

The Mystery of the Lady Who Cared



Chapter 1: The Mysterious Grandmother

"OOF... what a long queue, when will our turn come", my little brother Simcha complained. Although his name is Simcha, that does not mean that he is always happy. For example, we went to "Toys and more", to buy some things that are missing from my English soldier's costume, and Simcha just complained all the time, that it is crowded and that the line is too long. (This was before Corona ... when the shops were open of course ...)

"Simcha, do you see this girl? And this tall man? And this grandmother? Right after them is our turn. It's just a few more minutes," I tried to reassure Simcha.

But Simcha kept nagging and jumping from side to side impatiently. I looked around quickly and tried to look for something that might interest Simcha:

"Hey Simcha! Look at that clown! How cute!" I exclaimed with false enthusiasm, pointing to a large balloon clown standing at the entrance and interfering with the passage.

"He's not cute at all!" Shouted Simcha, and some people turned around to see who was shouting.

"Hey Simcha! Look who's standing there next to the Playmobil! Its your kindergarten teacher from last year!"

"It's not my teacher at all, it's just another mother! My teacher had blue shoes, and this woman has grey shoes." I did not want to get into an in-depth discussion with Simcha about the possibility that his teacher bought new shoes since last year, so I did not respond.

I took a deep breath and tried one last idea. "Hey Simcha, look at this grandmother standing in front of us, she is not holding anything! I wonder what she wants to buy ..."

To my great surprise, Simcha paused and looked in the direction of the cash register.

There stood an older woman, about the age of our grandmother, or a little older. She was not holding a costume or game or Bristol. There was no basket, just a small brown bag hanging on her left shoulder. She leaned on a cane and waited patiently for her turn.

"Twenty-one shekels and seventy cents," the seller informed the tall man standing at the checkout. The tall man took the wand, the crown, and the cloak, put it in the bag, and made his way out.

"Yes ma'am, what do you need?" The seller asked the nice grandmother. "Hmmm ... look sir, I need all the firecrackers, Pikot and explosives toys that you have in the store."

"What?" The seller was amazed, "What are you going to do with so many Pikot? Is it for your grandchildren?"

"Oh, no, sir," laughed the grandmother, "my grandchildren are in Russia, they study in a yeshiva, do not play with it, sorry, I

do not speak the language so well. I live in the country for only a few years."

The line grew longer and longer, and the seller decided not to linger any longer. He bent down under the counter and packed up all the firecrackers and Pikot he had, into three large bags.

"That's it?" The grandmother was disappointed. "It's not so much! Maybe there will be more firecrackers in the warehouse?"

"Michael! Go check the warehouse for a moment to see if there are any more firecrackers or Pikot", the salesman called out to one of the workers.

In the meantime, we started checking out and finished quickly. The older lady waited for Michael to return from the warehouse, and tapped the floor with a stick to the rhythm of the song played on the speaker, "Shoshanat Yaakov, Tzahala Vesameicha..."

Only one dusty box was found in the warehouse, the lady paid five hundred and ninety shekels for her purchase and put everything in a checkered shopping cart waiting for her outside the store.



Chapter 2: The Detectives

"Let's follow her!", Whispered Simcha in my ear. "We'll see what she does with all the firecrackers and Pikot that she bought ..."

Simcha wants to be a detective, and he likes to dream of gangs following all sorts of suspicious people. Now I did not think the kind grandmother was suspicious, but I agreed to cooperate.

"Okay, Simcha, we'll go after her, but only on the streets we know, and besides we should be home by six, agreed?"

Simcha barely heard me. He hid behind a tin (if you don't hide, it is not worth it), and peered in the direction of the grandmother.

The grandmother continued in the direction of Rimon Square and then crossed the road. We crossed it carefully. After a few minutes of walking, she stopped next to the "Yesh Chesed" supermarket. The automatic door opened and the lady dragged the heavy cart behind her and was engulfed in the busy store.

"I think we should wait for her there, near the playground, it could be suspicious if we just stand here by the store door," I suggested to Simcha.

"Yeah sure! I'm going to the swings in the meantime." Simcha managed to swing for a few minutes and slide three times, and then I noticed our lady, going out into the street with a white bag peeking out of the cart.

Oh no!!! What does this child think of himself? He's riding his scooter on the sidewalk at the speed of a motor.... boom!

The scooter collided with the checkered cart, and the nice grandmother moved aside in panic. The tangerines rolled all over the sidewalk.

Simcha ran and I followed him. We collected the tangerines and returned them to the bag, except for one tangerine that rolled onto the road and was run over ...

"Oh! You guys are very good like my Sander!" The lady complimented us.

"So it's for Sander?" We asked at once.

"For Sander?! You're being funny...ha ha ha, Sander is already a grandfather ..."

"So you bought everything for Sander's grandchildren?" Simcha asked curiously.

"No, never! Would I buy firecrackers for my great-grandchildren?!" The lady was startled. "And just a moment, how exactly are you kids here to help me with the tangerines?" She asked in amazement and continued with a nice smile: "Never mind, maybe you will come to my house, I'll give you chocolate."

I exchanged glances with Simcha. I know how much he loves chocolate ... but we do not enter strangers' homes, even if we follow them and really want to find out their secret! We had to politely decline the offer.

Oh, sorry ma'am, thank you very much, but our mother is already waiting for us, so we'd better go" I told her. The lady entered the new building right next to the mall, and we went home disappointed.

Chapter 3: The Royal Guest

In the middle of a stormy pillow fight, gentle knocks were heard on the door.

"Welcome," we heard Mother exclaim warmly, "what an important guest, come in, Mrs. Zilberman!"

Who is Mrs. Zilberman? I tried to remember. I do not know any Mrs. Zilberman ...

I quickly arranged all the pillows. Who stepped in and sat down on the couch? You guessed it! ... It was the woman from the Pikot!

"Children, this is Mrs. Zilberman, she's my friend from my Torah Class," Mother explained.

"What wonderful children you have! I came to tell you about it, and also to tell them something," the guest smiled, and told mother in a melodious voice:

"Yesterday a kid with a scooter crashed into my shopping cart, and all my tangerines rolled on the sidewalk, and your wonderful children helped me collect everything ... and if you want to know exactly how they got there? Then ask them!"

I felt my cheeks blush. Suddenly Simcha opened his mouth and said, "Mommy, we saw her in the store buying all the Pikot and firecrackers, and we did not understand why. So we followed her to see what she would do with them... Then the tangerines fell, and we collected them, and that's it, we went home."

Mrs. Zilberman relaxed on the couch. I served her a cup of raspberry tea and hung an expectant look at her.

"So children, after you went home, I remembered that I knew you. Your mother once let me see a picture of you from the bar mitzvah of your oldest brother. I decided to come and thank you, and reveal the secret to you," Mrs. Zilberman lowered her voice.

"Did you buy the firecrackers for us?" whispered Simcha hesitantly.

"For you? No! Of course not! Ahh sorry. Actually, yes! For you and for all the kids. But not for exploding them!"

Suddenly I understood everything. She buys all the firecrackers in the stores, so the kids won't buy them and play with dangerous toys!

"Oh, Mrs. Zilberman! That's why you asked if there's more in the warehouse?" I inquired.

"Yes, of course! Every year from Tu B'Shvat I can't sleep because I'm so worried.

I'm so scared that kids will play with firecrackers and Pikot or all sorts of terrible things like that, they've already hurt so many kids and people still dare to sell them! And children dare to buy them!"

"What about Pikot?", Simcha asked in disappointment, "all my friends buy them!" The guest looked into Simcha's eyes and replied: "they're simply fooling you! As if the Pikot are less dangerous ... Do not let anyone fool you! The Pikot heat up easily and often explode in children's pockets and even in their hands.

The company fools you also by writing the warnings in tiny letters that nobody can read. And most of the children just go on, not knowing that the factories and shops are making money at the expense of the lives and health of many innocent children."

I was very upset to hear that. What a Chutzpa! Since they want to make money, they're selling us such dangerous things! And they even hide the information about the dangers!

"It's such an important thing you do, and thank you so much! But Mrs. Zilberman," I knit my brow anxiously, "what if the stores order more Pikot after you buy everything? And what about the Pikot in other cities? And what if you don't have enough money to buy everything? And what about all the other dangerous toys and scary masks that children buy?" I queried.

"You're right" the guest sighed, "That's why I decided to tell you all about it. Tell it to all your friends, and they'll tell more of their friends ... until everyone finally understands, no one will be tricked into using them, and all will be well B'ezrat Hashem. We' won't have to chase after the Pikot and firecrackers in the shops, and we won't have to waste money ... and if your friends are as smart and nice as you, then I'm sure they will understand. And this Purim will be a really happy Purim! Not a Purim of noise and fright and injuries... but only light and joy, " ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר כן תהיה. " and with that she raised her cup and called out "LeChaim"! Now guess what she took out of her bag?! Two tangerines! One for me and one for Simcha.

I ate the tangerine, washed my hands, and sat down to write you this story.

Based on a true story of a savta in Eretz Yisrael told to a representative of Keren Yosef on a school pre purim educational program. The grandchild was so proud of his wonderful caring savta!



Shifra Rosenbaum rosenbaum585@gmail.com