



ON THE Spot

“Boys, you’ve been lounging around all afternoon,” growled Mr. Friedman. “It’s time you made yourselves useful. I’m sure your mother could use some help.”

He looked at Mrs. Friedman.

“Well — I suppose they could water the flowers in the back garden,” said Mrs.

Friedman. She didn’t sound very sure.

“Oh no!” Fishel groaned loudly. “I hate watering flowers. What’s the point? Next thing you know, you have to do it all over again!”

“Yeah. They should make waterless flowers,” declared Faivish. He agreed with his brother for a change. “Maybe I’ll invent some when I’m bigger and make piles of money. I’ll be rich as a king!”

“I’ll be rich as ten kings!”

“Twenty!”

“A hundred!”

Mrs. Friedman decided to intervene before things got out of hand. She pressed a watering can into Fishel’s reluctant fingers. And another into Faivish’s. “Boys, the flowers,” she said.

Seeing their father’s watchful gaze, the boys shuffled out to the garden. Watering flowers! What an utterly boring job. And there was a whole exciting world out there of things to do! They wished they were biking — scootering — rollerblading. Anything but watering boring old flowers.

The Friedmans’ garden was lush and gorgeous, with blooms in every color. Fishel and Faivish, however, were blind to its beauty. They listlessly filled the watering cans. They started pouring water every which way.



“Stop it! You’re splashing me!” complained Fishel.

“Oh, yeah? Well, you’re splashing me!”

“You started it!” growled Fishel.

“Oh, really?” snarled Faivish.

The two brothers faced off.

SPLASH!

SPLOSH!

Suddenly, a roar from somewhere nearby made them jump. They both dropped their watering cans.

“Look what you’ve done to my best jacket!”

Fishel and Faivish looked nervously across the fence. Mr. Krankowitz was pointing to the blue jacket he was wearing. It must have gotten wet during their water fight.

“Um... it’ll get dry, soon, probably,” Fishel said hopefully.

“I’m sure it will,” said Faivish.

The old man’s face turned purple.

“You young rascals! This jacket will need dry cleaning, I bet! And I’m not paying a penny toward it. You two can jolly well foot the bill!”

Fishel looked at Faivish. Faivish looked at Fishel.

How would they tell the cross old man they didn’t have any money? All their pocket money had gone to pay for a window they’d smashed.

Trouble was, if they didn’t pay, the old man would march over to their father to complain about their behavior. That was to be avoided at all costs.

“Um... sorry, I’ll try and sort something out,” said Fishel.

“Me too,” echoed Faivish.

The pair scuttled off as quickly as they could. Out of earshot, they stopped and looked at each other with terror in their eyes.

“What’ll we do?”

“We can’t ask Tatty for the money. He’ll have a fit!”

“We need help!”

“We need—”

As one, the two brothers said, “Jolly Solly!”

Thankfully, the clown agreed to help. He offered to speak to Mr. Krankowitz. Fishel and

Faivish crouched down behind the old man’s gate to watch.

The clown rang Mr. Krankowitz’s bell.

The troublesome two watched curiously as the clown examined the old man’s jacket carefully. They heard Jolly Solly making sympathetic noises. Then he swung into action. Jolly Solly tossed his hat up in the air. Out dropped a rolled-up apron, which the clown slipped on. It bore the logo: “Clothes Cleaning Services — Successful Solutions for Spots and Stains.” Next he pulled out a small spray bottle. Within seconds he’d removed any trace of the watermarks on Mr. Krankowitz’s jacket. In truth, they’d barely been visible.

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Mr. Krankowitz examined the cleaned jacket suspiciously. Unable to find fault, he silently put it back on. Then Jolly Solly offered to make him a nice cup of tea. As the door closed, Fishel and Faivish turned awestruck faces to each other.

“Wish I had a spray like that!”

“Wish I could pull things out of my hat like that!”

A stern voice interrupted their thoughts. Uh-oh. It was their father.

“Wish all you like,” he growled. “but do it *after* you’ve finished watering the flowers, not now.”

Without further ado, he marched the pair back to the garden to finish their jobs.

Hey, no fighting this time, Fishel and Faivish!

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.