

Of course it does. Someone else is making it.

Chapter 4: An Offer, Not a Summons

Binyomin asks Chaim whether he wants to try again tomorrow.

"You can say no. I won't keep taking the paper."

Chaim thinks.

"One fan. Not all the decorations."

"One."

Mama checks that they have time before their other jobs. They choose two plain practice sheets. The good paper can wait until Chaim decides whether he wants it.

Binyomin wants to prepare an excellent lesson, one that will prove yesterday wasn't his fault.



Then he thinks about Tatty's first crease.

This isn't a test of whether Binyomin is a good brother. Chaim needs to know which way the paper turns.

He makes a sample with only the first two folds. It will be easier to look at than a finished fan.

Chapter 5: Chaim's Rectangle

Chaim makes the first fold.

Binyomin keeps his hands on his own paper.

"Now turn the sheet over."

Chaim turns it sideways.

"I mean onto the other face. That wasn't clear."

Binyomin shows with his sample. Chaim tries with his own.

The next strip is wider than the first.

Binyomin wants to flatten it, refold it, and make it even. He can do that in a moment.

"Do you want help making those equal, or do you want to keep going?"

"Keep going."



The fan will be uneven. It won't be dangerous, unusable, or a spoiled school assignment. It is a practice fan.

They keep going.

Chapter 6: Not Quite the Same Skill

Halfway across the sheet, Chaim forgets to turn it.

Binyomin says, "Look at the last fold."

Chaim looks. He doesn't understand what Binyomin means.

So Binyomin uses different words. He opens his sample a little and points to the alternating folds.

Chaim corrects the one he wants to correct. He finishes with a wide strip at the end.

"Mine is bigger on this side," he says.

"Yes."

"It still opens."

It does.

Chaim waves it once and grins.

Binyomin doesn't say the uneven fan is better than all his own. He doesn't need to invent a prize for it.

"You folded it yourself," he says.



Chaim looks at his brother's hands, still resting beside the sample.

"This time."

Chapter 7: One Beside Another

Chaim puts his fan beside Binyomin's on the shelf Mama chooses for the decorations.

He doesn't want to make another today.

Binyomin accepts that. One fan is the agreement.

When their aunt admires the paper row, Chaim points out his own. Nobody hides the wide strip.

Later, Binyomin makes two more by himself. His fingers move fast again. Doing the job alone doesn't require him to stop after every crease.

Tomorrow he may show someone a different fold. He will have to find the steps his hands know before his words do.

He puts the spare practice sheet away.

He leaves the uneven fan in the row. Nobody needs to finish it for Chaim.

Chaim comes back with the spoons.

"I can show you this job," he says.

Binyomin holds out his empty hands.