

Check out our brand new, this-year-only column written by the Ayelet Mag editors!

Ayelet
MAG

Ayelet Tour

Letter from the Editors— Volume three! Let's make it awesome! {pg 2}

Kitchen Krazis - Pause the world tour, because this is just that good {pg 3}

Yehudis the Dragon Slayer - Sometimes our battles feel insurmountable... {pg 5}

Star Bright Spotlight - Ayelet Mag's first interview with a graphic artist! {pg 8}

Take A Chill Pill - Learn one of the most important distress skills! {pg 9}

Songspot— Sometimes strength isn't easy {pg 10}

Journey to Me - Join We Guys In Charge on our journey inward! {pg 11}

Pocket Message—This one fits right in with our theme {pg 14}

Poetry— Welcome to our newest staff member - Hi, Mushka! {pg 15}

Serial—Read the first chapter of the long awaited serial Stardust, by Shira Moskowitz! {pg 17}

GoFundMe: <https://www.gofundme.com/hcw2ug-ayelet-mag>

Ayelet Mag Website: <https://ayeletmag.weebly.com>



Dear Readers,

We're back for Volume Three! It took a lot of time to release this one and we're really sorry about that, but we've got a whole new load of fun in store! First of all, please admire our excitingly awesome new logo! We love it and are thrilled with it (all credit goes to Peninah Adler at highlightcreative.com, who is incidentally Sara Kayla's sister)! And, for this year only, we've created a special column written by....US! The Ayelet Mag editors. You see, yet ANOTHER fun surprise of this whole volume is that this time we have a theme for the whole year - "Remember the Heroes," which was also the theme for last year's final issue. We realized just how much there is to talk about on this topic that we're extending it to this whole year. Each issue we plan to focus on female heroes throughout Jewish History and their strengths. Because of this exciting new idea, We Guys In Charge decided to really try to implement all the themes in our own lives. Hence, the new column - Journey to Me. We split the theme for this issue - A Time to Speak, A Time to Be Silent - and tried to write about it,



think about it, bring it into our lives, etc. for a specific amount of days. The result is this issue's article. Check it out! The hero we're focusing on this time is Rachel Imeinu, with some focus on Leah as well. Our hebrew theme is "חגרה בעוז מתניה" "She belts herself with strength," which can be understood as "a woman has strength to do the same things over and over again." The first case of this is Rochel - her sister, Leah, kept having child after child, and Rochel was childless for years. But she never gave up. The english theme for this issue is A Time to Speak, A Time to Be Silent. Rachel knew when to speak - when she gave the signs to her sister - and when to be silent. Knowing the balance between these two very important tools can make all the difference, and Rachel was one who understood this and made use of it. Anyway, this is getting long, so just going to end off by saying we hope you enjoy our newest issue! Oh, and check out our poetry page to read some great work from our newest staff member - shoutout to Mushka Pinson!

*Sara Kayla and
Batsheva Miriam*

KitchenKrazies

Let's take a break from the world tour for a bit - because this recipe is the best!

Apple Pie

insert url

Ingredients - Crust (makes four layers of shell, which is double what you need):

4 c flour

½ c water

1 TBSP sugar

1 TBSP vinegar

2 tsp salt

1 large egg

1 ⅓ c margarine

Directions - Crust:

Preheat your oven to 400°F. Mix dry ingredients for the crust, then cut in the margarine. In a separate bowl, combine the remaining ingredients, then add to the dough. Shape your dough into a ball and let chill for at least half an hour. Roll out ¼ of your dough and place in a 9-inch round pan.

Ingredients - Filling:

2 ½ lb granny smith apples, thinly sliced (about 8 cups)

2 TBSP lemon juice

¼ tsp nutmeg

½ c + 1 TBSP sugar

2 ½ TBSP flour

1 tsp cinnamon

Directions - Filling:

Combine filling ingredients in a large bowl until a paste is formed and dollop it over the pie. Place second pie shell over it and cut holes in it so air can escape.



Ingredients - Topping:

½ c unsalted margarine, melted

½ c firmly packed brown sugar

¾ c flour

Directions - Topping:

Mix the topping ingredients and drizzle on top. Place the pie into a paper bag and staple it shut (if you don't have a paper bag wax paper works), making sure the paper isn't touching the sides of the oven. Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes. Let it cool in paper bag and enjoy! ●



Yehudis steps inside her house and out of the rain. She drops her threadbare backpack with her heavy Algebra I textbook inside onto the floor, and slips out of her wet jacket. From the kitchen, she can hear the cries of a sibling, wailing incomprehensible gibberish. For a moment Yehudis stays where she is in the front hall, half listening as the cries reverberate through the house. In her mind, the screams begin to compact. She watches as they swirl like smoke, compressing themselves on top of each other until they become more and more solid; finally she looks up to see a dragon towering over her. The scream-dragon looks down at Yehudis with rolling red eyes. It bares its horribly sharp teeth at her and opens its mouth to let out a stupendous roar-- "Oh, Yehudis. Thank goodness you're home." Yehudis' mother's head is peeking out from the kitchen doorway. Her tichel is a bit askew and her shirt is covered in something orange. Yehudis hangs her jacket in the closet quickly and follows her mother



Yehudis The DRAGON Slayer

Written By: Yet_Another_Schwarz_Kid

into the kitchen. Inside the kitchen, Yehudis sees where the crying is coming from. Noah, her two year old brother is sitting in his highchair and screaming, while banging his fists in the bowl of soup in front of him. This also explains the orange on her mother's shirt, since the soup is carrot. Her nine year old brother, Gershon is sitting in the space next to Noah and concentrating on slowly pulling out each thread from his shirt. In the corner, her six year old sister, Nava applies marker to the four year old, Zev's, face. Yehudis' mother pulls her purse over her shoulder. "Soup is on the stove, but you might need to heat it up again. We only have so much for this week, so try not to eat it all. My shift at the nursing home is starting soon, so I better leave." She grabs the jacket Yehudis just hung up in the closet, shakes it

cont next page

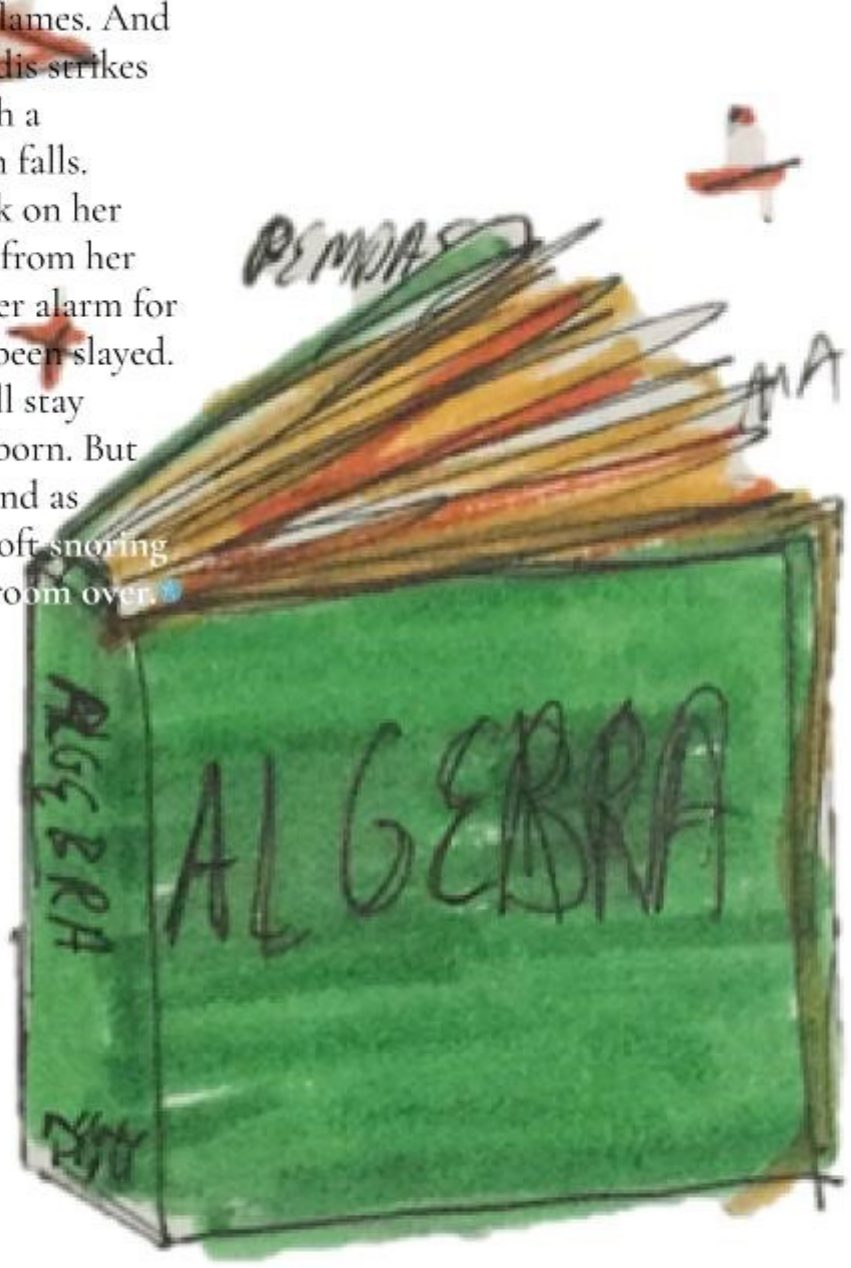


a little to get some of the water out, and opens the front door. "By the way, Abba has started working late on Mondays and Wednesdays now too, so he won't be home until after 9:30 tonight." Then she glances at her watch, makes an exclamation about being late, and hurries out the door. From behind Yehudis, the scream-dragon looms up again from the kitchen door. Still facing the door, Yehudis inhales deeply. She feels the weight of her sword come to her hand and grips it firmly. A helmet is lowered onto her head, and she feels a breastplate as it is strapped to her chest. Then, slowly, Yehudis turns around and faces the scream-dragon. Yehudis walks back into the kitchen. The situation is how she left it. Gershon looks up, his shirt significantly shorter than it was this morning. "When's Mommy getting back?" Yehudis walks over to the pot on the stove and peeks under the lid. "Not until her shift is over. I'm putting you guys to bed tonight." She unbuckles Noah from his high chair and bounces him on her hip. He continues to wail and grips her shoulder with his soup-covered fingers. From the other side of the kitchen, Yehudis hears the scream-dragon's low growl. She walks over to Nava and Zev, who are still sitting and coloring on the floor, and grabs the marker from their hand. "No more coloring. We're eating now. Gershon, get the bowls." Throughout the evening, the scream-dragon isn't the only beast Yehudis has to face. She also squares up against the but-I-don't-like-carrot-soup-dragon, the bath-dragon, and finally the dreaded and inevitable bed-dragon. But despite the monsters' intimidating stature and flaming breath, Yehudis defeats them all. Her sword gleams as she swings it back and forth, slicing through each beast's throat and stabbing each one through the heart. When she finally gets the last of her siblings in bed, Yehudis lowers her sword. She stands there for a moment outside the closed doors of her siblings'

bedrooms and gazes at the dragon corpses that surround her, exhaling and inhaling her rumbling breath and feeling the soreness in her muscles. But Yehudis does not sheathe her sword. She isn't yet able to take off her heavy armor. There is still one more dragon that Yehudis must face tonight. Yehudis walks to her bedroom. From her backpack she lifts out the next dragon she must slay before the day is out: Algebra 1: An Incremental Development, 3rd Edition. From the pages of her textbook, Yehudis hears a rumbling. She lifts her sword above her head and readies her stance. Out of the book rushes a storm of numbers and letters. The windows rattle. Pictures fall from the wall. The sound is deafening, and Yehudis must resist the urge to let go of her sword and cover her ears with her hands. Above her a monster forms so large and hideous, its body fills the entire room. Yehudis narrows her eyes and grips her sword tighter. Then she lunges. The beast hisses and swings a gigantic wing at her, trying to knock Yehudis off her feet. But the warrior dodges, rolling across the floor of her room and slicing through the membrane of the dragon's wing. Its yell fills the room and it aims another blow at her, but again she is too quick for it and this time issues a gash to one of its feet. Yehudis continues to dance around the dragon. Her sword swings from here to there, right to left. Lunging, dodging, rolling, striking. She suffers a bruise on her cheek and a gash on her leg, but still she fights, striking at the beast with all her strength. Finally she sees the dragon take a deep breath, and its eyes flame up with fury. As a seasoned dragon fighter, Yehudis knows what this means. Right before the dragon lets out its flaming breath, Yehudis ducks behind her dresser and sticks the blade of her sword out just enough as the flames fill the room. The blast of red heat hits the dresser and surrounds Yehudis from all sides. The roar fills her ears, and she holds tight to hilt of her sword as the flames



blast against its blade. But as the dragon begins to run out of breadth, so do the flames, and finally the fire is gone. Yehudis emerges from behind her dresser. She holds her sword high, its blade glowing red from the dragon's flames. And with the heat of its own breath, Yehudis strikes the dragon deep within its chest. With a tremendous roar of defeat, the dragon falls. Yehudis closes her textbook. The clock on her bedside table reads 10:30. She gets up from her bed, changes into pajamas, and sets her alarm for 6:30 am. For today, her dragons have been slayed. Tomorrow some will return, some will stay defeated, and some new ones will be born. But for now, all is peaceful in the house, and as Yehudis falls asleep she can hear the soft snoring of one of her brothers from the next room over.



-Yet_Another_Schwartz_Kid

3/14/19



Star-Bright Spotlight

For the first time, Ayelet Mag is interviewing an artist, and we hope you're as excited as we are to meet... Chani Judowitz!

How would you describe what you do in one sentence? *I illustrate children's books, I do illustrations for magazines, and sometimes I also do different kinds of illustrations for games and other products.*

How did you know that illustrating was something you wanted to do? *I always loved to draw. I doodled my way through school. I couldn't concentrate in class if I wasn't drawing. I didn't think I would go into the field professionally, because I didn't know of anyone personally in the field and I didn't think there was much parnassah there. I figured I'd maybe start painting once I retired. So I got a degree in special education. I was working in special education and I loved it, but I found it kind of draining. I put everything I had into teaching and it was exhausting, so I didn't see how I could do this long term and still put 100% into my family. I knew that I would love to illustrate. My husband's cousin is Yoel Judowitz (illustrator of Midos Man). We went to visit him once and I saw how he had his illustrating set-up, and I decided, "I must learn to do this, this is for me."*

What is your favorite kind of thing to illustrate? *I don't get to do this so often, but I love character design. Sometimes, maybe for a serial, the clients give me a basic story line and the character description – physical appearance and personality. Then I'll turn that into an illustration. If I could do that all day, I'd be totally happy.*

What practical steps did you take to get your work published? *I could not just start illustrating and be done with it. In order to get work, you need to be at a more professional level. So I started by taking a course in Eretz Yisrael (from someone who learned under Gadi Pollack) for three years, and I now teach that course in Lakewood. You need to understand the foundations of art*

before you start to illustrate. Nobody will hire you if your work is just okay. They want "very good." The second step was emailing different publishing companies and so many other places. Many people didn't even get back to me and the first book I got to hire me paid me so little that I actually lost money. I contacted other illustrators and told them my problem. I asked them if I should do an okay job because of the money issue, or if I should forget about the money and do my best. They all said do my best – this book was my business card. Looking back, I'm not happy with all my books, but that one I'm happy with because I know I put my maximum effort into it. For the first two years of working, I had to reach out to people, arrange meetings to show people my portfolio. But once I had contacts and had been working in other places, I was working more full time and people started coming to me. And you definitely need siyata d'shmaya every step of the way.

How did your relationship with Hashem/Judaism change through your work?

I'm very grateful to Hashem. I don't know if it's changed my relationship, but I have a lot of hakaras hatov that I can work in a field that impacts people. I have a part in so much learning – for example, all the learning from the 613 Torah Avenue book (the second of which is b'ezras Hashem coming out in time for Chanukah). I feel very fortunate and grateful because I know that without His guidance, I wouldn't have gotten anywhere.

Did you have a role model when trying to create your career? *Gadi Pollack, always. He's the ultimate in the frum illustrator world. I can't compare myself to him and I wouldn't try to, but looking at his artwork has always been very inspiring. It teaches me techniques, and gives me ideas to apply to my own work. And my husband's cousin Yoel really helped guide me along.*



Are the Kichels ever going to become a comic book? *Yes! Im yirtzeh Hashem, also in time for Chanukah, with around 90 comics in there.*

What do you love about your job, what do you not love? *What I love is that I get to do something that I ... love. I love artwork. The big problem, which happens when you work at home, is I'm always working. No break. I'm trying to find a balance so I don't get burned out, but that is a challenge.*

Art can say a lot while using little to no words. Do you feel that art is more speech or silence?

Art is a story. In the best children's books, the words don't say much but the pictures tell the story. Sometimes the pictures tell an entirely different story. I want people to look at my pictures and see all the different details. There should be so much going on, so much chochma going into this. A picture is worth a thousand words. Part of learning to be an illustrator is learning to tell a story and control the viewer, telling them where to look first, to direct the viewers' eyes. A good children's book will be more than just repeating the text in the picture. There's emotion in art that can't be said in words. There's so much to say. Art is NOT silence.

What's your advice for girls with a dream?

Figure out the practical steps to achieve your dream, and don't try to skip any. We artists can be a little dreamy and floaty. Don't do that. I do try to help people who want to go into the industry, and a lot of them say they want to be illustrators. I tell them about the course they have to take, and they say, "I know, but..." And there could be a million reasons why they don't want to take this course, but they won't be able to achieve their goal because they're skipping steps. Very few people were able to get into the field without taking courses. Many of the frum illustrators I've met were baalei teshuva who went to art school. But if you work hard and you daven, then you'll get there. 🍀

-Batsheva Miriam, Sara Kayla, and Chani

So I'm in my final year of high school. And I'm sure you're all asking yourselves, "What on earth does this have to do with anything?" My answer is cackling like a loon and falling asleep. In case it isn't obvious, I'm exhausted. Between the work, tests, head jobs, extracurricular activities and seminary applications, I don't have a lot (read ANY) extra time on my hands. In the very short three months of school, I've quickly come to realize that it simply isn't possible for me to do everything I used to. Luckily, there's a solution! It's this fabulous thing called prioritizing and it's my new best friend. The first step to prioritizing is to understand that it will not magically enable you to continue to do everything you've been doing up until now. It's like juggling. You have nine or twelve balls that you're trying to keep in the air. This is impossible because you only know how to keep seven balls up in the air. And because you only know how to juggle seven balls, you either need to choose which ones to drop, or let some drop at random. But we don't like to let things go by their own choice – that would be silly! Besides, why take the chance of dropping important balls, when there are balls that aren't as important to keep? This is what prioritizing is about. It's about recognizing what is more important to accomplish. For example, I recently told my local Friendship Circle – somewhere I volunteer on a regular basis – that I would not be able to do a specific program. This is because not only is my workload this year difficult (I elected to take two college classes and an optional Bereishis class) but my health also needs to come first, and I've already gotten sick several times.

Because of the stress of trying to keep up with all of my additional work, in addition

cont after Journey to Me



C G
I muscle my way through the hustle and bustle
G F
The overwhelming rustle of clothes in a crowd
C G
I'm praying I make it, you name it, I'll brave it
G F
Hoping I don't have to fake it, I close my ears cuz
it's loud

C G
But I'm stronger than I look, and fiercer than I
seem
Am G
I'm not powerless, I've got prowess; world, watch
out for me
C G
I've conquered everything I fought, each enemy I
beat
Am F
Hey-e-ey-e-eh-eh-ey (2, 3, 4, 5)
C
Don't mess with me

C G
Nothing bothers me ever cuz I forever endeavor
F G
To keep myself together, I'm exceedingly wise
C G
I keep my ears open, just coping, I'm hoping
F G
But you won't catch me moping, I open my eyes

C G
Cuz I'm stronger than I look, and fiercer than I
seem
Am G
I'm not powerless, I've got prowess; world, watch
out for me
C G
I've conquered everything I fought, each enemy I
beat
Am F
Hey-e-ey-e-eh-eh-ey (2, 3, 4, 5)
C
Don't mess with me
F C
But alone without light I am watching the night
sky
F G
Curling into myself, silently crying for help
C G
Cuz while I'm stronger than I look and fiercer
than I seem
Am G
Sometimes I'm powerless, no prowess, the whole
world frightens me
C
I've been scared of all those things I fought,
G
nightmarish enemies
Am F
But hey-e-ey-e-eh-eh-ey (2, 3, 4, 5)
C
Don't mess with me

Words and
music by
Batsheva
Miriam

Don't Mess With Me

Sometimes we feel stronger than others, but we just have to remember that we're **ALWAYS** strong enough to fight whatever comes our way. The world can't mess with you! •





Journey To Me

Each hero. Each theme. Join the Ayelet Mag co-editors on our journey to bring the themes of each issue into our daily lives with this exclusive, this-year-only column.

The destination? Ourselves.



A Time to Speak:

Sara Kayla

So I don't want to make blanket statements here, but let's say that many of us have tried to be silent for a certain period of time--day, hour, five minutes. "I can do it," we bragged to our disbelieving classmate/friend/sibling. "Easy!" And then we actually tried it. I'm a super talkative person so I have definitely gone into the "watch-me-I-can-be-quiet" mode. I can space out and just write story scenes in my head, so I figured it wouldn't be too hard. I'd sit quietly, think of something to space out about and voila! I was set. That did work, and the friend who was with me was content to let us sit in silence. Then, I don't remember how, a conversation started. She said something, I got excited and wanted to respond, and we basically played charades. The point is, it's after times like that when you remember that speech is a wonderful thing. People were not made to gesture desperately at the other person. Speech saves a lot of time. Especially if you're a gifted mumblor like I am, in which case you can artistically blend together certain phrases or words enough to convey the idea of them without actually having to say them. Moving on...let's start with the second day of my journaling attempt. First period of the day: Lashon. On the one hand, I have it with friends who I otherwise share very little of my schedule with, so yay. On the other hand, I'm terrible at it. And the whole having-it-with-friends thing wasn't much of an advantage that day, since I was determined not to talk during that particular class. I'd been talking a lot in this teacher's class and felt bad about it, so I'd really been hoping to be able to control my talkative nature for today. Plus, the obvious benefit

of writing about it for this article. But there were pitfalls. At one point I had literally turned around in my desk to add my input to a discussion when I remembered my decision. I shut my mouth, but by that point the teacher had noticed us and called us out for it. Someone must have said something about it being hard not to talk, because she said dryly, "where there's a will, there's a way." Hmm. Moving on, then.... Is speech about words, or tone, or the literal act of moving our mouths and having sound emerge? We have so many ways to avoid talking these days--texting, email, etc. Is it still a kind of speech in itself though? The silent speech? Silent words, unspoken words that still speak. And what about speech in our heads, that voice that talks? What defines speech? Words, or a voice, that creates an impact? Speaking creates something in the world, something that can never be undone, or brought back, like a large glob of bright paint on a canvas. It might be beautiful or ugly, but either way, it's irremovable. Many of the thoughts I had included silence, like my observation, that silence can deepen a person's words. Perhaps it is due to our unconscious desire to fill the quiet? Or maybe it is because through silence we allow the person to truly think and decide about what they're going to say. Silence allows a thought to fully bloom, whether is an idea that was just expressed or one that is yet unknown to most, trembling on the edge of reality. Questions, musings, random scraps of a story. That is what this has turned into. But I'm not really sure I mind. I heard once that there is no such thing as cold, only heat and lack of it. And I wonder...is there such a thing as silence, or is there only speech, or lack of it. Or is it the other way around?



A Time to Be Silent: *Batsheva Miriam*

Thursday, October 3

Poor Sara Kayla, I don't think she thought I'd write about social media silence. I posted a bunch of pictures for my friend's birthday, nothing else. Two of my friends were having a conversation on their statuses that nobody else understood. A different friend posted memes that not really everyone should see – maybe they only bothered me because it's on my mind, but it's still good to realize!

Friday, October 4

Usually I'll listen to music or a shiur as I do all my pre-Shabbos stuff. This week I decided I wouldn't. I honestly didn't notice that much of a difference in the quality of my day - but this isn't necessarily about the effect it has, it's just about the noticing something in my life. For now.

Shabbos, October 5

I walked with some friends to a class an hour away. We weren't really talking so much. It was nice to notice the gorgeous weather, to breathe in the fresh air, and just let it sink into my lungs. It isn't very often that a group of teenage girls gets together for an hour and hardly talks. After the class, I walked home with just one other girl, and we spent most of the walk in silence. I truly enjoyed it.

Monday, October 7

I did Tashlich the other day. It was quiet there; nobody else had found my spot. After I finished actually saying Tashlich, I just stood there for a bit. It was totally silent – just me

and Hashem! I'm not sure how my Days of Silence have changed the way I act or continuously talk (Sara Kayla's not the only talker), but I have more of an awareness of the beauty of silence, and hey, that's the point! ●

to dealing with seminary applications, I found that I needed to let at least one or two of the proverbial balls to drop if I was to have the proper energy for all of my other commitments. I prioritized my health and school above one of my volunteering activities. Prioritizing is an incredibly important life skill to have. It's the ability to realize that somethings are more important than others, and should take precedence over everything else. A good tip for knowing how to prioritize is to make a list. You compile everything that you need to do, and then you organize from the things that are of most importance, to the ones that are the least. Now, not only do you know what the most urgent thing to take care of is, you also have a checklist! Another way of whittling down the workload is to list the pros and cons of what would happen if you did or did not do it. This helps with prioritizing, because it gives you a chance to write out your thoughts on each activity. Prioritizing and time management goes hand in hand, so if you know how to prioritize, then you will find it easier to create a schedule. It enables you to correctly dedicate time to each activity, so that you're able to do everything to the best of your ability. Just don't forget to prioritize destressing! After all, what's the point in letting juggling balls drop if you don't get a break from juggling? Until next time Chill-Pillers. ●

-Perri T.



Courage is what it
takes to stand up
and talk. Courage
is also what it
takes to sit down
and listen

THEODORE ROOSEVELT



Dear Sister

*Emotions overflowing
Love forever growing
Connection not just by the common
Blood that we share
Bonds nothing can sever
Holding tight forever
Affection expressed though
Compassion and care
Embraces bloom inside us
Nothing can divide us
You are my sister
And I'll hold you dear*

~Mushka P.



It Was the Time

The secret confided to her
Ever so silently
In exquisite wrapping paper
Woven from threads of trust
Proclaiming on its packaging
“Handle with care”

The secret handed over to her
Placed tenderly in a safe
Under circumspect safeguarding
She turns the key in the lock
And buries the secret
Deep down in her heart
She pledges, she vows
To protect it at all costs
This secret of hers
Will stay safe and sound
The relationship will remain
Secure in her trustworthy hands

But the wheel of her fate
Spins out of control
And she hears in her ear
The rustling whispers
Of an internal voice telling her
It was the time

So she unwraps her secret
And unravels her heart
As she digs up her safe
And turns the cherished key
In that lock crafted from trust
For the last time

And when she hands over
That secret of hers
She unquestionably does it
Wholeheartedly
Because she knows the truth
It was truly the time

~Mushka P.





STARDUST

BY SHIRA MOSKOWITZ



THE BRISK SEPTEMBER wind blows back my long, strawberry-blond ponytail as I step carefully around the puddles dancing with rainbows from yesterday's storm. I enter the school building and make my way to the cavernous auditorium, with its cathedral-like domed ceiling, stage and the hundreds of chairs placed just so atop the slightly discolored green carpet with flecks of white.

There are masses of girls seated, talking and chattering with their friends. I'm not sure which is ninth grade, but in any case, I won't sit with them. They don't want me there and I don't want them. Carefully, I choose a seat in the middle. It's far enough from the crowd so I can be alone, but not too far back that it looks strange.

Rebbecca Friedlander, the principal, mounts the stage and approaches the shiny wooden podium. She taps her microphone twice and everyone quiets down.

"Good morning, boys!" she starts. "It's so wonderful to see you all back here for another year of learning!"

I hear some groans that are

quickly stifled when Rebbecca Friedlander launches into a beginning-of-the-year d'var Torah.

After our principal - or *rebovets*, as she insists we call her - finishes, she gives a couple more announcements. After the last one about never being allowed to use your cell phone in the building during school hours, she announces, "And with that, boys, Mrs. Silverman will introduce your G.O.!"

Murmurs ripple through the high school. I hear one girl whisper to her friend, "I heard the theme this year is going to be something with ships."

"Nah, I heard flowers."

A brunette with hazel eyes hisses, "I really hope the G.O. is better than last year's."

I sit back in my seat and stare at the stage, where Mrs. Silverman, the G.O. coordinator ascends to the podium. I study her. She's a tiny, cute woman with a blonde shawl put up in a messy pony and seems to radiate energy and fun. Everyone quiets down without her even having to tap the mike.

"Good morning, girls!" Mrs. Silverman exclaims exuberantly.

"Presenting, as your G.O. heads, Talia Young! Kayla Feingold! Aaaaand Miri Pollack!!"

The three G.O. heads burst onto the stage, and Mrs. Silverman flips the switch of a CD player and the new G.O. theme song starts blasting.

Talia, Kayla and Miri are doing the motions, involving a complex twisting of their hands and some weird twirling move that I could never in a million years do. But the tune...I listen intently. It's a jaunty one. I like it.

The song finishes and Mrs. Silverman starts talking again. "So, the theme for this year is 'On the Road!' Look out for exciting upcoming events! And now, I'll play the song again! Let's see if you girls can figure out the motions!"

As the song starts again and the girls all start imitating the G.O. presidents (although some aren't doing such a great job), I quietly get out of my seat and slip out of the auditorium. No one notices me. As usual I walk down the hallway with its airy, knoeder walls, floor-to-ceiling windows and gray carpeting.

Where's the bathroom? I rack

cont. next page

CHAPTER 1



I SEE MASSES OF GIRLS SEATED. I'M NOT SURE WHICH IS NINTH GRADE, BUT IN ANY CASE, I WON'T SIT WITH THEM. THEY DON'T WANT ME THERE, AND I DON'T WANT THEM.

my brains, trying to remember where they were when I came yesterday for orientation. I walk down another corridor, and then find an inconspicuous door, squeezed in between two lockers. The only reason I notice it is because of the typical plaque tacked on the door with a stick figure in a dress and reads 'Women.' Ha. Like there'd be a boys' bathroom here...well, maybe for the janitor.

I push open the door and walk inside. It's larger than the bathroom in elementary; that is to say, it has more than five stalls.

Unfortunately, that doesn't mean it smells any nicer (still smells like chemicals) or that there's still a semblance of cleanliness (dirty pink tiled floor and some walls are actually wet, plus there's quite a few flies zipping around). I choose the handicapped one all the way at the end and step in, locking the door behind me. In addition to a toilet, there's also a small bench. I sit down and sigh.

So. Your first day of high school. How's it going so far, Avi-gayl? I heave a deep breath. Dunno why I expected it to be any different from elementary. It's the same thing, just with different girls and a different setting.

I sit for another few mo-

ments, listening as the booming music swells, and then slowly dies away. Another deep breath. I should go. The assembly probably finished already. I inhale one last time and step out of the bathroom.

I hear laughter and chatter from one of the halls and follow the sound of girls chattering. Clusters of excited girls are examining their schedules and classes.

"Hey, I'm with you this year, Chana!" squeals a girl with hair as golden as the sun.

Chana squeals back and they clasp hands.

I wait for the crowd to thin a bit; I don't usually push or shove. When the girls gradually move away, I approach the lists. Scanning the ninth grade, I find myself in 9C. I don't recognize any names.

I head to my new classroom. Almost everyone's there already, and most of the desks are packed out. I groan inwardly. The back corners, where I usually deign to occupy, are all taken up. The only choices are in the front middle or in the third row, next to a girl with jet-black hair and vivid green eyes.

I take my chances with the girl. Dumping my bag on the

desk, I quickly arrange my pencil cup and Post-Its.

"Hi, I'm Chassi Fein," says the black-haired girl in a friendly voice. "What's your name?"

I start. I'm not used to people talking to me. "Oh! Um...hi. I'm...uh...Avigayil Klar."

"Nice to meet you!" says Chassi excitedly.

I can't help but smile at her lively tone.

"Which elementary school did you go to?" she inquires.

"Brook Sarah."

"Oh, I went to Bais Rivka... do you live in this neighborhood?"

"Yup, just a few blocks away."

"Really?" exclaims Chassi. "I also do! What street?"

"167th."

"I live on 168th!" Chassi says. "That's so cool! I can't believe we never met!"

Just then, our Chumash teacher walks in, which puts our small conversation to an end. As I flip open my Chumash, I can hardly believe it. Chassi actually seems interested in being my friend! Maybe this year will be different after all. ✨

TO BE CONTINUED...



CREDITS

We Guys In Charge (Editors In Chief)

Batsheva Miriam Altose, Sara Kayla Singer

Hashkafic Mentor

Mrs. Rochie Berkowitz

Authors

Batsheva Miriam Altose, Basya G., Leah Langsner, Shira Moskowitz, Mushka P., Sara Kayla Singer, Perri T., Yet_Another_Schwarz_Kid

Techno-Savvy Entities

Batsheva Miriam Altose, Shira Moskowitz

Cover Credits

Basya G.

Logos

Devorah Fertel

