

The Hand That Means Wait



Nussbaum Mind

Illustration coming soon

Ages 6-9



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Chapter 1: The buzzing chair

On Thursday after school, Pinny sits in the tall chair at Mr. Levi's barbershop.

His feet do not reach the floor. A blue cape is clipped around his neck. The mirror shows a boy with hair that has grown over his ears.

On the shelf lies a pair of clippers. They look small, but Pinny has heard them from outside the door.

Bzzzz.

His stomach flips like a pancake.

Chapter 2: The plan

Tatty sits on the waiting bench with a newspaper.

"Pinny," he says, "do you remember our plan?"

Pinny nods. "I raise my hand."

"And what does that mean?"

"Wait."

Mr. Levi smiles in the mirror. His beard is neat, and his sleeves are rolled to his elbows. "When your hand goes up, I stop and wait. I do not argue. We talk first."

"Even if you are in the middle?"

"Even then."



Chapter 3: First buzz

Mr. Levi switches on the clippers.

Bzzzz!

The sound is louder than Pinny expected. It hums against his ear. His shoulders climb toward his neck.

He does not raise his hand yet. He wants to be brave. He wants to see how it goes.

The clippers move up the back of his head, and the buzz becomes a tickle, then an itch, then a tiny shiver down his spine.

His fingers grip the arms of the chair.

Chapter 4: The hand

Then Mr. Levi lifts the clippers toward the other ear.

Bzzzzz!

Pinny's eyes squeeze shut. His heart beats fast, like a drum.

He raises his hand.

The clippers stop at once. The room is quiet except for the clock.

"Thank you for showing me," says Mr. Levi. "What do you need?"



Pinny opens one eye. "It is too loud on this side."

"Too loud," Mr. Levi repeats. "Would a break help? Or would you like to hold the clippers and feel the buzz on your hand first?"

Chapter 5: The buzz on his hand

Pinny thinks.

"I want to touch it."

Mr. Levi switches the clippers on and holds them away from Pinny's head. Pinny puts his palm near them, then on the handle.

Bzzz.

It tingles. It is not scary now. It is only a machine making a noise.

"It's like a bumblebee in a box," says Pinny.

"A very busy bumblebee," says Mr. Levi.

Chapter 6: Almost

"Ready to try again?"

Pinny breathes in and out. "Can you go slower on this side?"

"I can go slower."

"And can you tell me before you start?"

"Of course. I will say, buzz coming."



"Okay."

"Buzz coming," says Mr. Levi, and Pinny nods.

The sound rolls near his ear, and he keeps his hand in his lap. He can feel it hum, but his shoulders come down a little.

When it is done, he looks in the mirror. His ears are visible. His hair is short and neat, and one small curl sticks up at the back.

"Looks like a snail," says Pinny.

"A very handsome snail," says Mr. Levi.

Chapter 7: Outside

Tatty takes Pinny's hand as they walk home.

"You showed Mr. Levi when you needed to wait," Tatty says.

"My hand went up by itself."

"That is good. You used the plan."

Pinny touches the back of his head. It feels bristly and strange.

"Next time," he says, "I might raise it sooner."

"That is a good idea, too."

Pinny runs his fingers over the little curl all the way home.



Haircut order

Number the cards in story order.

Pinny raises his hand and Mr. Levi stops.

Pinny sits in the tall chair.

Mr. Levi says buzz coming before the next try.

Pinny touches the buzzing clippers on his hand.

Pinny and Tatty remember the plan.



Event or body feeling?

Mark EVENT for something that happens in the story. Mark BODY FEELING for what Pinny's body feels.

Story statement	EVENT	BODY FEELING
A raised hand means wait.	☐	☐
His stomach flips like a pancake.	☐	☐
Mr. Levi stops at once.	☐	☐
A shiver goes down his spine.	☐	☐



What do you need?

Choose the sentence that says what Pinny needs. Rewrite one other sentence in your own words.

Sentence	Plain?
☐ It is too loud on this side.	
☐ Can you go slower and tell me first?	
☐ Never mind, I am fine.	

One sentence in your own words



A plan with a hand signal

Draw a path through the steps that help.

Start

Agree on the signal first.

Wait for it to stop on its own.

Raise your hand when it is too much.

Say what you need.

Hide the feeling.

Try a small step.

Ask for a warning.

A helpful next step



My wait signal

Use a fictional child. Write or tell a signal and one thing the helper does when they see it.

A signal that means wait

What the helper does first



Wait is allowed

Read the reminders with an adult. Choose one that fits. Final stickers are 2 1/4-inch squares.

**Hand up means
wait**

**Say what you
need**

Try a small step

**Ask for a
warning**

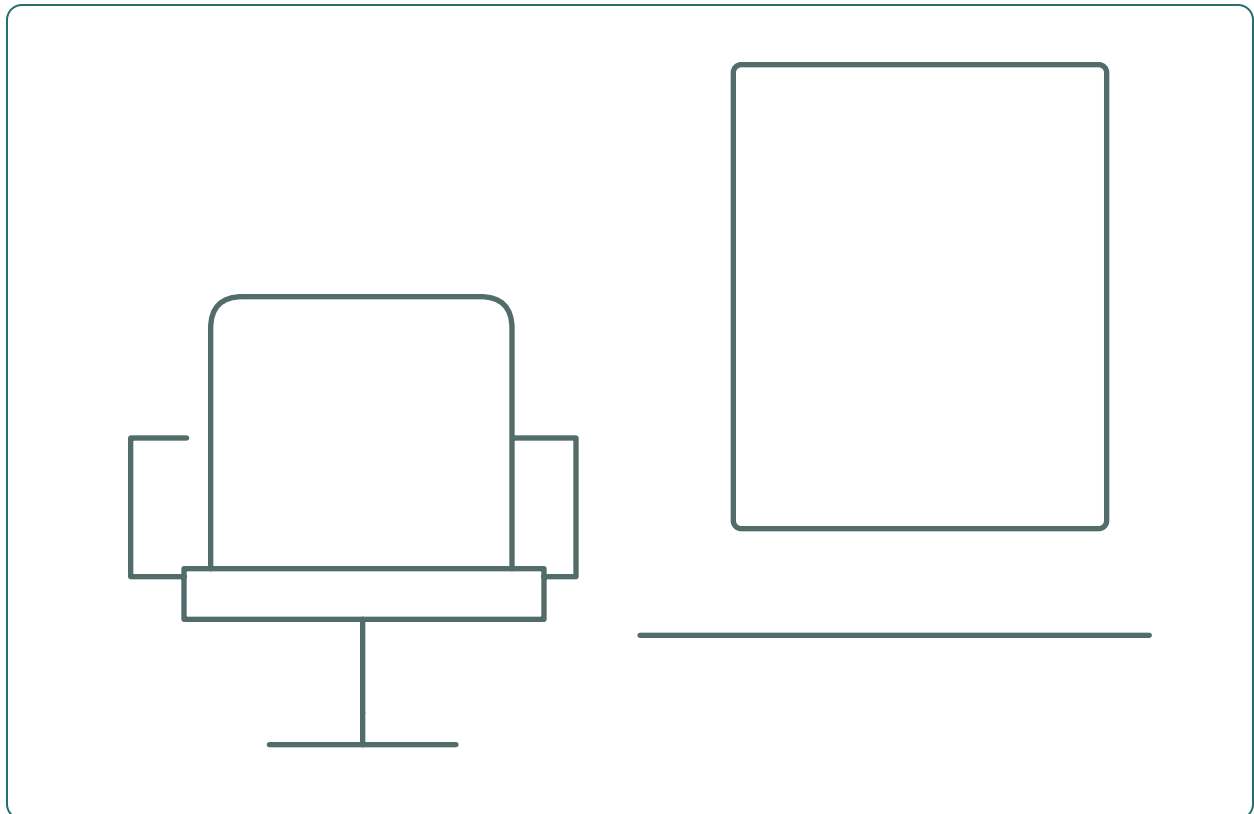
**Going slower is
okay**

**The helper
stops**



The barber chair

Draw a tall chair, a cape and a mirror. Add a raised hand in the mirror.



A detail I add to the chair or mirror



Find the wait words

Find WAIT, HAND, CHAIR, PLAN, BUZZ, SLOWER, CURL, MIRROR. All go left to right. Tell one word's part in the story.

W	A	I	T	X	Q	Z	B	W	P
X	H	A	N	D	Q	M	D	F	G
Z	C	H	A	I	R	P	X	K	H
Q	P	L	A	N	B	V	D	W	C
X	B	U	Z	Z	M	Z	P	N	G
B	S	L	O	W	E	R	D	F	G
X	C	U	R	L	Q	W	X	Z	M
K	M	I	R	R	O	R	C	B	N
P	Q	M	Z	X	W	V	B	D	F
C	B	N	M	K	X	Q	Z	P	D

WAIT**HAND****CHAIR****PLAN****BUZZ****SLOWER****CURL****MIRROR**

One word's part in the story



Parent notes and answers

Discussion questions:

What did Pinny and Tatty agree the raised hand means?

What did Mr. Levi do the moment the hand went up?

What did Pinny say he needed?

What small step helped?

What did Mr. Levi promise to say before the next buzz?

Parent tool: A clear wait signal agreed in advance lets a child feel noise or discomfort and still take part. The adult stops at once, asks what is needed and offers a small choice. Practice the signal at home. This is an everyday haircut; no medical or safety concern is implied.

1. Listed order 3, 1, 5, 4, 2.

2. EVENT: a raised hand means wait; Mr. Levi stops at once. BODY FEELING: his stomach flips like a pancake; a shiver goes down his spine.

3. Plain needs: It is too loud on this side; go slower; tell me before you start. Not plain: nothing.

4. Helpful nodes: Agree on the signal first; Raise your hand when it is too much; Say what you need; Try a small step; Ask for a warning. Not helpful nodes: Wait for it to stop on its own; Hide the feeling.

5. Open. Example: a raised hand means wait; the helper stops and asks what is needed.

6. Open. Asking to wait is not giving up; the helper decides how to go slower.

7. Open. No people required; a raised hand shape in the mirror is enough.

8. WAIT: row 1, column 1, right; HAND: row 2, column 2, right; CHAIR: row 3, column 2, right; PLAN: row 4, column 2, right; BUZZ: row 5, column 2, right; SLOWER: row 6, column 2, right; CURL: row 7, column 2, right; MIRROR: row 8, column 2, right