

Ayelet

MAG

Ayelet Tour

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Dear Readers,

This is it, guys. A year of remembrances culminating in this final issue--a year of the Hebrew quotes being from Aishes Chayil--a year of Journey to Me--and now we're here: "Aishes chayil, mi yimtza?" The beginning of aishes chayil is our Hebrew theme this time, and for English we have "Recognize the Heroes."

This one isn't just about remembering; it's recognizing, being aware and maybe expressing it verbally. It's about recognizing the people in our lives who've made a difference. It's about that teacher, that friend, that sibling, that role model in our lives and, as Mushka explores in her poem Following, where we fit into the whole equation, which sometimes feels quite daunting.

There's a lot in this issue to do with legacy--both in our short story, our poems, and part of the Journey to Me. And while we're talking about short stories--you're in for a treat with this one, because not only is it fabulous but it is also written by one of the We-Guys-In-Charge, who I don't think has ever written a short story for Ayelet Mag before! Be sure to check out Frame of Mind by Batsheva Miriam!

(It's Sara Kayla writing, so I'm allowed to say it's fabulous without it sounding egotistical.)

I would say "oh my goodness I can't believe this is the end of the third year" and all that stuff, but the truth is if you look back on old issues I say that pretty much every end/beginning of new volumes. So as thrilling as it is, I'm going to leave that part to your imaginations. Moving back to our theme though--

Aishes chayil, mi yimtza? A woman of valor, who can find? The song continues to extol her virtues and says such a woman is more precious than pearls.

Batsheva and I didn't really have an official heroine for this one, but in a way, the issue's theme provides its own. This is about recognizing all the heroes, past and present. The strong women throughout the centuries who have lit Shabbos candles, instilled Torah values in their children, and who have fought to keep Torah alive. They are our ancestors, our relatives, the women in our community, woven into the fabric of our DNA.

Maybe you, one day? 🌸

Sara Kayla and Batsheva Miriam



Kitchen Krazies

Brownie Cupcakes with Coffee Mousse

This recipe is an original of mine. I have spent about a year creating and adjusting this to the perfect dessert. **WARNING:** This is not meant to be an overly sweet dessert! This is a dessert for adults, kids may not enjoy it so much as it's a bit bitter from the coffee. That being said it is extremely delicious and worth a try!

Brownie Cupcakes (yields about 24 cupcakes)

Ingredients

1 cup margarine
4 eggs
1 1/2 cups sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups flour
4 tbsp cocoa powder
1/2 tsp baking powder

Directions

- 1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit
- 2) Cream sugar and margarine in mixer
- 3) Add eggs, vanilla, cocoa, flour, and baking powder
- 4) The batter will be thick, spoon into cupcake tins
- 5) Place in oven and bake for 23 minutes, until edges are crisp and middle is soft (it should look slightly sunken in)
- 6) Let cool before assembly



Coffee Mousse

Ingredients

1 8oz. container of rich's whip, or equivalent.
1 teaspoon granulated sugar.
1 cup boiling water
3 1/2 tablespoons instant coffee

Directions

- 1) Dissolve sugar and coffee in the hot water and allow to cool slightly
- 2) Whip the cream until slightly firm and slowly pour in coffee continuously mixing
- 3) Finish whipping until stiff peaks form.



Assembly

Ingredients

Dark chocolate shavings (I grated a 78% dark chocolate bar but you can buy containers of shavings.)

Cupcakes

Mousse in a piping bag fitted with a large round or star tip

Directions

- 1) Sprinkle some chocolate shavings into the dip of the cupcake
- 2) Pipe out mousse neatly, starting at the edge of the cupcake and moving into the center, slightly rising into a neat tower.
- 3) Sprinkle lightly with chocolate shavings



Greek Pizza

This recipe I made up on the spot when my sister complained about pizza never being new or exciting. You can use your regular pizza or flatbread dough, or even a wrap for a quick easy pizza. This recipe also tasted delicious without the cheeses so you can leave those off for a pareve version.

Ingredients

2-3 large tomatoes, sliced

Green olives sliced

Black olives sliced

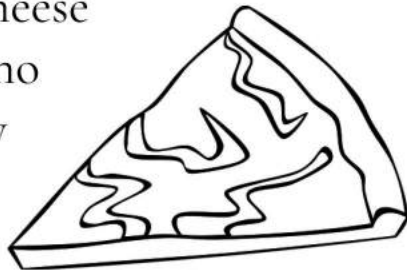
1 small onion diced

Parmesan cheese

Feta cheese

Oregano

Parsley



Rosemary

Chives

Basil

Thyme

Garlic powder

Salt

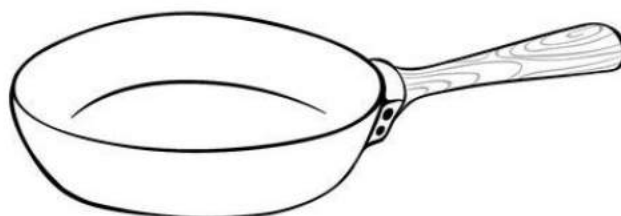
Pepper

Onion powder

Directions

- 1) In a frying pan heated with olive oil, saute tomatoes, keeping their shape
- 2) Remove tomatoes and place on paper towels to soak up the extra oil
- 3) Saute the olives
- 4) On pizza dough, place tomatoes covering it as much as possible
- 5) Sprinkle spices and seasoning to taste
- 6) Add olives and onions
- 7) Sprinkle cheeses lightly--DO NOT COVER COMPLETELY!!
- 8) Bake
9. ENJOY!!

~Leah



Frame of Mind

I'm in the hallway, sneaking furtive glances around me to make sure nobody knows I'm here. Again. I went to get a drink, and I'm not at all in the mood to go back to class now, so here I am. The hallway is a perfect spot to sit – just out of view of any classroom, and anyone who does walk past will think that I have a reason to be sitting out here. So I plop down next to the foldable gate that blocks the hallway off for Shabbos and stare at the wall across from me. It's covered in pictures. Five rows up and more rows across than I can count, identical brown frames are filled with class pictures from all the graduating classes. My eyes automatically seek out the empty one – “2020,” it reads – and I imagine what my class's picture will look like.

A teacher once told us that her picture is up here somewhere. Not that I know what year she graduated or what she looked like whenever she did, but I scan the wall anyway, looking for someone that looks remotely like her. What was high school like when my teachers were here? It's crazy to imagine they had lives, that they went through the same things I am.

My gaze drifts to the very top row of photographs. All odd hairdo's, that decade was. I can just imagine – the frantic mad dashes to one friend or another's house to recurly/bouffant/otherwise puff up hair before picture day. “My crimper isn't WORKING and I don't know what to

do!!!!” The many olden-day DMC's – “I can't believe she said that to me-“

“Shh stop crying, I'll burn your hair if you keep moving!”

Moving down a few rows, I can see the changes in the uniform over the years. First, no uniform, then... something? Can't tell exactly what, the pictures are still in black and white. Some version of the uniform I know, but with more blue. Then the trademark plaid skirt with those ancient green sweaters, then black sweaters, and with the occasional group managing to wear their senior sweaters for the official photo (oh the horror!). Ah, the switch to the pinstripes and gray. Now these are the girls I know. My babysitters, my friends, my role models – the girls who I saw cry in this hallway over homework and production. But even though our school years overlap, their high school experiences and mine differ in so many ways. Different teachers and principals and-

I FOUND A TEACHER'S PHOTO!!!!

Gosh, she looks exactly like her daughters. Whoa. I'm having a serious sense of déjà vu here. She once told us that her class had only twelve girls. There were probably some very, very close friendships in that grade. I'm kinda envious; although the small size probably intensified everything, not just the good stuff.

I think I should go back to class. It's been far more than five minutes and I think

there's some (not-really-enforced) rule outside for too long. I stand up and take a last look at the wall. I feel proud to know that one day my picture will be there. Also a little creeped out that someone might ogle my face the same way I'm staring now, but mostly honored to be part of such an institution.

I turn towards my classroom, and catch a glimpse of the wall around the corner from the class pictures. It's that portrait. The one of the school's namesake, the one where her eyes follow you. But since I'm walking away from the wall, when her eyes follow me, they roam across the wall full of photographs. I'm thinking that maybe this lady is also proud – proud of the legacy her name carries.

I know I would be. 🌀



Star-Bright Spotlight

A Light for Greytowers is probably one of the most well-known Jewish movies ever. Read on for our conversation with Robin Garbose, film director and founder of Kol Neshama!

How would you describe what you do in one sentence?

I am a film writer, director, and producer. For the past twenty years, I've run a performing arts camp with my husband called Kol Neshama.

How did you grow up? Did that affect your dreams/work?

I grew up Conservative with a strong Jewish-Zionist identity. I fell in love with theater when I was six years old. I attended a WASP-y prep school and went to Brown University for college. I was very aware, both in prep school and college, of my Jewishness. Both schools were intense academic and creative environments. I directed several plays at Brown, culminating in a production of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night." After college, I went to New York where I was hired as assistant to the artistic director of a major off-Broadway theater. I was thirty years old when I became a ba'alas teshuva, and I was quite driven in my career as a director.

Why did you start Kol Neshama, and what is it?

I believe in the arts and I'm passionate about self-expression. During my engagement to my husband, I met two budding young performers: Rivka Siegel Krinsky and Chaya'le Fogelman Komar. I recognized their high level of talent and realized they had no performance or training opportunities. There were no programs for frum girls who had a serious interest in the performing arts. I had directed several plays at the Juilliard School and New York University, and had a familiarity with the drama school model. I decided to create a conservatory program for frum girls, providing real training in technique for singing, dancing, and acting. After

several successful summers, I decided to incorporate filmmaking as well. For the last three years of the program, we moved Kol Neshama to Tzfat, Israel. It was a phenomenal experience.

What were the practical steps you took to getting your films produced and publicized?

You can't cut corners. You still need money to make a film with production value. You take it one step at a time. As a director, I'm a problem solver and a risk-taker. We made the first films through what I would describe as "creative financing." My husband and I risked everything. Spike Lee, a well-known director, famously got his first movie made by maxing out on credit cards. With "A Light for Greytowers," we pulled a Spike Lee.

Have you faced any opposition and how did you push past it and keep believing in yourself?

I got pushback from the far left and far right, which I guess means I must be doing something right. When "A Light for Greytowers" first screened, the idea of Jewish women going to a movie was a relatively new concept. I wasn't the first women's film, but I did have the first film without women dressing up to play men. I got askanias from respectable rabbonim, but I still had problems when I got to Boro Park. One woman stood up during a Q & A and asked why there were men in the film. I told her I made the film with rabbinic supervision, askanias, and I further explained that on camera women dressing up as men doesn't work. But that didn't satisfy this woman. She made a big complaint that went all the way up to the Dayan and Rebbetzin of Bobov. In Boro Park, they use crime scene tape and

drive through the streets calling “asur, asur” when they want to shut something down. I was terrified. This would destroy everything. It would kill the film and would ruin us financially. I was traumatized. Our booking agent called and told us they decided not to asur the film, but they were putting out a disclaimer in Yiddish all over Boro Park and Flatbush saying “this does not meet our standards.” I was devastated.

When we arrived Boro Park that night for the screening, a mob scene greeted us. A thousand women and girls were lined up around the block! The posters and phone blast wound up being incredible publicity. What looked like destruction, turned into the greatest day of my life. In terms of opposition from the left, we were selected to show “A Light for Greytowers” at the Jerusalem Jewish Film Festival at the Jerusalem Cinemateque, the first-ever Haredi film invited to screen at the festival. But when I said our movie had to be marketed to women only, we were promptly disinvited. A friend advised me to protest, so we rented out the Menachem Begin Heritage Center and held protest screenings. I wrote a letter to the festival where I hammered them very eloquently. We received a lot of press which led to an attorney becoming involved, claiming it was religious discrimination. It turned into this huge opportunity for a Kiddush Hashem. You really can’t pay for this kind of publicity. The biggest irony is that Ha’aretz, the leftist Israeli newspaper owned by the New York Times, took my side.

Did you have a role model when you were trying to making to your dreams work in the Jewish world? Do you remember anyone having a particular impact on your career?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe is my role model. I derive strength, guidance and inspiration from the Rebbe, my courage to go for it. His teachings and wisdom help me to be properly armed with halacha, tznius and fearlessness. I am blazing new territory.

What is the worst and best part of your job?

Best – impacting people, both participants and

audiences. Seeing the creativity blossom in people, nurturing and facilitating the creative process. I love when people surprise themselves with what they’re capable of.

Worst – the financial. I have so many projects I want to make, and I need people to step up and invest. I have to put a lot of time into finding investors and creating business plans. That’s the hardest part.

Do you enjoy watching your previous work?

I think with every project, I watch it and watch it and watch it during editing, until I’ve seen it hundreds of times, until I know every frame (there are 24 frames per second). There is a period of time where I can watch a film regularly. Then I need to move on.

Usually, though, I have favorite parts that I never tire of. I do think as an artist it’s really important to finish things and move on.


Are you working on anything new right now?

I’m working on a kosher Jewish movie for general audiences that will play in theaters and stream online. It’s a fish-out-of-water dramedy called “Meet the Shustermans.” I’d like to create a film school for women in Tzfat. Also, I have an incredible young adult novel I plan to make into a feature film. I’m never at a loss for material. We have a new episode of “Young Detectives of Tzfat,” which hopefully will premiere this Chol Hamoed Sukkos. It can be rented online through Mostly Music. The DVD will hopefully be out for Chanukah.

What’s your message for Jewish girls with a dream?

It’s important to develop craft and technique in an environment where religion doesn’t need to be compromised. Exploring creative expression at Kol Neshama inspired girls to grow in their Yiddishkeit. I want to encourage all girls to work at what they love; to recognize that we’re living in special times. I believe that the voice of the Jewish woman is essential to the world today.

What is that voice?

That voice comes through tznius. The boundaries of tznius are so important. There's more to tznius than clothing, and that's what's so special. I grew up in this business, in the theater, in Hollywood, and I have seen looseness with no boundaries, and the devastating effects that carelessness can lead to. When I have to interact with men, because I have my boundaries and I'm clear about them, it keeps the relationship professional, focused, and relaxed. This is such a gift. Popular culture preaches immodesty. We have to re-sensitize people. Trust me, the world is going to be blown away by frum girls, by their excitement, depth, passion and sensitivity. 

*-Batsheva Miriam, Sara Kayla,
and Robin*





Aishes Chayil



A^b D^b b^bm b^bm E^b

Aishes chayil mi yimtza, v'rachok mepnanim michra

A^b E^b fm D^b E^b A^b E^b

batach bah lev ba'alah v'shalal lo yechar

A^b D^b b^bm b^bm E^b

g'malas-hu tov v'lo ra kol yemei chaye-ha

A^b E^b fm D^b E^b A^b C

darsha tzemer u'fishtim, va'taas b'cheifetz capeha

fm E^b fm

fm E^b C fm C⁷

piha poscha v'chochma, na na na na na na na na na na v'soras chesed, al l'shona

fm E^b fm

fm E^b C fm C⁷

tzofiya halichos beisah na na na na na na na na na na v'lechem atzlus lo sochel

fm A^b E^b A^b A^b D^b b^bm b^bm E^b

Aishes chayil mi yimtza....aishes chayil mi yimtza, v'rachok mepnanim michra

A^b E^b fm D^b E^b A^b E^b

batach bah lev ba'alah v'shalal lo yechar

A^b D^b b^bm b^bm E^b

g'malas-hu tov v'lo ra kol yemei chaye-ha

A^b E^b fm D^b E^b A^b C

darsha tzemer u'fishtim, va'taas b'cheifetz capeha

fm E^b fm

fm E^b C fm C⁷

piha poscha v'chochma, na na na na na na na na na na v'soras chesed, al l'shona

fm E^b fm

fm E^b C fm C⁷

tzofiya halichos beisah na na na na na na na na na na v'lechem atzlus lo sochel

fm A^b E^b A^b

Aishes chayil mi yimtza

Fun story--I actually have no idea who composed this particular version of Aishes Chayil So yeah....anyone who hears the (eventual) Songspot recording and knows the original artist, please let me know! --Sara Kayla





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.



Goal: Reach out to someone whose impacted you in the past. Also, once a day recognize the good someone has done for you that day

Sara Kayla:

Sunday: My brother made lunch for people, which was very helpful. I planned to express my thanks by offering to clean up, but I was davening while he made it and I got there too late. So I just thanked him, but briefly, because his earbuds were in and so I doubted he was interested in any grandiose speeches about his generosity just then.

Monday: One of my best friends and I went to the store while hanging out. I didn't actually have any money on me, but my friend was happy to pay for me to get two things, which was awesome. (Any friend who buys you milk chocolate caramel goodness is someone you need in your life.) Considering the above parentheses, I thanked her profusely, and she seemed very happy to have been able to help.

Tuesday: This time I had a plan--I would express my appreciation for dinner by offering to clean up! It worked, except that my mother made a one-pan dinner so there wasn't much to clean up...I also took the time to thank one of my brothers for listening to me yesterday when he looked like he was actually doing something else.

Wednesday: Um...

Thursday: Shira Moskowitz (who writes short stories for us, in case you recognize the name) and I were having a whole email conversation about writing and I was thinking that I was so grateful to be able to have friends to do that with, like to ask for advice and critique. So I told her that, in an email, because I really value her feedback. And in her email back she said she loves having it too and so it was lots of nice feelings all around.

Friday: Had a long conversation with someone that went some heavy places. But it was also...helpful. It...cleared something in my mind that had been bothering me lately, even though I don't even think we were specifically talking about that. Plus I got some good life advice, so...it was a good conversation. I thanked the person afterwards. I'm not sure they knew that even the heavier part helped me in a way.

Shabbos: WAIT. I only noticed when I was typing this up but I just realized I DID AN EIGHTH DAY. Oh oopssss. Cuz like, you know, Sunday to Sunday is a week so I also did Sunday. Oh well. I did my "reach out to someone whose impacted you in the past" then soooo fine, I'll just mention it here at the end. Happens to be that on Shabbos I didn't do something huge, I was hanging out with some of my best friends and it was so nice to be able to hang out all together, so when I was walking home with two of them I mentioned briefly about being so thankful for them. 'Cuz I have amazing friends and some of them are going to seminary and things shall change and I'm just so lucky to have them all. So, anyway, for my person-whose-affected-me-in-the-past, I wrote a letter to someone who's helped me make a lot of decisions, and delivered it in person. I don't know if/when she read it, but I haven't gotten a response yet.

I can't believe this is the last Journey to Me of the year!! I really enjoyed doing these, and I'm sad to say goodbye--they were so much fun, and prompted me to pay attention to my surroundings in new ways. I'd love to make this a regular column, but I said in the beginning Journey to Me would be a this-year-only special...but hey, if you guys are interested, maybe we can work something out? Let us know at ayeletmagle@gmail.com if you want more Journey to Me! 🌟

Batsheva Miriam:

Well, dearest readers. This is quite a JTM over here. My summer of “thank you”s and here I am writing about, well, “thank you”s. Having graduated and all that, I’ve been thanking teachers for guiding me and friends for being there for me (shoutouts all around). But I hadn’t stopped to really think about what I was saying. And so, true to form, my JTM is about noticing.

Sunday: My sister made the most *amazing* cinnamon rolls for me to bring to a learning group. Later that night, after the event, I thanked her for her time and told her that everyone enjoyed the food she baked.

I’m sure I yelled a thanks as I ran out the door with the tray of delicacies, but I made sure to express my appreciation later.

Monday: My mother made an amazing dinner (salmon patties, yum) and I thanked her afterwards. I’m ashamed to say that I don’t say thank you for dinner nearly as much as I should, and after this realization I’ve been trying to remember to tell whoever cooked that the meal was delicious.

Tuesday: I’m finding it weird to write about “thank you”s. Maybe because we’re brought up to always say please and thank you, but not necessarily to think about why we’re doing it. And hence, the noticing part of my JTM I’m here to notice the things I do (or don’t do) by habit and mayhaps even fix them or at least do them with intent. But back to Tuesday. Two girls a year older than I am arranged a weekly learning program over the

summer for post-high-school girls with a wide array of speakers. I texted one of the girls who spearheaded the project to tell her that the weekly classes made my summer so much more meaningful.

I wonder... would I have sent that text if I wasn’t working on my JTM? I certainly hope so...

Friday (yes I skipped some days): I texted a friend who I haven’t necessarily seen so much over the years but have been in touch with for a long time and told her I appreciate that she’s been there for me throughout my high school years.

Honestly, this is something I was planning on doing before I left anyway, but a deliberate “thank you” is a “thank you” for JTM I guess?

I’ve been trying to figure out how to show my hakaras hatov to a friend who literally turned my life around and who’s inspired me in so many ways. I spent this week writing down all the reasons I’m grateful to her and on Sunday, a week after I started my JTM experience, I handed her a card with a poem. Reaction notwithstanding, I feel like the poem I wrote isn’t enough. In the words of Rabbi Ari Bensoussan, “Sometimes words don’t even come up to the frequency of the ‘thank you’ that you’re trying to reach.”

Maybe that’s why I’m having such a hard time putting my hakaras hatov this week into words. Even the smallest “thank you”s said in person are more than just the words— facial expressions and tone of voice, for instance. Maybe writing those moments down doesn’t do justice. But when all is said and done, I’ve learned to be more conscious of my expressions of thanks, whether for holding a door or changing my life. 🌟



STARDUST

BY SHIRA MOSKOWITZ



CHASSI COMES THE

next day, to my relief. "Did you miss me?" she says with a grin. "I was a bit under the weather, so my mother said it'd be best if I stayed home for a day."

"Are you feeling better now?" I inquire.

"Yeah, *Baruch Hashem*."

"Well, you came just in time!" I quip. "There's a *Navi* test tomorrow!"

"What?!" gasps Chassi in horror.

"I know. I'm really annoyed too..." I take a deep breath and then ask tentatively, "Um...do you maybe want to...study together? I have pretty good notes and if I don't have any I can just copy from someone else." The last bit comes out in a rush and I hold my breath.

"Sure," Chassi says, sounding genuinely excited. "I'd love to study! Call me after school, 'kay?'"

"Sure." A smile plays on my lips. For the first time, I just might have a friend.

"Ma?" I walk slowly into the kitchen, where my mother is drying the dishes.

"Yes?"

"Can Chassi come over to-

night to study? We have a *Navi* test tomorrow..."

Ma drops the towel. "Of course, sweetheart! Anytime!" She gives me a hug, and although she doesn't speak further, I know everything that she wants to say and silently thank her for not saying it.

I retreat to my bedroom and give Chassi a call, who, after checking with her mother, says she's coming over. I wait by the window until I see a slim figure in a blue blouse hurrying across the street.

Jumping up from the couch, I weave my way through my siblings, who are all clustered around on the floor, either playing Monopoly (Chaya Gitty, Chaim Meir, who's nine and Orly, who's eleven), building things with Magna-Tiles (Yehuda, who's five, Yitzchak Yaakov, Moishy, and Shana, who's two) or crawling around and generally being cute (the baby, Shmuel).

I open the door and try to appear casual, like I haven't been sitting on the couch for five minutes, waiting impatiently for her. Chassi comes in, her *Navi* and notes tucked beneath her arm. She takes a quick look around the crowded living room and grins.

"Your siblings are so cute!"

"Thanks," I say, blushing, as Shmuel crawls over and starts to

chew on my slipper. "No, no, yucky!" I pick him up, plant a kiss on both of his ample cheeks and then put him down next to a stuffed tiger, which he grabs with his fat fists.

"C'mon, let's go to my room, where we won't be disturbed." I lead the way up to the attic and shut the door after entering.

"So, how many siblings do you have?" asks Chassi.

"Umm...twelve, *bli ayin hara*. I have three older brothers and eight younger siblings."

"Whoa, *kein ayin hara!* So you're one of...thirteen? I only have six siblings, no way as much as you do!"

I smile. "Are you the oldest?"

"Nope. I have a married older brother with kids, an older sister who teaches at *Bnos Sarah* - she's still single - and an older brother in *yeshivah*. Then there's me, and then I have two younger sisters and my youngest brother, who's one."

"Wow. A married brother?" I laugh. "I cannot imagine my oldest brother being married!"

Chassi giggles too, and then seems to notice something. "Hey, you play an instrument?" She is studying my music stand, which still holds my notebook. I inwardly

Avigayil remembers how she began playing violin. She has a vivid flashback to an awful moment from when she was younger

"IF I DON'T PLAY, MAYBE CHASSI WON'T WANT TO GET TOGETHER WITH ME ANYMORE. I DRAW A SHAKY BREATH"

groan; I'd forgotten to put it away last night.

"Um... yeah... kinda..."

"What?"

"Violin," I mumble.

"Can you play something for me? Please, please, please!" Chassi clasps her hands together and gives me a beseeching look.

"Let's just study, 'kay?"

"Noooo, play for me!"

"I don't know..."

"Play it! Play it!" Chassi starts up a chant.

I freeze. Flashbacks to that terrible, terrible day in the playground so long ago make me shake. If I don't play, maybe Chassi won't want to get together with me anymore. I draw a shaky breath.

"Fine. But after this, we're studying." I carefully slide my case out from under the bed, remove the violin and the bow and raise the instrument to my chin. Balancing it on my shoulder, I flip through the notebook until I reach my new composition.

I draw the bow quickly across the strings a few times to warm up and then take a deep breath. Chassi is sitting on my bed, watching eagerly.

I slowly bring the bow over the strings. A small, high sound emerges gradually, and I feel sort of self-conscious, but as I get into the piece, I lose myself in it. The bow's

now a blur, skimming the strings, barely touching them at all... my eyes are shut tightly as I play, my entire body shuddering with concentration... there is nothing else in the world, no Chassi, no room, no nothing...

And then, with one quick flick, I am done. I take a deep shuddering breath and sit on a chair, putting the violin back gently into its case. "So? Did you like it?"

I look at Chassi, who is trembling.

"A... are you... okay?"

She turns to me. I see crystal tears shimmering in her eyes. "Avigayil?"

"Um. Yeah?"

"I... that was beautiful," she whispers hoarsely. "Where did you find it?"

"What do you mean?" I'm confused. "I composed it."

Her eyes bulge. "You *composed*—"

I shrug modestly. "It's nothing, really. It's just some notes thrown together. Let's stud—"

Chassi snorts, cutting me off midsentence. "*Just some notes thrown together!* Avigayil, do you know how gorgeous that was?! What did you name it?"

I shrug. "I didn't think of one yet."

"So we'll think of one!" Chassi is so excited she's bouncing

on my bed.

"It really isn't such a big deal... let's just study now, okay?"

"No! We are *not* studying!" Chassi takes a deep breath. "Avigayil, you are *crazy* talented! You should totally play for, like, orchestras and stuff!"

"You think so?"

"Absolutely." Chassi nods, her black ponytail bouncing.

"I don't know... I never really performed in front of people..." I play with the ends of my hair.

Chassi snorts. "Oh, come on, Gayil... can I call you that?"

"Sure." I play it cool, though inside I want to dance a jig. *Someone actually wants to call me a nickname!*

"I don't know if you ever saw yourself playing, but when you play, you just... lose yourself. You're not... there; I guess I just... don't know how to explain it... but anyway, it's like you don't notice anything else. If you perform, you probably won't notice where you are!"

"I don't know. I'll think about it." I quickly put away my violin and slide the case safely underneath my bed. "Kay, let's study now."

"Fine," grouses Chassi, but she's grinning as she cracks open her Navi.

to be continued...

Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no help at all.

DALE CARNEGIE



Following

Footsteps of my forbearers lurk in the horizon
They loom beyond distance with threatening size
Feet stamping perfection, imprints in the dunes
They kicked up a sandstorm 'till the sky blushed its dawn
Prevailing winds forming swirls in the horizon
Sketching luminescent shapes that I dare not try
Me – a primitive camel rider, trotting along
Though I've barely tasted a whiff of their vast trudge

And already, wilting from the weight

Barren tongue cleaves to my palate, sculpting its groove

Now, me – primitive camel rider

Trotting, sandal clad and hunchbacked in a weary stance
Must lead a caravan of shadowing followers

And attempt to tail the immense prints stamped upon my path
Their magnitude ever more daunting when seen at close range
And my blistering, sandal clad feet must fill the hollow carves
The shadowing caravan lingers, watching, expectant
For me to kick up a sandstorm 'till sky blushes its dawn
And though I've barely tasted a whiff of their trudge

I must measure up to the sweeping strides of my forbearers
Though their footprints of perfection intimidate at close range

I have a shadowing caravan that I must now lead

Me – a primitive camel rider, weary, sandal clad

Though my feet are blistered and harshly sunburnt

My arms are raised in prayer, humble faith and pleading trust

That I'll grow into their footsteps of threatening proportions
My sandal clad feet can follow, poised and proud to lead the shadows

Forming luminescent shapes against the scorching dunes

Kicking up the sandstorms, sketching swirls in the horizon

'Till sky blushes its dawn, and paints the rising desert sun

Weeping Candle Rising Soul

"The heavens tremble as she dies
The angels sing, the sages cry" (Sara Hecht)

The candle's wax weeps tears abound

Melting sorrowfully to the ground

The soulful whistles of mourning breeze

Through the hollow spaces between the shriveled trees

Reflect the gaping holes in my heart where she belongs

But her wick's dried up with the last of hope's songs

And as the final reverberations shudder from her death

And the gasping little flame takes its last few breaths

The silence from the angels reflects all the empty spaces

But deep down I know, her soul is going places

By Mushka P.



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