

**CHOSEN**

Written by

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**INT. AVI'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

Avi, 16, watches YouTube on his laptop in bed, headphones on. We are close on his eyes, see part of his head - a skinhead.

He watches Jordan Peterson clips, Alt-right vs Antifa, Tommy Robinson vlogs. He's hooked, barely blinks.

Knock knock.

LEILA (O.S.)  
Wakey wakey rise and shine, seven  
seven's are...?

Avi quickly rips off headphones, shoves laptop under duvet.

AVI  
Alright, I'm up.

LEILA  
Seven seven's are...?

AVI  
Yeah, I'm too old for that, mum.

She's hurt. But also she's now suspicious. She opens the curtains and window. Leaves. Beat. She suddenly charges back in.

LEILA  
Seven bloody sevens!

AVI  
Forty-bloody-nine!

LEILA  
Thank you!

She storms off.

LEILA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
And don't swear!

We pan out. He despairs, has a stretch. On closer inspection, we see he has two-inch sidelocks on either side of his head.

There is a picture of the Chabad Lubavitch Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, on the wall over his head - an old man with a big white beard and fedora hat.

**EXT. STREET, STAMFORD HILL - MORNING**

Avi stomps down the road in white shirt, black trousers, skullcap and sidelocks. Best mate YAIR, 16, in same attire.

'Jerusalem' by Matisyahu accompanies their stomp - Reggae-fusion-Jewish hip hop. The local Hasidic community goes about its day. Kosher shops open for morning trade.

A bus stops - SKINHEADS get off, clock Avi and Yair. Avi sees them, speeds away. The skinheads give chase. Avi and Yair leg it to their school gates. But they are not open yet. Damn. They look at each other - they need a plan, quick...

**TITLES: CHOSEN  
EPISODE ONE - EXODUS FROM N16**

So Avi and Yair use the other STUDENTS waiting outside as human shields against their attackers. Avi spins students around, knocks them in the way, crawls through their legs. The skinheads are now doubly infuriated.

That's when Avi - momentarily under cover - spots her across the road. GRACE, 16, posh school uniform and perfect hair. She walks into her school - Our Lady's Convent.

Avi stands up to wave at her, yells to catch her attention. She notices him - but so do the skinheads - who continue their pursuit...

Avi evades their clutches while also trying to look cool about it - in an effort to impress Grace. It sort of works... in a Laurel and Hardy kind of way.

She smiles - bemused.

Avi's school gates suddenly open - and the students pile in, including Avi and Yair, just in time...

The skinheads are met by DANNY, man-mountain security guard, white shirt, black trousers, skullcap and bomber jacket. They stop, look up - they're not going to mess with that.

Avi looks up to see if Grace is still there - catches a glimpse as she disappears into her school...

DANNY

Forbidden fruit, Romeo - you can look, but you can't touch. Like bacon.

AVI

Bacon's not a fruit.

DANNY

It's an analogy.

AVI  
Actually, it's a kind of cured  
meat.

DANNY  
Shut up prick.

AVI  
You meant simile.

DANNY  
I meant prick! Go on, piss off.

AVI  
And I've had bacon, so...

DANNY  
My tuchus you've had bacon.

AVI  
I once had a Peperami round the  
back of Mr Schluffer's house,  
actually.

DANNY  
Is that what they call bumming  
these days... Go on, pis avek.

AVI  
And Romeo schtupped Juliet, so...

DANNY  
With his Peperami?

Avi leaves - walks straight into EZRA, 30s, the Enforcer. He's wily, sly, medium-build and not particularly mean looking - but he knows Krav Maga Combat. And that's enough.

Avi goes to walk around, Ezra blocks him. And again. Ezra smiles, lets him go.

Ezra joins Danny at the gates, watches the skinheads strut away.

EZRA  
Proklamirn dem tsvishn di aumus:  
tsugreytn far mlkhmh.  
(Proclaim this among the nations:  
Prepare for war.)  
Book of Joel. Not the best of the  
books, admittedly, but some great  
one-liners.

#### **INT. CLASSROOM, YESHIVA - MORNING**

The teacher, MR ABELMAN, 50s, white shirt, black trousers, skullcap, sidelocks, full beard, is mid-argument with Avi.

MR ABELMAN  
Will you just read it?

AVI  
I sped-read it already, it doesn't  
really answer the question.

Mr Abelman gives up.

AVI (CONT'D)  
Where was Hashem during the Holocaust?

MR ABELMAN  
I told you, the question isn't where  
was Hashem, the question is where  
was Man? Man had neglected Man.

AVI  
Clearly. But so did God. Your God  
stood by -

MR ABELMAN  
It's Hashem, and he's your God too...

YAIR  
Might be a she. Or non-binary. Gods  
are fluid. Like Slimer in  
Ghostbusters.

MR ABELMAN  
Hashem's not fluid.

JACOB, 16, ginger, acne, leans over.

JACOB  
I got some God fluid. (a knowing  
wink)

AVI  
Guys, focus. Hashem stood by and  
watched six million of his own  
people die. Six million. Do you  
know how many that is?

Mr Abelman seems fazed, rattled.

MR ABELMAN  
Jacob - read!

AVI  
In a sec, Jake, thanks.

Jacob is unsure...

AVI (CONT'D)  
Hashem saved us when we were slaves  
in Egypt.  
(MORE)

AVI (CONT'D)

So why intervene then with miracle  
after miracle, and basically sit on  
his tush in the war?

MR ABELMAN

Do not say Hashem's name in vain -

AVI

Just asking a question.

Mr Abelman's losing the class.

MR ABELMAN

Who's to say he didn't save twenty  
million lives without us knowing?

AVI

There were only sixteen million  
Jews in the world at the time.

A skirmish breaks out towards the back.

MR ABELMAN

Stop that now!

In the opposite corner, HEIME, 16, a little bit weird, rocks  
back and forth at his desk muttering to himself...

HEIME

Ein million... zwei millionen...

MR ABELMAN (O.S.)

Do not make me take to you to the  
khedmaster!

HEIME

Drei millionen... vier millionen...

Avi shakes his head, flicks his book aside - the game's rigged.

HEIME (CONT'D)

Funf millionen... sechs millionen.

Avi stares out the window. Across the road, he can see Grace  
in class. She's attentive, tucks a lock of hair behind her  
ear. Puts her hand up. Waits to be picked.

Ahh, thinks Avi, so this is what 'civilised' looks like.

Back in his world, Mr Abelman flounders around trying to break  
up the fight.

Grace gets the answer right, she smiles. Makes notes in her  
book with elegant poise.

Grace's TEACHER walks to the window - closes the blinds.

The BELL SOUNDS.

On Avi.

HEIME (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Sechs... sechs... sechs...

**EXT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY**

Avi stands outside with Yair - who holds a shofar (ram's horn).

AVI  
Don't bail on me now.

YAIR  
I'm not, I'm just nervous, and when  
I get nervous my breathing goes to  
shit...

AVI  
You weren't nervous when you rapped  
your Barmitzvah portion.

**We cut to...**

**INT. YAIR'S BARMITZVAH, SYNAGOGUE - DAY - THREE YEARS AGO**

Yair stops singing from the Torah, and gangsta-raps the Hebrew instead. Jaws drop, KIDS beam, a doddering RELATIVE taps and nods along.

But Yair's dad, MENDY, 50s, white shirt, black trousers, full beard, skullcap and sidelocks, silently fumes - hiding his outrage with a nervous smile.

**We snap back to current day...**

YAIR  
Dad didn't speak to me for a month.  
He says if I dick about one more  
time he'll confiscate my shofar.

AVI  
Look at me. You got this, bro.  
(beat) Have faith.

Yair shoots a wry smile back; bolstered, he goes in.

**INT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY**

Yair is on the podium next to RABBI HIRSCH, 40s. The Rabbi calls out a note to be played and Yair blows on the shofar.

RABBI

Tekioh.

The first note is pretty standard - one medium length note.

RABBI (CONT'D)

Shevorim.

Three short bursts.

RABBI (CONT'D)

Terioh.

Nine rapid, extremely short bursts.

RABBI (CONT'D)

Tekioh gedoiloh.

This is the one. Avi starts the timer on his wristwatch. Yair blows - he's going for it.

The students stir, look up from their boredom. Yair keeps going. Avi wills the clock on.

AVI

Come on, come on...

The Rabbi smells a whiff of insurrection in the air - and so deems it long enough...

RABBI

Shkoyech!  
(Well done)

He pats Yair hard on the back - which knocks the shofar out of his mouth. The mission has been foiled. Avi puffs his cheeks, stops the clock.

Yair joins his fellow pupils in the congregation. Mendy - also one of the teachers - taps him, gesturing for the shofar.

Yair gives it to his dad. This pains him.

Avi sees this - another loss in the fight against the Order.

**EXT. AVI'S HOUSE, STAMFORD HILL - NIGHT**

Loud rap metal music comes from the garage...

**INT. GARAGE - NIGHT**

...and 'WAILING WALL' are in full swing. Avi raps into the mic from his scribbled-on bit of paper.

AVI

...Yo, attention deficit disorder,  
Come arrest me I'll just split for  
the border,  
I ain't no pussy I'm the fifth  
Intifada...

Yair plays bass guitar to a drum track. They're not bad, but they're not great either.

The garage door rises - DOV, 55, Avi's dad, white shirt, black trousers, full beard, skullcap and sidelocks, bursts in and turns on the light. They promptly shut up.

DOV

On Shabbat! On Shabbat I get this!  
And now you made me turn on the  
light. A broch on me!  
(A curse on me!).

AVI

Turn it off then.

Avi turns the light off.

DOV

I need to see who I'm shouting at!

Dov turns it back on.

DOV (CONT'D)

Ah, a broch on me again!

Beat.

DOV (CONT'D)

Yair Miller. You're not even in  
tune.

Dov looks towards the house, unsure, thinks about it.

DOV (CONT'D)

Play a C. But quietly...  
(Yair does)  
You call that a C?

Dov gestures for the guitar, and tunes it.

DOV (CONT'D)

Press play on the drums. Turn the  
volume down. Lower... lower...

They can barely hear it.

DOV (CONT'D)

That's good. And turn the meshugene  
(buggering) light off already.

Avi rolls his eyes, does.

DOV (CONT'D)  
Okay, count me in.

Yair does. Dov plays a funky riff.

DOV (CONT'D)  
Now Avi. Sing. But quietly.

Avi is reticent...

AVI  
(reading from paper)  
(mumbles)...Intifada,  
(mumbles)...do it harder,  
(mumbles)...stick it in the larder.

Dov flicks the light on again.

DOV  
(as a matter of course)  
A broch.

Dov snatches the lyrics from Avi. Reads it.

DOV (CONT'D)  
Ikh ton nit gloybn es.  
(I don't believe it.)

He rips it up.

DOV (CONT'D)  
Go on. Inside. You - home. You,  
you're grounded.

They file out. Dov follows them, clocking a 'STAR OF RABID'  
death metal banner on the way out.

DOV (CONT'D)  
(to himself)  
Really?

He rips it down, turns the light off.

**INT. AVI'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Avi goes straight to his room, passing Leila on his way.

LEILA  
And on Shabbat. The shame of it.

Avi stomps upstairs - feeling the strain.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
 Oh, such a victim. Be a Jew in the  
 days of Moses, then you'll know  
 what real victimhood is!

Dov walks in.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
 Did you discipline him?

DOV  
 Ooph, you should have seen me in  
 there... Like a raging bull...

She looks at him, unconvinced, goes into the living room.

Dov looks up in the direction of Avi. He's concerned, but also  
 feels sorry for him. He recognises his younger self in the boy.

**INT. AVI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Avi slams his door - his framed picture of Mendel Schneerson  
 falls and smashes on the floor. He picks it up. Says it all  
 really...

He looks at his palms - cut from the glass.

Opening the window, he sits on the ledge and looks to the night  
 sky.

AVI  
 Eli, Eli, lomo azavtoni!  
 (My God, my God, why hast thou  
 forsaken me!)

There is no answer.

So he jumps off.

We hear a thud.

**EXT. AVI'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Avi groans, face full of grass, gets up. Makes his way down  
 the road, casually, as a matter of routine.

**INT. LEVI'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

LEVI, 30s, white shirt, black trousers, skullcap and sidelocks,  
 racks up lines of cocaine, and tokes on a spliff. Danny, now off-  
 duty, sits with him in a Marvel Superhero t-shirt and shorts. He  
 is also spaced out.

Avi sits opposite with a can of Kosher Coke. Huge polythene bags of marijuana, like green candy floss, litter the place.

In the kitchen out back, we make out a few WOMEN in bikinis, wearing surgical face masks, weighing and bagging up large quantities of cocaine and weed, listening to grime.

LEVI

You see Science can only go so far. They say gimme everything from the big bang onwards - but they cannot explain the Origin. That tiny gap from nothing... to something. They say 'Oh it started off with a collection of gases' - well where did the gases come from, fucknut!

DANNY

It may well have come from a fucknut.

LEVI

I'm telling this story, shut up.

DANNY

I'm just saying, fucknut, seed of life - seems pretty plausible...

LEVI

You're the fucknut.

DANNY

Oh, so I'm the origins of the universe?

LEVI

You ain't even the origins of your own arse.

DANNY

Expand on that, please.

Avi fazes out, watches Ben Shapiro on Fox News YouTube spouting rhetoric...

LEVI

Your arse already has. It's sucking us all into its blackhole.

We catch the odd word from Ben Shapiro - "white guilt", "reverse racism", "reductionist Marxist Left", "two state solution".

DANNY

You're obsessed with arseholes, do you know that? Are you aware of that?

"This isn't about Israel"... "Left"... "Left"... "Left"...  
 "That's not right"... "Palestine, Palestinians..."

LEVI

I'm not even sure your nut came out  
of a fuck - you are an accidental  
fucknut...

Danny forces out a fart.

DANNY

There you go - my collection of  
gases...!

LEVI

Meshugene!

TASHELLE

Will you both shut the fuck up!

They shut up. So does Ben Shapiro. Avi looks at her - TASHELLE, 20s, Jamaican born and bred, no-nonsense physique, impressive dreads.

She stands by the kitchen door in her facemask and bikini, her surgical gloves white from cocaine powder.

LEVI

I am trying to explain the origins  
of the frikking universe!

TASHELLE

Well do it quieter so I can hear my  
Skepta!

Levi backs down. Tashelle kisses her teeth. Gets back to work.

LEVI

(to Avi)  
Obsessed with me.

TASHELLE

What was that, fool?

LEVI

(meekly)  
Nothing. Just... explaining...

She goes back inside, turns the music louder.

LEVI (CONT'D)

Where was I? Oh yes, origins of the  
universe, have you ever seen Police  
Academy 4? Okay, there's this  
scene...

But Avi cranes to get a better look inside the kitchen.

Ben Shapiro: "Well, that's fine, we'll just absorb your grenades and scud missiles and launch our Tomahawks and Jerichos instead - I think that's a pretty good bit of diplomatic dialogue..."

**EXT. STREETS, STAMFORD HILL - NIGHT**

Avi escorts Tashelle home. Or she's escorting him.

AVI

So why do you work... you know,  
with your clothes off?

TASHELLE

So they don't smell, so we can't  
hide shit on our way out, and saves  
on frisking. What Levi don't know  
is...

She reaches deep in her hair, pulls out a sizeable bag of weed.

TASHELLE (CONT'D)

Commission, baby. You wanna come in?

AVI

I don't really smoke...

TASHELLE

It's kosher, honey, blessed by Jah  
himself.

Beat.

AVI

You wanna go out sometime? Like...  
iMax or something?

TASHELLE

(giggles)

Aw, you're cute. So this is me.

They stop outside her flat.

AVI

We got more in common than you know.

TASHELLE

How so, baby?

AVI

Iron like a Lion in Zion?

TASHELLE

(beat)

Come again?

AVI

Or what about Redemption Song.

TASHELLE

What about it?

AVI

It's Joseph's story as black emancipation. He was taken from his 'brethren', thrown into the 'bottomless pit', but his 'hand was made strong by the hand of the Almighty'.

TASHELLE

I think you're confusing Bob Marley with Andrew Lloyd Webber.

AVI

Exodus? Movement of Jah people? Brother Moses and the Red Sea?

TASHELLE

Coincidence.

AVI

'We got to fulfill the Book'. What Book do you think that is?

TASHELLE

Um... The Jungle Book?

AVI

Rastafarians wear the Star of David with a Lion on top. Neither of us eats pig. And we both have dreads.

She kneels down to get to eye-level.

AVI (CONT'D)

Sort of.

TASHELLE

Thanks for walking me home, O Lion of Zion.

AVI

Seriously, I know I'm young, but our lineage is old, and we were both slaves...

She pulls him near and snogs him. Sticks her tongue right into his mouth. His eyes bulge.

TASHELLE

Keep out o' trouble, baby...

She goes in. He stands there. Stunned. Walks on, big grin.

"Stir It Up" plays as he walks back home, head high.

**INT. AVI'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING**

...the music continues over this scene. Avi sneaks back into his room through the window. He picks up the smashed picture of Mendel Schneerson, tips the glass into the bin, hangs it back up again.

He takes it in - inset of the portrait is a picture of a Chabad Hasidic family trip to the beach - all of them in 'beach-wear'. Basically their usual get-up but with trousers rolled up at the ankles.

The family seems happy. Almost too happy. Maybe it's staged...

As we pan round, we suddenly see a pale-faced GIRL IN A NIGHTIE standing behind Avi - who is unaware of her presence. The music skips.

SHONNY

He'd be turning in his grave.

Avi nearly has a heart attack. He swivels round, holds his mouth so as not to scream. It's only his sister, SHONNY, 15. Not a nocturnal apparition.

AVI

Shonny, you - (brings his voice down) Get out of my room.

SHONNY

I knew it. I knew you were leaving the house at night. Where do you go? What do you do out there?

AVI

I swear to God...

SHONNY

Hashem. You swear to Hashem. Which is a lie, since you clearly don't believe in him.

Avi marches her to the door. She shrugs him off.

SHONNY (CONT'D)

I'll scream.

Avi has no choice but to hear her out.

SHONNY (CONT'D)

Playing music on a Shabbat? Getting Yair into trouble? And I know you've got a laptop, which means you're visiting the world wide web.

He looks at her - dubious at her choice of words.

SHONNY (CONT'D)  
You're giving mum palpitations.

Beat.

AVI  
You going to tell?

She's thinking about it.

SHONNY  
Stop acting like a shaygets  
(rascal/non-Jew), and I won't have  
to.

AVI  
Who died and made you Mossad?

SHONNY  
You're the eldest. Kayla, Nate,  
Gideon and Schmooley all look up to  
you. (beat) Even I did once.

On Avi - he felt that.

Shonny goes to the door.

SHONNY (CONT'D)  
You stink of smoke.

He smells his clothes. Shonny leaves - the warning shot fired.

Avi falls on to his bed, lets the rays of dawn flit across  
him, arms out, Christ-like. His bloody palms like stigmata.

**INT. FINKELSTEIN FAMILY SHOP - MORNING**

Leila loads a CUSTOMER'S bag with material and pocket squares.

CUSTOMER  
We've got a wedding to go to,  
Moshe's actually lost weight.

LEILA  
A simcha (blessing) on both counts.

CUSTOMER  
We were thinking of getting a suit  
from you.

LEILA  
Well great, shall I get the catalogue?

CUSTOMER

(beat)

You know, Moshe came back from his shift late last night - well, early in the morning really - and he swears he saw your one walking the streets.

LEILA

My one?

CUSTOMER

Your boy. Avi?

LEILA

He must have been mistaken. Avi would have been tucked up in bed.

CUSTOMER

Oh, he must have a doppelgänger.

The customer goes to leave, grave and unconvinced.

LEILA

Will you bring Moshe in to have a look then?

CUSTOMER

Possibly...

Leila's front fades. This is how rumours start, reputations are ruined, businesses go under. She's worried.

#### **INT. AVI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The light is off in Avi's room. He opens the laptop under his duvet - logs into 'Raging Rohan's Open Wi-fi Account' way down the list. Opens up YouTube. Sticks in his headphones, Watches the North London Derby highlights.

For the first time he notices a Spurs fan waving the Israeli flag. And there, right in the back in the away stand, an Arsenal fan waves a Palestinian flag.

The commentary and atmosphere fade away as Avi focuses in on this bizarre phenomenon. It's as if the fans are communicating with him. Signalling, speaking just to him. He is sucked in...

The door barges open, light pours through.

DOV

Go to sleep. It's late.

Avi shuts his laptop.

AVI  
 (from under duvet)  
 Okay.

Dov closes the door.

**INT. SHONNY'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Shonny has been listening against the wall. She hears Dov walk past her room - quickly gets into bed, pretends to be asleep.

Dov goes into the master bedroom. Shonny gets up and listens at the other wall, to her parents' muffled tones.

**INT. DOV AND LEILA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

They get into bed.

DOV  
 It's adolescence. He'll grow out of it soon enough.

LEILA  
 You've seen his grades - he's distracted...

DOV  
 I was distracted when I was his age. Guess who by?

LEILA  
 I don't mean like that - and chance would be a fine thing - he's not interested in anything or anyone. Not the Teshuva girls his age, not in extra-curricular activities...

DOV  
 Hmm, speaking of extra-curricular activities...

Dov nuzzles her, she pushes him back.

LEILA  
 Dov, this is serious. You're too soft on the boy. He'll listen to you...

DOV  
 Since when does anyone in this house listen to me?

She means it.

DOV (CONT'D)  
Okay, I'll talk to him.

LEILA  
Thank you.

She snuggles up to him.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
And not just a jokey chat like you  
do - a proper talk.

DOV  
I will lay down the law, woman.

He tickles her, she laughs, playfully hits him back.

LEILA  
Ssh, ssh.

They stop.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
You're not a total schmuck, Mr  
Finkelstein, did I ever tell you  
that...?

DOV  
I distinctly remember you saying it  
once, maybe on our wedding night...

She looks into his eyes.

LEILA  
Hashem will keep Avi on track.

On Dov.

DOV  
He better. Or I'll give him a  
talking to and all.

Leila half-feigns shock, as Dov reaches over her.

DOV (CONT'D)  
Now turn off this meshugene  
light...

We hear laughter in the dark.

**INT. OUTSIDE AVI'S ROOM - FOLLOWING MORNING**

Leila goes to knock - but stops herself. She wants to play  
this right.

LEILA  
 (clears throat)  
 Wakey wakey...

She gently opens the door, as opposed to just barging in.

**INT. AVI'S BEDROOM - FOLLOWING MORNING**

Avi is in bed. He stirs.

LEILA  
 Shall I open your blinds?

Avi is curious at her sudden politeness.

AVI  
 Okay.

Leila does. Goes to open the window.

AVI (CONT'D)  
 Not the window?

Leila doesn't open it. Respects his boundaries.

LEILA  
 As you like.

She turns to him. Smiles.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
 See you downstairs.

Avi is now suspicious. She goes to leave.

AVI  
 No seven seven's?

LEILA  
 Well... I suppose you're right.  
 You're too old for that now. Proper  
 mensch now aren't you.

Avi's a bit gutted - deep down.

AVI  
 Yeah. Suppose I am.

LEILA  
 If only you got yourself up on  
 time, I wouldn't have to wake you  
 up either.

Beat. A half-sad smile from Leila.

AVI  
Are you alright, mum?

Leila nods, holding in everything. She leaves.

Avi watches her go. A bit crest-fallen himself.

**INT. KAYLA'S ROOM - MORNING**

KAYLA, Avi's sister, 8, black dress, white tights, pouts.

DOV  
Right, what's the deal?

KAYLA  
He's got my Nerf Gun.

DOV  
Your...?

KAYLA  
And I want it back. Now.

Dov leaves. We hear him negotiate with someone through the wall. Dull pleading tones, emotional comebacks. Kayla waits, listens.

Dov comes back in.

DOV  
Okay, so... I can't get you anything on the gun front at the moment - wait, just wait. But I got a glimpse of it, and quite frankly you can do a whole lot better.

KAYLA  
What do you mean?

DOV  
I mean, let him have the narische Nerf tchatchke - wait, wait, wait! - and I'll sort you out down the line.

KAYLA  
How - ?

DOV  
Keep your voice down. And come away from the wall. Look, I'll make it good. Hey. I'm good for it, right?

She supposes.

DOV (CONT'D)

But you don't tell anyone the deal we got. That's the condition. If he suspects I'm doing you a favour...

She's good with it.

KAYLA

The new Rebecca doll is out -

DOV

Say no more. But mum never finds it.

She concurs. He leaves. Gangster-like.

**INT. NATE'S ROOM - DAY**

NATE, 10, Avi's brother, white shirt, black trousers, skullcap and sidelocks, sits there holding the Nerf gun.

DOV

Gun's yours, bought it hook, line and sinker. But you gotta hold up your end. No bragging. No mention of this conversation. If she suspects I'm doing you a favour...

They fist pump.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Dov walks in, pours himself a Palwin No.5.

LEILA

Sort it?

DOV

Huh, I think so. (beat) Now I know how Clinton felt at Camp David.

LEILA

Well, it's about to get worse.

She holds up an empty Monster Munch packet. He's speechless.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Gideon.

DOV

This is too big even for me.

**EXT. DOV'S HOUSE - DAY**

Dov opens the door to Ezra.

DOV  
 Toda raba.  
 (Thank you)

EZRA  
 Ein Baot.  
 (No Problem)

DOV  
 Top floor, second on the right.

**INT. GIDEON'S BEDROOM - DAY**

Knock knock. Ezra enters. GIDEON, 6, seriously overweight, white shirt, black trousers, skullcap and sidelocks, looks up.

EZRA  
 Hello Gideon, I'm Ezra. Your father told me about the contraband.

Ezra heaves a big suitcase onto the bed, opens it - inside is packed full of Monster Munch (pickled onion flavour). He puts on latex gloves, takes out a packet.

EZRA (CONT'D)  
 Do you know what treif means?

GIDEON  
 Unkosher.

EZRA  
 Correct. And why do we keep kosher?

GIDEON  
 For Hashem.

EZRA  
 Correct. To keep him in our thoughts every day. It separates the chosen people from who?

GIDEON  
 The genitals, and the Finkelsteins.

EZRA  
 You mean, the gentiles and the philistines.

GIDEON  
 Genitals, yes.

EZRA  
 Gentiles. You are the Finkelsteins.

GIDEON  
 I know.

On Ezra. Beat. He opens the packet, smells it, makes a face.

EZRA

The food of savages. Come, take.

Ezra offers. Gideon takes, unsure. Ezra nods. Gideon eats it.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Nice?

Gideon nods by accident. Then quickly shakes his head.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Now, as punishment, you have to eat all of this. By six o'clock this evening. And if I find out there's so much as one Munch left - then I come back with another suitcase.

Beat.

EZRA (CONT'D)

You do not leave this room.

Gideon nods, scared. Ezra leaves.

Gideon gives a look: what's the catch? And gets stuck in...

#### **INT. LANDING - DAY**

As Ezra leaves Gideon's room, he notices Avi in his room, watching his laptop. We hear a politician: "Nationalism isn't a crime, it isn't a dirty word, there's nothing wrong with being white and British..."

Avi notices Ezra - quickly inserts his headphones, shoots a winning smile, knocks his bedroom door shut.

On Ezra.

#### **INT. FRONT DOOR - DAY**

Dov escorts Ezra to the door.

EZRA

Whatever you do, don't go in there, no matter how blood curdling the screams.

DOV

Aye aye, captain.

EZRA

I wasn't a captain. I was a general.

DOV  
(beat)  
That's bigger than captain, right?

EZRA  
Dov... insurgents, terrorists,  
children - the only way to keep  
them in line is with a strong hand.  
Crush their spirits when they're  
young, you reap the rewards when  
they're older.

Dov isn't sure, but smiles politely. Ezra goes but turns back.

EZRA (CONT'D)  
How's Avi getting on?

DOV  
Oh, well, you know Avi.

Ezra scrutinises Dov. Dov smiles nervously. Ezra leaves.

EZRA  
Tend your sheep, O shepherd.

Dov smiles, waves.

DOV  
(under his breath)  
Go fuck yourself, O wolf.

**EXT. YAIR'S HOUSE - DAY**

The MOHEL, 30s, fedora hat, black jacket, full beard and  
sidelocks, rings the doorbell. It's his first circumcision -  
and he's nervous.

MOHEL  
(to himself)  
Come on, you can do this...

MENDY opens the door, holding baby BENJI, eight days old.

MENDY  
A-ha, welcome!

**INT. YAIR'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

FAMILY and FRIENDS gather. Avi goes over to Yair.

AVI  
So... you get your shofar back?

YAIR  
No. That's gone. For good.

AVI  
Oh.

YAIR  
Yeah.

AVI  
I could chip in, get you a new one?

YAIR  
Sure. But where would I use it?

Avi doesn't know what to say. A frosty silence between them.

**INT. YAIR'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

The Mohel goes into his bag for his trade instruments: a tray of scalpel knives, and cotton wool.

His hands shake with nerves. He has a quick word with himself, back to the room. He holds his cutting hand out, sees if he can keep it still. It shakes. It shakes a lot.

**INT. YAIR'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Avi holds his gefilte fish ball.

AVI  
Okay, I got an idea to get it back...

YAIR  
No, Avi. I can't keep fighting your battles.

AVI  
(beat)  
What do you mean?

YAIR  
It's not me. Any of it. I'm happy with the way things are.

AVI  
(beat)  
No you're not.

YAIR  
Have you ever stopped to ask me?

On Avi.

YAIR (CONT'D)  
Didn't think so.

AVI  
Yair, bro -

YAIR  
Don't bro me. If you want out, then  
go - but I'm fine just here.

Yair walks off. Avi's stunned - looks down at his fish ball.

**INT. YAIR'S HOUSE, TOILET - DAY**

The Mohel enters. Retches into the bowl. Washes his hands and face. Stares himself down in the mirror.

MOHEL  
You got this!

He leaves the toilet. Smiling politely at a GUEST on his way.

**INT. YAIR'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

The blessings are in full swing. The Mohel sings, sweating, shaking. And now baby Benji is presented by Mendy.

MENDY  
Here we are, Mohel. I want him back  
in one piece.

The CROWD laugh. The Mohel lays Benji down, picks up his knife. He looks sick with nerves. The room spins.

MENDY (CONT'D)  
Well, most of him.

The crowd laugh again, it echoes in the Mohel's skull. They seem grotesque, tribal.

MENDY (CONT'D)  
I'm just kidding, have at it.

Mendy whacks the Mohel heartily on the back. He nervously laughs, and focuses on the baby.

There's a silence. This is it.

He cuts.

CROWD  
Mazel Tov!

They cheer and break into prayer song. But in the Mohel's head it is muffled and reverberating. He knows what comes next - the holy act of the metzitza b'peh.

He puffs his cheeks, his mouth is dry, he licks his lips to get the saliva working. He mutters a swift prayer to himself under his breath - and goes for it...

He sucks the baby's penis to clear the blood. He stands back up, red lips, shocked that he managed to physically do it.

But he coughs.

And again.

His throat is clogged. He disguises his choking well, but he is struggling to breathe.

Everyone else is singing joyfully - while he is quietly turning white.

Mendy congratulates the Mohel with another hearty back-pat, and the Mohel coughs up whatever was clogging his throat - and swallows it back down again.

He smiles, he can breathe again. The colour comes back to his cheeks. He did it. Relieved, he picks up his prayer book and leads the prayer song.

Avi observes all this from the back of the room. He's still stinging from Yair's comments.

God it's a farce, the whole set up. It's more than just another dreadful ritual that he can't bear... Something inside him has changed.

He makes to go but Shonny gets in his way.

SHONNY

Where are you going now?

Avi shoves her out of the way.

Leila - mid-conversation with the Rabbi - sees this. For a second, she thinks she should go after him, but she can't be seen to leave the event too. She gets back to her conversation as best she can.

We leave the scene on the Mohel singing happily - but he suddenly notices a small bit of something dangling from his watch strap. Is it...? No. It can't be. Yes, it is. The foreskin. He surreptitiously pulls his suit cuff over it.

No-one has noticed. He gets back to the singing.

**INT. CLASSROOM, YESHIVA - EVENING**

Mr Abelman has a meeting with Leila and Dov.

MR ABELMAN

I'm worried, yes. I think Avi is on a downward spiral. It's not that Hashem is angry at him, I'm not really angry at him - I'm not comparing myself to Hashem, you understand. But I am deeply concerned for the boy. (beat)  
The other day, he asked me to prove the existence of God. In front of the whole class.

LEILA

(under her breath)  
Ai ya broch.

Dov tuts along with them, but less convincingly.

MR ABELMAN

His sociology coursework was titled... Hasidic or Has-he-no-dick: Transgenderism in the Ultra Orthodox Jewish Community.

LEILA

Oi vei s'mir...  
(Oh woe is me...)

MR ABELMAN

And this one, his politics paper, Brexit or Schmexit: Does anyone actually give a shit?

Dov suppresses a giggle.

LEILA

A klolleh oif mayn mishpocho...  
(A damnation on my family...)

MR ABELMAN

When was the last time you made pilgrimage to Crown Heights, and the Rebbe's grave?

Dov shrugs. Leila jumps in -

LEILA

We go every year for Pesach without fail.

Dov looks at her curiously. Nods along to Mr Abelman.

MR ABELMAN

I think he needs to reconnect to his roots. He needs to understand who he is, only then will he see the light of Hashem.

DOV  
Yes, of course... Um, and who is it  
that he is, exactly, just so we  
know...

MR ABELMAN  
A Jew.

Beat.

DOV  
Just a Jew, or...?

They look curiously at him.

MR ABELMAN  
What else is there?

DOV  
No, sure. I was going to say that  
he also sings, plays guitar, he's a  
bit of a Spurs fan. Mea Culpa, as  
the Catholics say...

Dov flinches massively, a big knock from under the table.

DOV (CONT'D)  
Aai...!

He disguises this attack from Leila by getting up and offering  
his hand to Mr Abelman.

DOV (CONT'D)  
...ai ai. Well, I'll make sure he  
bucks up his ideas.

MR ABELMAN  
There was... one other thing.

Dov sits back down.

MR ABELMAN (CONT'D)  
I noticed a drawing - an absent  
minded doodle, I'm sure - but...

He passes them an exercise book.

MR ABELMAN (CONT'D)  
Under the Star of David, you can  
clearly see... a swastika.

Leila is in shock.

Dov looks, he's confused - it's a drawing of a cock and balls.

Mr Abelman peers over, turns the page.

MR ABELMAN (CONT'D)  
 Sorry, wrong page.

We can see a star of David doodle in the margins - with a swastika shape highlighted underneath.

Dov tries to hide his concern.

DOV  
 Ah, I see... But he's playing with shapes. A doodle, like you say.

He shows Leila the book, she averts her eyes immediately - speechless.

MR ABELMAN  
 It's not what Hashem thinks, or what I think - again, I'm not comparing myself to Hashem, you understand...

Dov bristles.

MR ABELMAN (CONT'D)  
 ...it's what you should be thinking.

LEILA  
 He gets it from that computer of his. He's only supposed to use it for school work.

Dov gets up, puts on his jacket.

DOV  
 Okay, I've had enough of this. Avi is not the Omen child. And going through his work is wrong.

MR ABELMAN  
 Hashem sees all.

DOV  
 Not that you're comparing...

Leila bashes him.

LEILA  
 Now you know where Avi gets it.

MR ABELMAN  
 Yeizter hora. The wayward spirit.

DOV  
 (angry now)  
 By the way, what did you tell him?

MR ABELMAN

I'm sorry?

DOV

When he asked you to prove Hashem exists?

MR ABELMAN

I simply said... prove he doesn't.

DOV

But the burden of proof is on you.

MR ABELMAN

Hmm, that's what he said.

Mr Abelman and Leila share a look. Dov leaves. Leila follows - all apologies to the teacher.

**INT. AVI'S BEDROOM - EVENING**

Dov storms in - sees Avi is under the duvet.

DOV

Okay, we need to talk.

Dov waits. He takes another look. Throws open the duvet - it's just a pile of pillows...

**INT. GARAGE - EVENING**

Dov throws open the door - no-one there... a flyer for a gig is caught in the draught. Dov picks it up: Wailing Wall, Barfly, 9pm tonight!

He thinks about it - he shouldn't... but he has to.

**INT. BARFLY, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

Avi and Yair sit backstage - still a coldness between them.

AVI

You going out there with that face?

YAIR

I'll go out there how I want. But once this is done - we're through.

Avi is gutted. This was supposed to be their big break, a chance to launch themselves.

**INT. BARFLY, AUDITORIUM - EVENING**

Dov buys a ticket, walks in. He wears his fedora, and tries to keep a low profile as he sneaks to the back of the crowd by the bar. REVELLERS gawp at this fish out of water.

It's a packed crowd. The MC announces the next act.

MC

Hoes and Pimps flap your tits and  
make some noise... all the way from  
Stamford Hill... Wailing...  
Waaaaaalllllll!!!!

Avi and Yair take the stage. Whoops and cheers. Dov is stunned.

Yair belts out a traditional Jewish folk tune on the trumpet. Avi then strums heavy metal riffs on the guitar. The CROWD love it.

Dov can't believe it - he's shocked, but also sort of proud.

Avi takes to the mic and begins to sing - but as he does, he catches sight of Dov in the back watching... and he FREEZES.

Dov quickly tilts his hat lower, turns round to face the wall behind him, takes out his prayer book, pretends to read.

Yair notices something's up.

YAIR

Avi! What is it?

Avi bottles it, unplugs his guitar and leaves the stage... to BOOS from the crowd.

Yair leaves too, gesturing apologetically to the crowd.

Dov sees this. He knows he's fucked up.

**EXT. BARFLY, OUT BACK - EVENING**

Avi holds back the tears up against a brick wall. Yair gives him some space.

YAIR

Hey man, you okay? What happened  
back there?

Avi punches the wall in anger over and over again. Yair restrains him. Avi relents, weeps.

YAIR (CONT'D)

It's okay. We gave it a go. It  
didn't work out. We can go back  
home now. We can just... go back.

Avi shrugs him off - leaves.

Yair shakes his head - goes back inside.

**INT. BARFLY - EVENING**

Dov stands there, angry at himself. He shouldn't have come.

BARMAN  
What's your poison?

Fuck it, he thinks. Slaps down a tenner.

DOV  
Whiskey. Large.

**INT. GIDEON'S BEDROOM - ROSH HASHANA MORNING**

Gideon grabs his prayer book - looks at his artwork. He has wallpapered his room in Monster Munch packets.

**EXT. AVI'S HOUSE - ROSH HASHANA MORNING**

The family pile out to walk to synagogue. Dov stands by the door - more than a bit hungover - counting off his KIDS.

DOV  
Echad (one)... shnayim (two)...  
shalosh (three) arba (four)...  
chamesh (five) -

SCHMOOEY, 6, the youngest, sidelocks and inch-thick glasses, has a grubby face. Dov licks a handkerchief and wipes him.

DOV (CONT'D)  
(under his breath)  
Ir zent nisht adishan far Oliver.  
(You're not auditioning for  
Oliver).

SCHMOOEY  
Ver iz Oliver? (Who is Oliver?)

DOV  
Never you mind.

Dov shoves him along. Avi comes out last.

DOV (CONT'D)  
So, hey...

But he ignores his father and carries on up the road. Dov looks on.

**INT. SYNAGOGUE - MORNING**

Avi walks through the doors, but Mr Abelman directs him to a room off to the side...

**INT. SYNAGOGUE, SIDE ROOM - MORNING**

...where Leila waits for him. Mr Abelman closes the door on them both. Avi knows he's in for a bollocking. There is a long silence, a stand-off.

LEILA

Do you know what the real relevance of Rosh Hashana is?

AVI

New year, new leaf, a celebration of the...

LEILA

The real meaning.

AVI

(beat)

Judgment day.

LEILA

Judgment day is correct. And which book of account will your name be written in? The righteous, or the wicked?

AVI

I was rather hoping for the intermediate book...

LEILA

Don't get smart with me. You might be able to run rings round your father, but that chutzpah doesn't fly with me, young man.

AVI

Well then write me up in the wicked list, and "blot my name out of the book of the living forever".

On Leila.

LEILA

Where did I go wrong with you?

AVI

This isn't about you.

LEILA

That's where you're wrong. Your actions reflect on all of us. The family name, our Chabad court, the Ba'al teshuva families...

AVI

Like they honestly give a shit about me.

LEILA

You swear in the house of Hashem?

AVI

That's precisely my point. Hashem doesn't have a house. Hired Christian contractors built this house. It's not even a house. And no-one's willing to debate with me on any of this, because they know deep down it's a sham.

This cuts her. Deeply. She's speechless. He knows he's overstepped the mark. He wants to say sorry to her but...

LEILA

You will go into the synagogue...

AVI

I don't want to go in there -

LEILA

You will sit in the back with the kinder (children), as an act of repentance. You will be first to kiss the Torah when...

He's tearing up now.

AVI

No...

LEILA

When it is paraded. You will say the blessings for the reading...

He shakes his head, but he knows it's useless.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Before and after. You will recount the blessings for the Chumash. You will stay for the sermon, for the Kiddush, and you will collect every - single - Siddhur (prayer book). Or you are NOT my son!

He looks at her. She can't look him in the eyes. A long beat.

He concedes. He has to.

AVI

Okay.

She nods back, a relieved intake of breath. This has been really hard for her too. She leaves the room.

Avi follows, head down.

**INT. SYNAGOGUE - MORNING**

It's packed for the high holy-day of Rosh Hashana. But there's a sombre feeling. Dov gazes sadly on a crushed and dispirited Avi sitting in the back, with the children.

Avi is shell-shocked. The Order has won. He must accept, repent.

The Rabbi, Mr Abelman and Ezra - in contrast - are in fine fettle. Leila takes her seat in the women's balcony, overlooking Dov. She bolsters herself, shakes off her emotions as best she can, and pastes on a smile.

Dov glances up at her - a supportive nod, shows a united front.

Yair watches the new SHOFAR BLOWER await his call-up to the pulpit. A travesty of justice. But as the NEW GUY gets up to walk down the aisle, a HAND comes out of the aisle and snatches the shofar from his grip.

The shofar is passed to other HANDS across rows of STUDENTS all the way over to Yair. The NEW GUY shows his empty hands to Mendy, who queries this.

A STUDENT taps Yair on the shoulder from behind, hands him his shofar back. Yair takes it, thinks about it... fuck it, he gets up and walks to the pulpit.

Avi sees Yair take the stage. He's intrigued, confused, and a little scared...

Rabbi Hirsch is aware this isn't part of the script but has to carry on. He's not happy.

RABBI

Tekioh.

Yair blows a medium length note.

RABBI (CONT'D)

Shevorim.

Three short bursts.

RABBI (CONT'D)

Terioh.

Yair gives nine rapid, extremely short bursts. The Rabbi shoots a semi-confident smile to the crowd - he is impressed so far, maybe Yair has finally learnt his lesson.

But Avi knows what's coming next - and it lifts him up. An emotional lump in his throat.

Yair's gaze connects with Avi. Avi smiles back in appreciation. It's a Dead Poets Society 'Captain, my Captain' moment.

RABBI (CONT'D)  
Tekioh gedoiloh.

The students wait with baited breath...

Yair goes for it. As long and pure a note you ever did hear.

The Rabbi goes to knock Yair again - but Yair is wise this time and walks to the centre of the pulpit, away from the Rabbi. This is Yair's moment - and no-one is going to take this away from him.

There's nothing the Rabbi can do now other than watch.

Avi quietly gets up and slips out the back to exit.

Dov looks back towards Avi, thinking he might have something to do with this - but Avi's seat is empty.

Dov slips out to look for him.

Ezra sees this. He slips out too after Dov.

Yair's still going...

**EXT. SYNAGOGUE - MORNING**

Avi picks up a skateboard left behind the bins. Zooms off. Dov comes out a few beats later, sees him in the distance, runs after him. Ezra comes out. Runs after Dov.

**INT. AVI'S HOUSE - MORNING**

Dov arrives, red faced and wheezing, Ezra is with him.

DOV  
Check downstairs. I'll go up.

Dov schlepps himself upstairs.

Ezra goes into the living room, gives it a scan - sees a framed school photo of Avi. Picks it up. Analyses Avi's forced smile. He sees the defiance behind the eyes. The game is on.

**INT. SYNAGOGUE - MORNING**

Yair still blows into the shofar. Students are in awe. As is the Rabbi - it's insubordination, but by Hashem, it's impressive.

Mendy doesn't seem to think so.

Yair's face is purple.

**INT. AVI'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

Dov enters, stops for a breather, checks his pulse.

He looks under the bed, finds a copy of 'Asian Babes', gives it a quick flick through, puts it back.

On the desk, he sees an envelope with 'Dad' written on it - and in front of it... no... it can't be... Avi's sidelocks. He has cut them off, and left them there.

Dov picks them up. He is stunned. This is HUGE.

Ezra comes to the door. Dov holds the sidelocks behind his back, turns to Ezra.

EZRA

Anything?

Dov thinks quick, holds up the letter.

DOV

Just this.

Ezra knows its significance.

EZRA

I will need to read that in due course. (beat) You stay here, Dov. Look after your family. They're going to need you.

Ezra goes to leave.

DOV

Ezra. (beat) Bring him home.

Ezra nods. That is his job. He leaves. Dov weeps, holds the letter to his heart. He takes out the sidelocks again, rubs them between his fingers.

DOV (CONT'D)

Mayn eyngl... mayn eyngl...  
(My boy... my boy...)

**INT. SYNAGOGUE - MORNING**

...Yair comes to the end of his note. Kids are on their feet.

KIDS

Shkoyech!  
(Well done!)

Yair is chuffed. Mendy melts a bit. He acknowledges his son's chutzpah and talent. Perhaps there's hope for them yet.

**EXT. TOTTENHAM HIGH ROAD - NIGHT**

The sounds and sights, the hustle and bustle. Avi walks through, blends in, like an unassuming tourist in his hometown. Wearing jeans and jumper and carrying a rucksack, he sees things afresh, up close, uncensored.

Avi stares into the shop-front of an indie label music store - there are rows of limited edition LPs, mixing decks, guitars of all kinds, a GUY at the counter jams with a couple of MUSICIANS.

This is a portal into the universe of his soul. But he must build up to it, he walks on, with wonder in his heart.

Across the road, waiting at the bus stop, is a GROUP OF GIRLS out on the town. One if them is Grace. She spots Avi walking on by, sort of recognises him but can't place him. She thinks he looks hot, giggles with her MATES, subtly pointing him out.

Avi doesn't notice her. He walks into a pub, over-spilling with Spurs fans.

**INT. THE RISING SUN PUB, TOTTENHAM - NIGHT**

Wall to wall Spurs memorabilia and FANS in high spirits. Several SKINHEADS in footy shirts enjoying a pint and lairy banter. A bunch of them chant "Yid Army! Yid Army!".

A Rastafarian in a leather tam, props up the bar - an Israeli flag around him. LADS pick up beers from the bar, as they turn we see small skullcaps on their heads.

Several BRITISH MUSLIM FANS in kufis (traditional headwear) and thobes (Islamic robes) gather around the table-top football. Cultures and races blend in this place. A cultural smorgasbord.

Avi enters. Looks around. These could be his kind of people. He goes up to the bar, blends in perfectly. Orders his first beer ever. When it comes, he takes a sip, makes a face - but that sip for Avi was a real rite of passage.

He takes a seat. As we pan out, he's just one of the crowd.

**FADE OUT.**

RUN CREDITS.

END OF EPISODE ONE.