



The Laugh That Did Not Happen

A talking radish and a prediction made
before anyone heard it

For ages 9-12





Chapter 1

The Radish's Complaint

Binyomin had written a tiny story about a radish who wanted to become a chandelier.

The radish was tired of living underground. It wanted to hang somewhere important and sparkle.

Leib read the opening and laughed.

"That is a very ambitious radish."

Binyomin liked the laugh. He had wanted the idea to be funny.

But the library club was different. Most of the boys there were older, and Binyomin had never shared a story with them.

"They'll laugh at me for writing something silly," he said.





Chapter 2

Before They Had Heard It

Mr. Rosen, who led the club, asked whether Binyomin wanted to bring a short piece.

"Mine isn't the right sort," Binyomin said.

"What sort is it?"

"A vegetable story."

Mr. Rosen smiled. "We have had stories about shoes and stubborn clocks. Would you like to let one listener hear a little first?"

Binyomin explained what he expected: the listener would say the idea was babyish and want something serious.

Mr. Rosen did not promise that everyone would like it.





They agreed that Binyomin would show the first paragraph to one willing club member, with Mr. Rosen nearby. He could decide afterward whether to share more.

Chapter 3

One Paragraph

A boy named Shmuel read the opening quietly.

He did not laugh.

Binyomin's stomach dropped. Perhaps the story was so bad it wasn't even funny.

Then Shmuel looked up.

"Does it have roots or a chain?"

"Roots."

"How will it hang from the ceiling?"





"It hasn't thought of that."

Now Shmuel laughed.

"I want to hear what it does when it finds out."

Binyomin looked at Mr. Rosen. The insulting laugh he had expected had not happened. The real listener had asked about the story.

Chapter 4

What One Try Could Tell

"So everyone will like it?" Leib asked later.

"I don't know," Binyomin said. "Shmuel wanted to hear more."

One listener was not every listener. It was still more information than Binyomin had had before anyone read the paragraph.





At the next club meeting, he chose to read the whole short story.

One boy liked the ending. Another thought the radish needed a better reason to leave the garden.

That comment stung a little.

"What reason would make sense?" Binyomin asked.

The boy suggested that the radish had seen a picture of a chandelier in a gardener's catalog.

Chapter 5

A Useful Difference

Binyomin kept his funny ending and tried the picture idea near the beginning.

He did not have proof that nobody would ever make an unkind remark. If someone did, he could tell Mr. Rosen.





He did have something different from a prediction made alone: he had heard actual questions and comments about his work.

On the revised page, the radish stared at a catalog and declared, "At last, a vegetable with possibilities!"

Leib laughed again.

This time Binyomin thought about what the laugh meant in that moment, instead of deciding what every future laugh would mean.

