

# The Page She Does Not Trade



**Nussbaum Mind**

Illustration coming soon

Ages 12-15



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## Chapter 1: Two notebooks

Chani and Raizy meet at the kitchen table after school with permission from their families.

They have finished their classwork. Chani brings a notebook of observations she uses for stories. Raizy brings one with a cloth cover and a ribbon between its pages.

They begin by inventing names for a shop that sells umbrellas to ducks.

Then Raizy turns to a different page.

"I wrote something about myself yesterday. May I read it to you?"

Chani says yes.

Raizy reads a short passage about an ordinary disappointment. Chani listens. She doesn't copy it into her own notebook or suggest it for a classroom story.

The passage belongs to the conversation Raizy has chosen.

## Chapter 2: The other ribbon

When Raizy finishes, she points to Chani's notebook.

"Your turn. The page with the folded corner."

Chani puts a hand beside that corner.

"Not that one. It's private."

"Mine was private too."



"I know. Thank you for reading it to me."

Raizy waits.

Chani can show her the duck shop names. She doesn't want to read the folded page aloud. It isn't a dangerous secret. It's writing she has chosen to keep for herself.

"I trusted you," Raizy says.

The table feels smaller after that sentence.

## Chapter 3: An exchange not agreed

Chani looks at the cloth-covered notebook. Raizy has given her something personal, freely and in her own words.

Perhaps she owes an equal amount back.

But what would equal mean? The same number of lines? The same amount of embarrassment? The same chance of regretting a sentence later?

Chani has not agreed to any of those exchanges. Before the reading, Raizy asked whether she might read, not whether Chani would open a matching page.

Still, Chani starts searching for a reason that will disappoint her less.

"It isn't finished," she says.

That is true. It also invites an answer.



"Mine wasn't perfect either."

Now the page seems to be waiting for repairs before it can leave her hands.

## Chapter 4: The real answer

Chani closes her notebook without pulling it away from Raizy dramatically.

"Even when it's finished, I don't want to share it."

Raizy's face changes.

"Then you don't trust me the same way."

Chani doesn't know how to prove a whole friendship at a kitchen table. She knows she won't read this page to do it.

"I won't pass your writing on," she says. "You chose to read it. I didn't agree to trade pages."

Raizy looks at the duck-shop list, then puts her own notebook away.

They finish the visit with a short word game. It is less lively than their first ten minutes. Chani doesn't offer the folded page as a way to buy the laughter back.

## Chapter 5: What listening promised

After Raizy goes home, Chani tells Mama about the disagreement without repeating Raizy's passage.

Mama sits beside the table, her brown sheitel neatly covering her hair.



"Did she ask you to share before she read?"

"No. I said she could read to me."

"Then listening didn't promise an exchange."

Chani wonders whether she should have refused to listen from the beginning.

"You can ask what someone wants before hearing something private," Mama says. "If there's a condition, you can decide before agreeing. You can also keep a reasonable privacy limit afterward."

They talk about the word unfinished. Chani has used it to soften her answer, but it hasn't said what she means.

Her limit isn't a deadline for improving the page.

## Chapter 6: Before the next reading

At school the next day, Raizy asks whether Chani still wants to write their duck-shop scene together.

"Yes. I want to talk about yesterday first, if you have a minute."

They stand away from the busy table.

"I said unfinished when I meant private," Chani says. "That made the answer less clear. I'm not going to read it when it's finished either."

Raizy is quiet.

"I thought sharing meant we'd both do it."



"You hadn't asked me that. Next time, if you want an exchange, please ask before reading. I might still say no."

Raizy doesn't immediately agree that the conversation felt fair. Chani doesn't ask for the notebook ribbon as evidence that she has forgiven her.

## Chapter 7: A shared page

For the duck-shop scene, they choose a fresh sheet. It belongs to their agreed project, and both may read it.

Chani writes an umbrella that keeps opening indoors. Raizy gives the duck shopkeeper a sign asking customers to shake off the rain outside.

They change one line together. They leave another alone until their next writing afternoon.

Raizy doesn't reach for the folded corner in Chani's notebook.

The earlier disagreement hasn't vanished. There is now a clearer agreement around this different page.

At home, Chani puts her notebook on its usual shelf. She keeps Raizy's passage out of the duck story and out of the supper conversation.

She has something private. She has something shared. Neither needs to turn into a receipt for the other.