



The Tile With the Blue Flower

A broken keepsake, a cross thought, and
blame that could not travel backward

For ages 12-15





Chapter 1

The Sound From the Kitchen

The crash came just after Tova's angry thought.

That was what she remembered all evening.

Her little sister had been allowed to choose the cake for Aunt Rivka's visit. Tova had wanted lemon; her sister chose chocolate. Then her sister asked for the large plate with the blue flower tile in its center.

Tova thought, I wish that plate weren't here.

A minute later, a shelf bracket broke in the kitchen. Two plates fell, and the blue flower tile cracked across the middle.

Nobody was hurt. Mama told the girls to stay out while she cleared the pieces.

Tova stared at the closed kitchen door.

She had wished it away.





Chapter 2

The Wrong Confession

Mama, wearing her brown sheitel, brought the two large tile pieces to the table.

"The bracket was old," she said. "We should have checked it sooner."

Tova began to cry.

"It was me."

Mama looked at her.

"Were you touching the shelf?"

"No."

"Did you put something on it?"

"No. I was at the table."

Her sister looked frightened.





"I wanted the plate not to be here," Tova whispered.
The room went quiet for a different reason.

Chapter 3

What Broke

Mama sat down beside her.

"A thought doesn't break a shelf bracket."

"But it happened right afterward."

"Two things happening close together doesn't make one cause the other."

Tova knew thoughts couldn't reach across a kitchen and loosen metal. Knowing was easier when she hadn't just thought something cross about the very thing that broke.

Mama took a piece of the bracket from a safe place on the counter. Its old fastener had pulled away.





That was the part of the shelf that needed attention.
Tova's angry thought hadn't traveled into it.

Chapter 4

The Thing She Actually Said

"I also told her chocolate was a bad choice," Tova said.

Her little sister nodded unhappily.

There was something Tova had actually done.

"I'm sorry I said that. You were allowed to choose. I was disappointed and spoke unkindly."

Her sister accepted the apology.

Mama didn't attach the broken tile to it.

The rude sentence had reached her sister's ears.
That was a real action with a real repair.





The private wish had not reached the shelf.

Tova could apologize for the first without confessing to the second as though it were a secret method of breaking plates.

Chapter 5

Aunt Rivka's Visit

Aunt Rivka came the next afternoon, wearing her plum tichel.

The chocolate cake was on a different plate.

Mama told her about the shelf, and Aunt Rivka looked at the two tile pieces.

"That was from Bubby's old kitchen," she said.

Tova's stomach tightened again.

Now she wanted to apologize to Aunt Rivka for something the adults had already said wasn't hers.





Instead she went quietly to Mama and explained that the blame feeling had returned.

Mama listened without making Tova give another detailed account of every thought.

"The bracket broke. You were at the table. Those facts haven't changed."

Chapter 6

The Little Stand

Aunt Rivka asked whether she could keep the tile pieces.

A local craftsperson might be able to put them together in a stand. It wouldn't be a plate again. The crack might stay visible.

Tova offered to help pack them safely.





Mama said she could help with the wrapping after the adults had made the sharp edges safe.

Helping wasn't a punishment or a payment for a thought.

It was an ordinary useful thing to do for a keepsake.

Tova wrapped the prepared pieces and handed Aunt Rivka the small box.

Chapter 7

A Cross Thought at Break

At Bais Yaakov the following week, Tova felt cross when a classmate chose the last bright pencil.

A thought passed through her mind: I wish her pencil would break.

Tova didn't like it.





Then she noticed that a thought had arrived and that she could choose what to do next.

She picked another color. She didn't threaten the classmate, touch the pencil, or repeat the thought as a joke.

Nothing needed to be reported as a crime inside her head.

If blame thoughts kept frightening her or pulling her into repeated confessions, she could tell Mama and get help. She didn't have to spend break inspecting the pencil for cracks.

Chapter 8

The Flower Returned

A few weeks later, Aunt Rivka brought a photograph of the repaired tile on its little stand.





The blue flower was whole enough to recognize. A fine line ran across two petals.

"It sits on my shelf now," she said.

Tova looked at it without searching the line for proof of her own anger.

The accident had an ordinary cause. The unkind words had needed an apology. The keepsake had needed care.

Those were different things, even though they had happened in the same kitchen.

She asked Aunt Rivka about the stand and listened to how it had been made.

For the first time, the tile's new story didn't begin with the sentence in Tova's head.

