



# The Morning After the Dream

Ages 6-9



## Chapter 1: The tower in the dark

In the dream, Nachy knocks down the tower on purpose.

He looks right at Leibel. He grins. Then his elbow pushes the top block, and the whole tower crashes into a pile.

Leibel shouts, "Stop!"

He sits up in bed.

There is no tower. There is no Nachy. There is a blanket twisted around his legs and a strip of light under the door.

Tatty comes in.

"Bad dream?"

Leibel nods. His chest is hot with the words he wants to shout at Nachy.

Tatty sits beside him while he tells the dream. He helps him straighten the blanket and stays for a little while.

"You're here in your bed," he says. "I'm here too."

Leibel lies down again. The room is ordinary.

He is still cross at the boy who isn't in it.



## Chapter 2: The boy at the gate

In the morning, Leibel eats breakfast. He puts his exercise book in his bag. He tells Mommy about the tower while she ties her blue tichel securely over her hair.

"That sounds like an unpleasant dream," she says.

At the school gate, Nachy waves.

Leibel looks away.

Nachy runs to catch him. "Do you want to use the big blocks at break?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because you'll knock them down."

Nachy stops walking.

"I will not."

Leibel can still see the grin from the dream. It looks clearer than the puzzled face in front of him.

He goes inside without answering.

## Chapter 3: Two kinds of yesterday

At break, Leibel sits near Rabbi's desk. The boys have permission to use the blocks on the classroom mat. Nachy chooses a book instead.



Rebbi asks whether Leibel wants help with something.

"Nachy knocked down my tower," Leibel says.

"When did this happen?"

"Last night."

"Was Nachy at your house?"

Leibel shakes his head.

The answer feels strange. He knows Nachy isn't there. He also knows exactly how angry he feels.

"It was in a dream. But he did it on purpose."

"The boy in the dream did," Rebbi says. "What did Nachy do when you saw him this morning?"

"He asked me to play blocks."

Rebbi waits.

Leibel remembers the friendly wave at the gate. It is a small part of the morning, but it belongs to Nachy too.

"I said he'd knock them down."

Leibel looks at the real blocks. They are still on the mat. Nobody has made a tower yet.



## Chapter 4: A real sentence

"A dream can leave a strong feeling," Rebbi says. "That doesn't mean the person you dream about did the thing."

"It feels as if he did."

"I hear that. You can take time with the feeling. We also need to be fair to the real Nachy."

Rebbi doesn't ask Leibel to say the dream is funny. It isn't funny to him. He doesn't ask him to rush onto the mat either.

Leibel sits quietly for a moment.

Then he goes to Nachy, who is looking at a picture of a wagon.

"I dreamed you knocked down my tower," Leibel says. "This morning I spoke as if you really did. I'm sorry."

Nachy puts a finger between the pages.

"I didn't even know you had a tower."

"There isn't one."

They look at each other.

Nachy almost laughs, then sees Leibel's face and stops.

"Do you want to make one now?"

"Maybe a short one."



## Chapter 5: The actual blocks

They build a tower with a wide bottom. Leibel hands Nachy the next block.

For a moment, he sees the dream elbow again.

He looks at Nachy's hands instead. One is holding a blue block. The other is resting on the mat.

"That one goes here," Leibel says.

Nachy puts it there.

Later, Nachy's sleeve brushes the tower. The top block wobbles and stays up.

Both boys hold still.

"My sleeve," Nachy says. "I'll move back."

Leibel nods. A real wobble has a real explanation. They leave more space beside the tower.

When Rebbi says it is time to put the blocks away, they take it down together, starting at the top.

At home, Leibel tells Tatty about the morning.

"The dream still felt bad when I woke up."

Tatty listens.



"But Nachy wasn't the boy doing it," Leibel adds. "He was asleep somewhere else."

Tonight, the tower is gone from the mat. The friendly morning is something that actually happened.