



Who Remembers the Rain?

Ages 9-12



Chapter 1: Before or After

In the family story, the rain starts twice.

That is the problem with the story.

Uncle Shmuel says the rain started before they reached the railway station.

Uncle Dovid says it started after.

Shmuel remembers standing under the bakery awning with the cake box.

Dovid remembers carrying that box across a perfectly dry square.

They are describing the same family journey. Zeidy's birthday, years ago. A cake that arrives tilted. A train that nearly leaves without them.

Tamar sits at the supper table listening.

"Somebody isn't telling it properly," she says.

Both uncles turn toward her.

Uncle Dovid laughs. "That will be me, according to Shmuel."

"Usually," Shmuel agrees.

Everybody smiles.

Tamar doesn't. If one says before and the other says after, one must be wrong. She understands that much.

What she doesn't understand is why nobody seems worried.



Chapter 2: The Case for Shmuel

After supper, Tamar asks Uncle Shmuel about the bakery.

"I remember the red awning," he says. "Your Aunt Miriam ran inside to ask for a second bag. The cake box was getting wet."

Tamar writes it on a scrap of paper. This isn't a school assignment. She simply wants the story to make sense.

Aunt Miriam passes the table wearing her brown tichel, every strand of hair covered.

"Do you remember that?" Tamar asks her.

"I remember the cake box. And the second bag."

"Before the station?"

Aunt Miriam thinks.

"I don't remember exactly when."

Tamar wants her to say before. Two people make a stronger answer than one.

"But if you went into the bakery, it must be before."

"Why?"

"Because Uncle Shmuel said so."

Aunt Miriam sits for a moment.

"Then you have his memory of the timing, and my memory of a bag. Don't make mine answer a question it can't."



Tamar looks down at the scrap.

The bag is being extremely unhelpful.

Chapter 3: The Case for Dovid

Uncle Dovid remembers the dry square very clearly.

"Your uncle walked too fast, holding the cake like it was a treasure chest. I carried the other parcel. Rain came later."

"You're sure?"

"That's how I remember it."

"Then Uncle Shmuel made it up?"

Dovid puts down his cup.

"I don't think so."

"But it can't be both."

"Perhaps. That doesn't tell you either of us is trying to deceive you."

Tamar doesn't like perhaps. It leaves the story wobbling.

"Which one should I write?"

"What are you writing?"

She shows him the scrap.

Dovid reads the two versions.



"You can write that we remember the rain differently."

"That's not an ending."

"It's an accurate sentence."

He gives back the paper.

The uncles aren't arguing anymore. They are discussing the cake's enormous slope. Tamar has an investigation that its witnesses keep leaving.

Chapter 4: The Photograph

At home, Tamar asks Mama for the family album.

Mama, in her navy sheitel that covers all her hair, brings it to the table and sits with her.

There is a picture of Zeidy holding the tilted cake. There is a picture of the uncles beside the station wall. There is a picture of Aunt Miriam's bag.

Tamar leans closer.

The ground looks wet.

"There!"

Mama looks.

"That may tell us the ground is wet in that photograph. Does it show when the first rain started?"

Tamar studies the corners as though an earlier cloud might be hiding there.



It doesn't.

She turns the page back. Then forward again.

Mama asks what she wants from the album.

"I want to know who I can believe."

Mama leaves the page open.

"Is this one disagreement about a remembered journey, or do you have another reason to think somebody is dishonest?"

Tamar has no other reason.

Both uncles keep their promises. Both tell funny stories. Both remember to ask about her model houses.

She wants a disagreement to explain something larger than it does.

Chapter 5: An Ordinary Gap

Mama opens the album to the station picture again.

They know the family took that journey. They have photographs of the station and the cake. They know the uncles give different accounts of when the rain began.

They do not know why.

"They might remember different parts," Mama says. "One might be mistaken. There might be another detail nobody recalls. We don't have to choose a reason because we dislike a gap."



"So I just leave it?"

"For a funny family story, you can leave the timing uncertain. If an important decision depended on it, we'd need stronger evidence. We wouldn't simply choose the uncle who sounds more certain."

Tamar traces the corner of the photograph without touching its surface.

"I asked Dovid if Shmuel made it up."

"Do you think that was fair?"

"No."

The rain problem doesn't get solved. A different problem does: Tamar knows what she needs to say next.

Chapter 6: No Verdict at Tea

The uncles visit the next Sunday afternoon. Their families join them for tea.

Tamar asks if she can say something about the rain story.

"I acted like one of you must be lying," she says. "I don't know that. I'm sorry."

Shmuel raises his eyebrows. "I didn't know we were on trial."

Tamar smiles a little. "You were. In my head."

"A serious place to be," Dovid says.



Mama asks whether the uncles want Tamar to keep a short note about the journey in the album. Both agree, with the uncertain timing left uncertain.

Tamar reads the note aloud.

"Shmuel remembers rain before the station. Dovid remembers a dry walk across the square. Both remember the cake arriving tilted."

"Very tilted," Shmuel says.

"We need to decide whether the tilt started before or after the station," Dovid adds.

Tamar laughs.

For once, she can hear a joke without drafting a question about it.

Chapter 7: The Space Beneath the Picture

Tamar puts the note in a loose paper sleeve beneath the photograph, where Mama shows her it won't damage the album.

There is still no answer about the rain.

She looks at the picture of Zeidy and the cake. His hand rests beside the lopsided edge. His face looks delighted.

At the next family supper, a cousin asks whether the uncles really nearly missed the train.

"That's how both of them tell it," Tamar says. "They disagree about the rain."

"Which one's right?"



"We don't know."

The words don't embarrass her as much as she expects.

Uncle Shmuel begins with the cake box. Uncle Dovid interrupts about the parcel. Tamar listens for the part where Zeidy opens the door and sees the cake leaning toward him.

She doesn't need a verdict to enjoy that part.

If more evidence turns up, they can add it. Until then, the little note tells the truth about what they know.

Tamar passes her cousin a piece of the straight, ordinary cake on tonight's table. Uncle Dovid is describing the parcel. She leans closer to hear.