



One More Draw

Ages 9-12



Chapter 1: A Better Idea

Shmuel's team does not contain his best friend.

This seems a very poor way for the afternoon to begin.

The rebbi organizes a table quiz. Four teams, three boys on each. No prize except choosing the first question in the next round. Shmuel volunteers to draw the folded name slips from a bowl while Rebbi writes the teams on the board.

"We keep the teams that come out," Rebbi says. "If there is a problem, tell me."

On the board, Shmuel sits beneath Team Two. His friend Naftali sits beneath Team Four.

Shmuel turns the bowl in his hands.

"Shouldn't everyone get one friend?"

The suggestion sounds generous.

It would be especially generous to Shmuel.

Chapter 2: A Kind Redraw

Rebbi asks what problem Shmuel sees.

"Some boys won't like their teams."

"Has anyone told you that?"



"They might."

Rebbi puts down the chalk.

"The teams will work together for this short quiz. If someone has a concern, he can speak to me."

Dov points at the board. "I want another draw."

Shmuel feels encouraged. Now the problem belongs to someone else too.

"See? We could let unhappy boys draw again."

"What happens to the boys on the teams they leave?" Rebbi asks.

Shmuel hasn't considered that part.

"They can draw again too."

"Until when?"

The bowl suddenly feels less useful.

Rebbi keeps the first teams. He speaks quietly with Dov, then sends the boys to their tables.

Shmuel walks toward Team Two with the air of someone accepting a deeply unfortunate arrangement.

Chapter 3: Three Answers

His teammates are Eli and Nochum.



Shmuel likes them well enough. He simply doesn't think of them when he imagines a good afternoon.

The first question asks for something that can have a mouth but never eats.

"A river," Nochum says.

Shmuel is still looking at Naftali's table. He nearly writes a face, which seems wrong as soon as he thinks about it.

The second question gives them four words with one letter missing from each. Eli spots the pattern.

The third question is a little number puzzle. Shmuel solves that one.

Three answers. Three boys.

At Naftali's table, somebody drops a pencil. Naftali laughs. Shmuel wishes he is there for whatever makes the pencil funny.

He bends over the next question instead.

Chapter 4: The New Bowl

Before the second round, Rebbi puts four folded slips in the bowl. They contain the team numbers. One team will choose which question to take first.

The bowl sits beside Shmuel from the first draw.

"May I choose?"

"Yes. Without looking."



Shmuel pulls out Team Three.

He knows because he opens the slip beneath the edge of the table. No one else sees it yet.

Team Three already leads by two answers.

A redraw would help everyone else.

He puts the slip back.

He can say it isn't folded properly. He can say it sticks to his thumb. He can say he wants to mix the bowl better.

His fingers move toward another slip.

Then he sees Nochum watching him.

"Which team?" Nochum asks.

Shmuel takes his hand out empty.

Chapter 5: The Number He Sees

"Rebbi," Shmuel says. "I saw the number and put it back."

The room goes still.

"Which number?"

"Three. I want another one because they're ahead."

Team Three watches from the next table. One boy folds his arms.



Rebbi comes beside the bowl.

"Is there any other reason the slip can't count?"

"No."

Shmuel says it before he can improve the explanation.

Rebbi unfolds all four slips. Only one says Three. He places it beside the board and lets Team Three choose the question.

For later draws, he will handle the bowl himself.

Shmuel wants to say that he told the truth before taking a second slip. He did tell it. The bowl still leaves his table.

"I'm sorry," he says to Team Three.

The boy with folded arms nods. He doesn't uncross them immediately.

Chapter 6: What Kind Looks Like

After the quiz, Shmuel helps put the question cards away.

"I thought the first redraw would be kind," he tells Rebbi.

"Would you have asked for it if Naftali was on your team?"

Shmuel sorts two cards very carefully.

"Probably not."

"And would you have put back Team Two?"



"No."

The second answer is easier because the first one opens the door.

Rebbi doesn't tell him that every random arrangement is fair in every situation. Sometimes a grownup needs to change a plan for a real reason.

"You can bring a concern to me," he says. "You can't quietly keep choosing until the result suits you, then call the result a draw."

Shmuel puts the last card in its envelope.

"Even if another team gets helped too."

"Even then."

Chapter 7: After the Teams

Naftali waits for Shmuel at the coat hooks.

"Was your table terrible?"

"No. Nochum knew the river answer. Eli saw the missing letters."

"We argued about the river for ages."

Shmuel grins despite himself.

They walk out together.

At the door, Nochum asks Shmuel if he wants to see a different number puzzle tomorrow. Shmuel says yes.



The afternoon doesn't give him his preferred team. It gives him an unpleasant conversation, a bowl he no longer handles, and two teammates who turn out to know things worth knowing.

Tomorrow he can sit beside Naftali during the permitted break. There is no slip to draw for that.

He can want his friend and still keep the number he opens.