



The Skirt on the Second Hanger

A fitting room, a different size label, and the
school morning the skirt was meant to serve

For ages 12-15





Chapter 1

The Familiar Number

The first skirt wouldn't close comfortably.

Racheli tried pulling its waistband higher. Then lower. Then she stood so straight that breathing became a separate project.

"Try this one," Mama said from outside the fitting curtain.

The second hanger had a different size label.

Racheli knew the first number. She had worn it last year. The new number looked like an accusation printed on a very small square.

"The first is fine," she said.

"Can you sit in it?"

Racheli looked at the chair in the corner.





She already knew the answer.

Chapter 2

A School Day in a Chair

Mama, wearing her brown sheitel, waited while Racheli tried sitting.

The waistband pressed against her middle. She stood immediately.

"I'll just be careful."

"You spend much of a school day sitting. Your uniform needs to work when you do."

Racheli lifted the second hanger.

She had imagined this trip as choosing a fresh uniform for Bais Yaakov. She hadn't imagined needing a conversation about a number she preferred not to see.





The shop assistant knocked gently on the fitting-room frame.

"Everything all right?"

"We're still trying," Mama answered.

She didn't announce Racheli's size across the shop.

Chapter 3

The Label's Small Job

The second skirt closed easily.

Racheli sat. She stood. She bent to pick up the empty hanger without planning every movement first.

It worked better.

"I don't like what the label says," she told Mama.

Mama considered it.





"The label helps us find a garment to try. It doesn't tell us whether you are kind, clever, or worth listening to."

"But it's different."

"Your body has grown. Clothes are supposed to fit the person wearing them, not make the person prove something to the clothes."

Racheli looked at the first skirt. It hadn't become kinder or more useful because its little square had the number she wanted.

Chapter 4

What the Mirror Could Show

In the mirror, the second skirt looked like a skirt.

It was the right length. Its pleats lay properly. The waistband didn't pull.





Racheli had wanted the mirror to tell her whether she was acceptable. The mirror wasn't equipped for that question.

It could show whether the hem was even and whether the uniform fit.

Mama checked the school's requirements with her. They tried the matching blouse and made sure she could move comfortably.

The assistant brought a second skirt in the same fit.

Racheli put the first one back on its hanger.

It wasn't a defeated version of herself. It was a garment that didn't fit this year.





Chapter 5

The Question in the Hallway

On the first morning of term, a classmate noticed Racheli's new uniform.

"Which shop did you use?"

Racheli told her.

"What size?"

For a second, the small square seemed to reappear between them.

"I tried a few until one fit," she said. "They have different cuts."

The girl began describing a skirt with pockets too narrow for her hand.

They laughed about pockets that appeared to be designed for one very thin pencil.





Racheli didn't owe the hallway a number or an explanation of her body.

Chapter 6

The Long Lesson

By the third lesson, Racheli had forgotten about the waistband.

She was thinking about a river delta and whether her answer needed a second sentence.

At break, she bent to pick up a book someone had dropped. Later, she carried a stack of art paper to the cabinet.

The skirt let her do those ordinary things.

That was what they had bought it for.





The label hadn't helped answer the geography question. It hadn't made her a better friend or a worse one.

It stayed inside the waistband, doing its small job, while Racheli had a school day.

Chapter 7

A Second Visit to the Mirror

At home, she caught herself turning sideways in the hall mirror.

She wanted to inspect whether the new size was visible to everybody else.

Then she noticed what she was doing.

She checked that her blouse was tucked properly and went to put away her books.





The worry returned briefly while she washed her hands. She told Mama about it after supper instead of trying to solve it through another ten mirror inspections.

Mama listened. If worries about her body or clothes kept making daily life difficult, they could ask someone qualified to help.

For today, they had chosen clothes that fit and made room for a worry without letting it choose the uniform.

Chapter 8

The Useful Hanger

On Thursday evening, Racheli hung up the skirt for the next school day.

She noticed the number again. It was still not her favorite thing to see.





She didn't need to like every label before she could use a useful garment.

Her book report was in her bag. Her friend had lent her a funny story. The art paper had reached its cabinet without scattering down the stairs.

None of those things belonged on the little square in the waistband.

She smoothed the pleats and put the hanger beside her blouse.

The skirt fit Racheli.

Racheli did not have to fit a number.

