

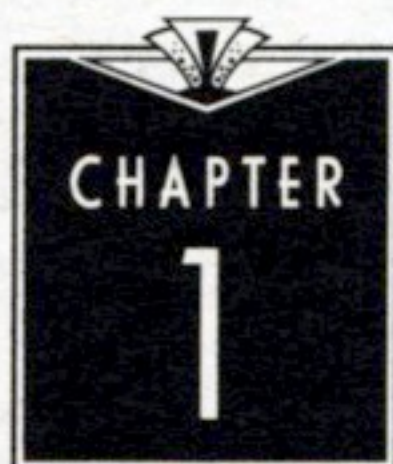
DAVE AT NIGHT

GAIL CARSON LEVINE

AUTHOR OF THE NEWBERY HONOR BOOK *ELLA ENCHANTED*



"Touching, beautifully told." — *The New York Times Book Review*



CHAPTER 1

FROM THE START, I've always made trouble. My mama died of complications from having me. I once joked about it to my older brother, Gideon. I said I could make trouble even before I was born. Gideon thought I was serious because he said, "You didn't do it on purpose, Dave. You were too young. You weren't even yourself yet."

No, I didn't do it on purpose, but probably I was fooling around in her belly, having a fine time, and I kicked or punched too hard, and one thing led to another, and she died.

I had nothing to do with Papa dying, though. He died on Tuesday, October 26, 1926, when he fell off the roof of a house he was helping to build.



About four years before he died, when I was seven, I got in trouble for smearing glue on the chair of Izzy, the class bully. My stepmother, Ida, had to go to P.S. 42 and promise the principal that I'd never smear glue on anybody's chair ever again. I never did, but Ida had to visit P.S. 42 often anyway. I batted a ball into our fourth-grade teacher's rear end (by accident—my aim wasn't *that* good). I fought with Izzy on the stairs. I let a mouse loose in our classroom. And more. Some things I didn't do but got blamed for because I'd done everything else.

Papa tried to be mad when I got into trouble. "You have to behave," he'd say.

I'd say, "Yes, Papa."

"Ida can't do her work if she has to go to school because of you."

"I know." Ida made ladies' blouses on the sewing machine next to her and Papa's bed.

"This is the end of it, then. Yes?"

"Yes, Papa."

"Good." Then he always asked, "What happened?"

At the beginning of my story, he'd listen and frown, but then the frown would disappear and his shoulders would start to shake. A little while later he'd be laughing and wiping tears from his eyes.

Papa was a woodworker. Before he came to the United States, he made a cabinet for the sultan of Turkey. The sultan was so pleased with the three hidden

drawers Papa put into it that he gave Papa a gold medal.

Whenever he told about the medal, Papa would laugh. "We had to come to this country because of the sultan," he'd say. "I didn't want any more work from him. If he liked what you did, he gave you a medal. If he didn't like it . . ." Papa would drag a finger across his throat. ". . . Too bad for you." He'd laugh some more and add, "When we came to New York City, I sold the medal and bought your mama a dress."

But this wasn't the real reason Papa came to the United States. The real reason was too serious for him to talk about, so he'd joke about his medal instead. The truth was that there had been a war, and Greece had taken over the city where he lived. Papa and his family, the Caros family, had sided with Turkey, and so they all moved here when Greece won.

The day Papa died, I was late getting home after school. Detention and then stickball. When I got there, Gideon was sitting on the steps outside our building. As soon as I saw him, I knew something was wrong. He was never out here. He was always upstairs or at the library, studying. When I got close enough, I saw he had been crying.

"What happened?"

"Papa . . ."

I ran into the building. Gideon followed me.

Papa was in the front room, lying on the couch where Gideon and I slept at night. He wasn't bleeding,

**If nobody wants him, that's fine.
He'll just take care of himself.**

When his father dies, Dave knows nothing will ever be the same—and he finds out he's right when he lands in an orphanage in Harlem. The Hebrew Home for Boys is cold and strict, but Dave knows he'll be okay. If it doesn't work out, he'll just find a better place to stay. But it's not that simple.

Outside the gates of the orphanage, the nighttime streets of Harlem buzz with jazz musicians and swindlers, exclusive parties and mystifying strangers. Inside, another world unfolds, with rare friendships and bitter enemies. And somewhere in the middle Dave is determined to find a place that feels like home.

"Poignant and energetic." — *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

**"This novel will provide inspiration while offering
a unique view of a culturally diverse New York City."**

— *School Library Journal* (starred review)

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