



The Case at the Foot of the Bed

A wanted visit, a quiet guest room, and a question she thought would send her home

For ages 12-15





Chapter 1

The Packed Case

Rochel had asked to stay at Bubby's for a whole weekend.

Mama had agreed with Bubby, and they had packed on Thursday evening. Rochel put in her clothes, a book, and the soft cushion she liked beside her when she read.

"You won't have room for anything from Bubby's house," her sister said.

"I'll bring back memories. They pack flat."

On Friday afternoon, the visit began exactly as Rochel had imagined: Bubby in her brown sheitel, a familiar kitchen, and a cake cooling on the counter.

Rochel carried her case upstairs.

She was glad she had come.





Chapter 2

After Supper

After Friday-night supper, the guest room felt different.

At home, Rochel's sisters would be whispering across their beds. Here, the wall clock ticked louder than she remembered.

Her case stood at the foot of the bed. Her cushion was by the pillow.

She wanted Mama.

The wanting surprised her. She was thirteen. She loved Bubby's house. She had begged for this visit herself.

All three facts seemed to be evidence that she wasn't allowed to miss home.

She opened her book and didn't read a word.





Chapter 3

The Tea Tray

Bubby knocked with a small tray of warm water and a cookie.

"Still reading?"

"A little."

Bubby looked at the open book still resting on its first page.

Rochel set it down.

"I'm happy I'm here," she said quickly.

"I'm happy too."

"I also miss home."

There. She had said the thing that might ruin the visit.





Bubby put the tray on the bedside table and sat down.

"Those can happen together."

She didn't look offended. She didn't tell Rochel to pack the case.

Chapter 4

What Would Help Tonight

"I thought you would think I didn't want to stay," Rochel said.

"Missing home doesn't tell me that by itself. Tell me what you want."

Rochel thought about it.

She didn't want to leave Bubby in the middle of the visit. She didn't want to spend the night pretending the room felt like home either.





"Could you sit with me for a little while?"

"Yes."

They looked at the cushion Rochel had brought. Bubby asked about the patch her sister had sewn onto its corner.

Rochel told the story. The room became a place where she could talk about home, instead of a place where home had to be forgotten.

Chapter 5

The Small Arrangement

Bubby left the hall light on and her own door open.

Rochel knew where she would be if she needed her.

They arranged breakfast for the morning and chose the book they might read together after it.





"We can enjoy one part at a time," Bubby said. "You don't have to decide how the whole weekend feels tonight."

Rochel tucked the cushion beside her.

She was still missing her sisters. It didn't mean she had failed the first night.

Later, she went to the bathroom and turned the faucet the wrong way. It worked differently from the one at home. She laughed softly to herself. Every house seemed determined to make faucets an adventure.

Chapter 6

The Morning Kitchen

In the morning, Rochel found Bubby setting out breakfast.





The kitchen was bright. The clock was just a clock again.

They ate, read together, and looked through the family album after lunch.

Some moments Rochel forgot to miss home. Some moments she didn't.

Bubby didn't ask for an hourly report on whether she was enjoying herself enough.

Rochel helped clear the table. Then she leaned against the cushion on the sitting-room chair while Bubby told her about one of the photographs.

The visit had begun to feel like its own place, not a poor imitation of home.





Chapter 7

The Truth After Shabbos

After Shabbos, Rochel spoke with Mama.

"It was lovely. I missed you last night."

She nearly left out the second sentence.

Mama listened to both.

"Bubby sat with me, and it got easier."

"I'm glad you told her."

They confirmed the Sunday journey home, just as they had arranged before the visit.

Mama didn't say that being thirteen should have prevented the homesickness. She also didn't turn one difficult evening into a rule that Rochel could never stay away again.





They talked about the album and the book. Rachel had plenty of real things to tell.

Chapter 8

What Packed Flat

On Sunday, Rachel closed the case.

The cushion fit beside the clothes. Bubby added a small wrapped piece of cake.

"Memories don't pack quite as flat as you thought," she said.

Rachel laughed.

At home, her sisters asked whether she would go again.

"I think so."

Next time she could make the same small evening plan with Bubby before she went. She could ask for





help if homesickness became hard to manage. She didn't need to promise that she would never miss home.

She had wanted the visit. She had missed her family. She had enjoyed Bubby's house.

All of it fit in the story she brought back.

