

The Three Tries at the Puppet Booth

Three afternoons and a speaking
part that grows

For ages 9-12



Chapter 1

Behind the Cloth

The school library club had a little puppet booth. A cloth hid the puppeteers, and an opening showed the puppets.

Yossi liked making the bear bow. He did not like giving the bear a voice.

When Rebbi asked for volunteers for a short library scene, Yossi chose to arrange the books beside the booth.

"The bear only has two sentences," Leib said.

"Then you can say them."

Leib looked disappointed but did not argue.

Yossi kept moving the same three books. He wanted a part in the scene. He just wanted the part without the speaking.





Chapter 2

Two Listeners

Rebbi sat beside the booth after the other boys left for their next supervised activity.

"Would you like to work toward the bear's part?"

Yossi nodded. "Not in front of everyone today."

"We can start smaller."

They agreed that Yossi would speak one bear sentence to Rebbi, with Leib listening beside him. The club met on three afternoons that week. They could decide each next step together.

Yossi expected the sentence to disappear from his mind.

He lifted the bear.

"Excuse me. Is this the library or the honey cupboard?"





He stumbled over cupboard, but the sentence did not disappear.

Leib grinned. "Definitely the honey cupboard."

Chapter 3

Two Chairs

On the second afternoon, Yossi remembered the stumble more clearly than the words he had said.

"Maybe yesterday was luck."

"Let's notice what happens today," Rebbi said.

Yossi agreed to say both sentences to two seated boys, with Rebbi nearby. He could pause and look at the script.

Before starting, he thought both boys would stare when he stopped.





He did stop once. He looked down, found the next line, and went on.

One boy scratched his nose. The other watched the bear. Neither demanded that he hurry.

Afterward Yossi told Rebbi, "They waited."

"And you found your place."

Chapter 4

The Third Afternoon

The next day Yossi's stomach fluttered again.

That annoyed him. He had practiced twice. Wasn't the fluttering supposed to be finished?

Rebbi didn't promise it would vanish.

"Would you like the same audience today, or the little group from the club?"





Yossi considered. He chose the group, with the script on a low shelf behind the booth and Leib beside him.

He said the first sentence. A few boys laughed at the bear's mistake.

For a moment Yossi lost his place. Leib waited instead of taking his line.

Yossi found the second sentence.

"Then I will borrow a book about honey."

Chapter 5

More Than One Try

Afterward, Yossi set the bear on its shelf.

"I was nervous all three times," he said.

"And what else happened?" Rabbi asked.





Yossi thought about the sentence he expected to forget, the boys he expected to stare, and the pause that hadn't ended the scene.

"I said more each time."

Next week's scene was longer. Yossi did not volunteer for every line.

"I'll choose my next part after I read it," he told Leib.

The bear still sounded a little like Yossi. For now, that was exactly the voice it needed.

