



Make a Note of This

A lively soccer game was taking place in the school playground. Fishel and Faivish were right in the middle. What they lacked in skill, they made up for in enthusiasm.

The game was so exciting that nobody noticed the head of English studies, Mr. Barker, step onto the playground. Mr. Barker wore his usual grim expression. He also wore his usual black bowler hat. He believed it made him look “official.”

Just then, Fishel kicked the soccer ball high in the air. The boys watched in awe. Then the awe changed quickly to horror. The ball was heading straight for Mr. Barker!

Thwack! It knocked off his bowler hat and sent it flying.

Mr. Barker let out a roar of rage. He looked for the guilty boy. Aha! Fishel Friedman, of course! Fishel was well-known to Mr. Barker. Fishel had spent many hours outside Mr. Barker’s office.

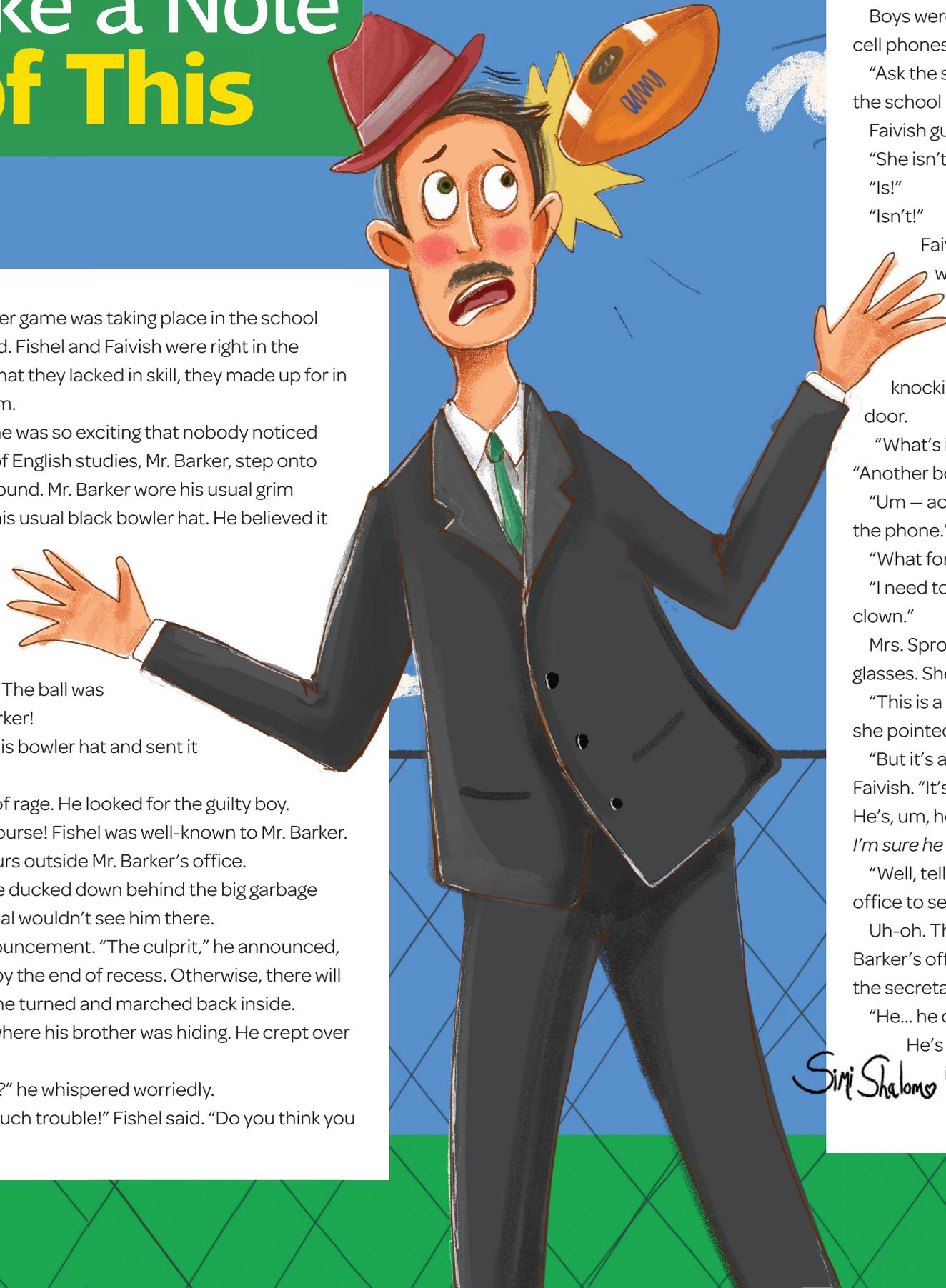
Fishel turned and ran. He ducked down behind the big garbage bins. He hoped the principal wouldn’t see him there.

Mr. Barker made an announcement. “The culprit,” he announced, “will be outside my office by the end of recess. Otherwise, there will be consequences.” Then he turned and marched back inside.

Faivish had figured out where his brother was hiding. He crept over to him.

“What are you gonna do?” he whispered worriedly.

“I don’t know. I’m in so much trouble!” Fishel said. “Do you think you can call Jolly Solly?”



“But how?” asked Faivish.

Boys were not allowed to bring cell phones to school.

“Ask the secretary if you can use the school phone.”

Faivish gulped.

“She isn’t going to let me.”

“Is!”

“Isn’t!”

Faivish looked at Fishel’s worried face.

“Okay, I’ll try,” he said.

Soon he was knocking on Mrs. Sprockett’s door.

“What’s it now?” she snapped. “Another boy lost his pencil?”

“Um – actually no. I need to use the phone.”

“What for?”

“I need to call Jolly Solly the clown.”

Mrs. Sprockett removed her glasses. She stared at Faivish.

“This is a school, not a circus,” she pointed out.

“But it’s an emergency,” pleaded Faivish. “It’s for my brother, Fishel. He’s, um, he feels really sick.” *And I’m sure he does*, Faivish thought.

“Well, tell him to come to the office to see me.”

Uh-oh. That wouldn’t work. Mr. Barker’s office was right next to the secretary’s.

“He... he can’t come right now.

He’s doing something important.” *Like hiding.*

“Well, then, obviously

he’s not that sick.”

“Oh, please, can I at least phone my mother?” begged Faivish.

“She’ll take care of it.”

Mrs. Sprockett really had no time for annoying young boys. On the other hand, Faivish seemed really upset. She pushed the phone in his direction.

Fortunately, Mrs. Friedman was a lot more sympathetic. She didn’t understand the whole story, as Faivish was careful about what he said. Mrs. Friedman did understand that Fishel needed her help. Within minutes, she had Jolly Solly on the phone.

“I don’t know. I’m in so much trouble!” Fishel said. “Do you think you can call Jolly Solly?”

As soon as he hung up, Faivish ran back outside.

“Jolly Solly said you should write an apology. Explain that it was a mistake. Say you’re really sorry.”

“What! He thinks Mr. Barker will pay attention to that?”

Faivish shrugged. “Look, that’s what Jolly Solly said. Do you have a better idea?”

Fishel didn’t.

They took out a page from Faivish’s notebook. Then they wrote the letter together. They

begged forgiveness for the very terrible mistake. They offered to pay to fix the hat.

Before the end of recess, they pushed the letter under Mr. Barker’s door.

Then they waited nervously outside.

Mr. Barker opened the door a few minutes later. But now he was like a pussycat, not a lion. His hat was back on, and it looked fine.

“Got your letter. Next time, be more careful. Now, off you go back to class,” he said.

There was a stunned silence.

“Wow! A thousand thanks, sir!” cried Fishel.

“Ten thousand!” exclaimed Faivish.

“A million!”

“Ten million!”

Mr. Barker shut his door with a firm click.

R. Atkins’s book, Around the Year with Jolly Solly, featuring 50 fabulous stories, is in bookstores now. For information about a personalized version, contact the Mishpacha office.