

The Afikoman by Tirzah Rosenberg Cohen

Seder night had come at last! Everyone had worked so hard to clean the house and make sure there was no chametz anywhere. Now it was time to start the seder.

Grandpa and Grandma had come specially and so had Aunty Sarah and Uncle David. They had two children called Daniel and Rifkah. They were cousins of Eli and Sharon. All the children were very happy to be together for the seder nights.

Sharon was the youngest so she would ask the Mah Nishtanah. She had learnt the first two questions in kindergarten and knew them very well. Eli would help her with the last two questions as she did not know them quite so well. Sharon was very excited indeed. She was looking forward to singing the Mah Nishtanah.

When everyone came home from shul it took a little while till they all found the right place to sit. In the meantime the four children were talking to each other. Daniel was the oldest. He said to the others "I will take the Afikoman from Grandpa's place while he is not looking. I am the oldest so I will do it the best."

Rifkah said "Well, that is a good idea, but what will you do if you are not sitting next to Grandpa? How will you manage it? If Eli is sitting next to him then I think he should do it."

"I have a very good idea," said Eli "whoever sits nearest to Grandpa should take the Afikoman when he is not looking. Then they should pass it on to the next one and so on till it gets to Sharon. She is the youngest and will sit next to Mummy and Mummy said she will help us to hide it."

"That is a very good idea," they all said.

Just then Daddy called them all to come and sit down. Grandpa sat at the top of the table in the big chair. He had two big white cushions at the back of it and was wearing his white kittel and white kippah. Grandma sat next to him on one side and Daddy sat on the other side. The children all looked at each other. How would they get the Afikoman?

Eli sat next to Daddy. He thought "I am the nearest so I will have to try the hardest!" The seder started. Grandpa made kiddush and everyone drank the first cup of wine. All the children drank too.

Then it was Sharon's turn to ask the Mah Nishtanah. She was a little bit shy to begin with but then she sang in a loud voice. Eli helped her a bit with the second two questions and when they had finished, all the grown ups said how well they had done.

The seder went on. All the children were so interested for a chance to take the Afikoman that they stayed awake and did not fall asleep at all.

When the time came to split the middle matzah and put the larger part away for the Afikoman. Everyone watched Grandpa as he put the piece of matzah into a special Afikoman bag and put it between the cushions at the back of his chair. How would they take it away? Eli whispered to Daddy, "Please will you take the bag from Grandpa's cushions when he is not looking and pass it over to me. I will pass it to Rifkah, she will pass it to Daniel and he will pass it to Sharon and Mummy will help her hide it!" Daddy agreed to help.

But it was more difficult than they thought. Grandpa kept looking round every time they tried to take the Afikoman.

At last they had a chance! Grandpa was explaining something difficult to Uncle David and while he was talking, Daddy reached over and took the Afikoman in the bag and passed it over to Eli. Eli passed it quickly to Rifkah. She passed it to Daniel and Daniel passed it to Sharon. Then Mummy saw it and said "Come, Sharon, I need you to help me in the kitchen for a moment!", and they both went into the kitchen and hid the Afikoman in the bag inside the Pesach cupboard in the kitchen. Then they went back into the room. All the children were very happy that they had taken the Afikoman and everyone had helped to get it.

When they came to the end of the meal, Grandpa wanted to give everyone a piece of the Afikoman. He could not find it anywhere. He looked all over the dining room and still could not find it. At last he said, "Well I can't find the Afikoman. Who has taken it? Please give it back to me so that I can share it out!"

Then all the children laughed and said to Grandpa, "We have taken it! We all helped to take it! Daddy and Mummy helped too so we will all have to have a reward when we give it back to you!"

Grandpa looked very surprised indeed. "What reward would you all like for the Afikoman?", he asked.

"A picnic in the country all together", said Daniel, "that would be fun for everyone."

"What a good idea", said Grandpa, "we can go on Chol Hamoed. I think that is the best reward for everyone for the Afikoman. Please bring the Afikoman – where have you put it?"

Sharon ran into the kitchen and fetched the Afikoman in the bag and gave it back to Grandpa. He was very happy to have it back and be able to finish the seder and everyone enjoyed the picnic reward on Chol Hamoed.