



# An Old **JEW'S** *Blues*

(A Movie adapted form the Play)

By  
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## CAST

In order of appearance

FATHER.....Rabbi, Father of Leyzer and Shaiya.  
SHAMOS.....75 yrs.  
LEYZER.....60 yrs. Shaiya's brother. A Cantor.  
SHAIYA.....57 yrs., Leyzer's brother.  
MORRIS.....60's. Holocaust survivor.  
GERSH.....60's.  
HYMIE.....60's.  
MURRAY.....60's.  
ABIE.....60's.  
MAX.....37 yrs. Leyzer's son.  
PINKY.....40 yrs. Dynamic.  
WENDY.....13 yrs. Emotionally disturbed. Daughter of  
Max and Trudie.  
TRUDIE.....35 yrs. Shaiya's daughter.  
SYLVIA.....34 yrs. Psychologist. Shaiya's daughter.  
NURSE.....38 yrs.

(SHAIYA will sing cantoral selections during scene changes)

# An Old Jew's Blues

INT: 1934: IN *SHUL*, AN OLD RABBI (THE FATHER) ADDRESSES  
1  
HIS OVER-FLOWING CONGREGATION.

FATHER

Good *Yom Tov*, good *Yom Tov* and a *zeesen Pesach* to you all... It's a pleasure to see you again, my pleasure. How long was I in the hospital this time, three months? You know what I missed most, more than anything, standing on this *bemah* and *dahvening* with you in my beloved *Besmedresh HaGadol* and once again, here I am, about to celebrate my favorite holiday with you, *Pesach*, and Moses said, "Let my people go, let my  
(shows Hagodah)

People go." Look at this child's *Hagodah* and you'll see that even after nine plagues, that *yold* Pharaoh, still refused to let our people go, but when G-d ordered the Angel of Death to 'Pass over' all the Jewish homes and kill the first born of every Egyptian, Pharaoh finally got the message. We call it *Passover* and when Tomas De Torque Mada slaughtered us during the inquisition, like Hitler, who is trying to do the same throughout Europe... A madman.

(clutches side)

*Oy...* Only when those murderers experienced the wrath of G-d did they understand that we are all the chosen; Coloreds, Jews, Gypsies, Puerto Ricans, does it matter, aren't we all *HIS* children? Remember that when they move into the neighborhood, say hello, and welcome them with open arms. '*Ale menschen zeynen brider,*' all people are our brothers. So, what are you waiting for? Always have a little more *rachmunes* for the

misfortunate, for they have suffered as much  
as we have, maybe more.

(MORE)

FATHER (Cont'd)

They cry and so do we, so go into their stores,  
invite them over

(Clutches side.)

for coffee... *Oy*... So, here we are, 5,698 years  
later, 885 families, defying all odds, not only  
learning to coexist like the wild flowers our  
grandfathers once sowed in the Negev desert,  
arm in arm we will flourish, because we did  
more than even the biggest *shuls* in  
Manhattan.

CUT: BACK IN TIME:

2

FATHER

And when they asked us to plant trees in  
Palestine, what did we do? 37 of our children  
including two coloreds from the  
neighborhood went to work on a Kibbutz.  
Your contributions helped plant over 10,000  
trees. I know I counted them to make sure  
and when they ran out of medicine, what did  
we do? When they needed doctors, didn't  
our own Dr. Rappaport, Dr. Slimowitz and  
my own cousin, Dr. Sidney Finkel and who  
knows, how many more went over, I mean at  
their-own expense and they stayed for six  
months.

CUT: WE ARE BACK:

3

FATHER

And when they needed *gelt* to build a hospital  
for Jews, didn't we, G-d bless you and your  
children, buy a \$100,000 worth of bonds...

(Clutches side)

*Oy*... *The Shamos* and I couldn't be more  
proud of you, my dear friends. If it were up  
to me, I would inscribe each and every one of  
you in the good book, because if anyone  
deserves it, it is you. That's why, next week I

am going to have your names inscribed<sup>3</sup>  
(Uncovers enormous plaque on wall.)  
(MORE)

FATHER (Cont'd)

on this beautiful plaque and thanks to your generous donations, the *Besmedresh HaGadol* shall live forever, and now our dear *Shamos*, the man that is responsible for the up-keep of our beloved *shul* would like to say a few words, and don't worry, he's not going to ask

(Smiles)

for another donation, not this week.

SHAMOS

Good *Yom Tov* and a *zeesen Pesach*. Thank you *Rebbe*, and are we glad that you are finally home from the hospital and enough with the operations already, we had enough. Hopefully you'll never *have to go back, Uhmmain*, and yes *Rebbe*, I too could not be more proud of our congregation, because we had 63 '*Bris*es,' 72 *Bar Mitzvahs* and 65 weddings this year. Was I busy, '*Kinehora*.' I also have to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the success of our own day-care center, because Jewish children should have a place to go after school, if both their parents have to work and come this fall, that's just what we'll do. I just hired a new teacher and naturally we'll need some *siddurs*, a few odds and ends. Don't worry, nothing major, and I promise, with yours and G-d's help, I will help them all become proud Jews, filled with *tsdoke* like each and everyone of you.

WANTING TO SPEAK, FATHER GOES AHEM AND POINTS TO SELF.

SHAMOS (cont'd)

And now ladies and gentlemen, our beloved *Rebbe* would like to say a few more words about his two wonderful sons, Leyzer, who just graduated from college with the highest honors and still found the time this year to help start our new day care center and his talented brother Shaiya, who we haven't seen

since he graduated <sup>4</sup>U.C.L.A. two years ago  
(MORE)

SHAMOS (Cont'd)

and hopefully he will stand right here where  
he belongs and now, the proud father of these  
two wonderful young men, our own *Rebbe*...

FATHER

Thank you thank you. Today my dear friends  
I thank G-d the Almighty that I'm still alive to  
share this *nachess* with you. Since you know  
my son Leyzer since he was born, I'd like you  
to know, that he just graduated, something  
*cum laude*, anyway, he was number one in the  
whole N.Y.U. Law school.

LEYZER

(to self)

It's '*Summa Cum Laude*,' Papa.

FATHER

And the baby of my family, Shaiya who has a  
*schtimme*, my own Mario Lanza. He sings  
in those fancy nightclubs in Los Angeles, but  
I predict that one day he will sing here, can  
you blame me for being so proud? And now,  
I have an announcement. Since *Boruch*  
*hashem*, I have reached the ripe old age of 72,

WE see and HEAR APPLAUSE.

Which is four times *Chai*... and besides I don't  
feel that good, so, I've decided, G-d has  
decided that it is time for me to retire...  
Please,

WE HEAR MURMURS.

Please that doesn't mean I'm leaving my  
beloved *shul*, it just means that I have to pick  
a successor...

SHAIYA

(Shakes head with disdain)

LEYZER

No papa, please  
Don't, please.

5  
FATHER

Who better than my own son Leyzer to lead this great congregation? Does he have a good heart, he has the mind of *Maimomides* and of course, Shaiya will one day be our *Chazin*, he has to.

SHAIYA

(Aside)

...In your dreams...

FATHER

...He has to, because who sings better? What a singer and its time he came home, don't you think?

WE HEAR APPLAUSE

FATHER (cont'd)

So my dear friends, with my beloved sons and the *Shamos* to lead you, I can assure you that as long as there's one orthodox Jew here in the Bronx that needs us, the *Besmedresh HaGadol*, will last forever, I promise. May you continue to do good deeds and may your doors always be open to strangers in need and even though this is officially my last day, my heart will be always be with each and everyone of you. I love you all, now go home and have a *zeesen Pesach*.

LEYZER

(crying)

Papa, don't make us do this.

SHAIYA

(nods in disgust)

Unbelievable.

CUT: INT: IN TEMPLE: 35 YEARS LATER:

4

SHAIYA ENTERS, GIVES NEWSPAPER TO LEYZER AND PUTS ON *TALIS*:

SHAIYA

You forgot your Law Journal again  
Counselor.

LEYZER

Thanks Caruso, I'm some counselor all right,

(Sarcastic) 6

Your Father would be so proud.

SHAIYA

Forget about Papa and let's sell the *shul*.  
What ever we get, we get and I say, let's move  
to Long Island, okay, New Jersey.

LEYZER

No Shaiya.

SHAIYA

How about Westchester, better yet Miami,  
that's where everyone else moved to, isn't it?  
This is a losing proposition, it has been for  
years. We can't pay our bills, because there  
are no more Jews in the Bronx that go to *shul*,  
our *shul*.

LEYZER

You never stop, do you? I will never sell the  
*shul*, I can't and I forgot to tell you, Max  
called, they brought Wendy home.

SHAIYA

So, how is that *mommaleh*? Boy, did I miss  
her Leyzer.

WE HEAR A CHORUS OF SNEEZING AND COUGHING, ENDING WITH  
MORRIS' VERY DISTINCTIVE SNEEZE AND COUGH.

SHAIYA (cont'd)

I believe *Kvetchers* anonymous has finally  
arrived.

MORRIS, GERSH and HYMIE ENTER DUSTING OFF THE SNOW, SNEEZING, COUGHING AND SNIFFLING. LEYZER and SHAIYA BECOME, ALMOST LIKE BYSTANDERS, AS THEY ENJOY THE REPARTEE THAT ALWAYS ENSUES. THEY HAVE A GOOD TIME.

MORRIS

(Heavy, Jewish, European accent)  
*Ah nudder vinter like dhis and dhey'll bury*

*me fa sure. No bout a doubt it.*

(looks up to heaven)

*In Poland, it used to snow like dhis, but  
Here in America, dhe Goldeneh land, Jews  
are not only supposed to be safe but varm  
also, even in dhe Bronx, no, so, vhat*

(feigning blindness, he squints)

*heppened? Nu, Mr. Lawyer, so, vhere is  
everybody?*

HYMIE

(warms hands over steam and laughs)

They're all here, can't you see them '*blinde?*'  
Clean your glasses you.

GERSH

Thank G-d we still have steam here. Last  
night we almost froze to death and Hymie  
says it's your fault Morris.

HYMIE

(Loud, angry)

I told you to order oil, didn't I? Three times  
I told you, you deaf *meshugeneh*...

MORRIS

*...Vhat...? Vhat?*

HYMIE

(loud)

OIL, OIL! I told you to order the oil  
G-ddamnit.

MORRIS

*I bought Crisco, didn't I? Vhat dhe hell do  
you vant from me?*

LEYZER

(loud)

Not Crisco Morris, not Crisco. I believe  
Hymie means oil for the boiler.

MORRIS

*You believe vhat?*

8  
HYMIE

Stop believing, stop believing, you're  
believing and I'm freezing my ass off.  
WE NEED OIL FOR THE BOILER!  
Shaiya, would you please tell him that we need  
oil for the boiler?

SHAIYA  
(loud)

Morris, you need oil for the boiler.

MORRIS

*Oh, oil fa dhe boiler. Vell, vhy didn't  
you say so in the foist place?*

HYMIE

(whispers to Hymie)

Why I ever let you talk me into moving in  
with this wet noodle I'll never know, never.

SHAIYA

(whispers to Hymie)

I believe, it's because it's Morris's house and  
you live rent free, business stinks for years  
remember?

GERSH

Hymie, that reminds me, I almost forgot,

(arm on Hymie's shoulder)

maybe you have an extra quarter you can  
spare...? Come on, what's a quarter between  
old friends, right?

HYMIE

Again with the quarters, what do you do with  
all the quarters I keep giving you...? All right,

(Gives quarters)

here's a deuce.

GERSH

(Open hand to Morris.)

*Nu Morris, you're next.*

9  
MORRIS

*Nuch a quarter? Everyday, it's ridiculous.*

(Gives quarter)

*Here, schnorrer, and if you don't stop vit dhat  
rock and roll music all night long, I'll throw  
you out too, G-DDAMN IT! I didn't escape  
the gas chambers to hear Elvis, not me*

(Sings)

*mister, I vant... "Svanee, how I love you, how*

(Looks up)

*I love you." You hear Monya? Tell 'em I vant*

(chants)

*a little Jolson and I vant rent, I vant rent, I  
want rent.*

HYMIE

Morris, don't tell me you're talking to Monya  
again? How many times have I told you,  
she died ten years ago. If Shaiya tells you,  
will you believe him, Shaiya...?

MORRIS

Do you think I would believe anything you  
say cheater, that's why I don't play gin with  
you anymore, you peek at the cards. You

(Touches heart)

think I Don't see, but I can feel it here.

GERSH

Yup, I believe that's the last sign. He's  
definitely, banana, bananas, and tootie fruity.  
I've seen it before, soon he'll start spitting  
and making that crazy noise.

MORRIS MAKES CRAZY NOISE, OOOEEEEAAA.

GERSH (cont'd)

I wonder if Belleview still gives fifty bananas  
for Loony Tunes?

HYMIE

25 for you and 25 for me, you got a deal!  
Hey Moe, we're still waiting for the rolls,  
where's the rolls?

10  
MORRIS

*Holes, don't vorry, I got plenty holes, in my socks too. You're not dhe only vone mit holes, but do I complain? Dhenk G-d ve have a little steam here. Feels good, no Shaiya?*

SHAIYA

I hate to tell you this, but I 'believe' someone forgot to pay our gas and electric again this month. Lets hope we don't need steam in April.

LEYZER

Let me clean your glasses for you Morris.

GERSH

He needs binoculars not glasses. And the sounds he makes, *OOOEEEEAAA*. Its like living with a freakin' pig, disgusting.

AT DIRECTORS DISCRETION, MORRIS WILL MAKE ANNOYING AND RASPING SOUNDS THROUGHOUT.

HYMIE

You hear him? I'm telling you he's made Gersh crazy and now, he's trying to do it to me. Ask him, GERSH are you crazy, or what?

GERSH

I don't mind that he's deaf and dumb, but his mumbling, his mumbling drives me crazy.  
(shivers and makes sound)  
*OOOEEEEAAA!* Tell me I'm not crazy.

HYMIE

You see, I told you he made him crazy. First they spit and then they go *OOOEEEEAAA*. They call it banana bananas.

MORRIS

(Sound)

*Nuch amul mit deh OOOEEEEAAA? Dhe only reason vhy I let you live vit me is, I like to beat you in Pinochle. Makes me feel like I*

11  
(flexes arms, sound)  
*still got it, OOOEEAAA!*

HYMIE  
You got it all right.

MURRAY ENTERS SNEEZING AND COUGHING. ALL WILL INTERCHANGE COUGHING, SNEEZING AND SNIFFLING, WHICH AT TIMES WILL SOUND LIKE A GREEK CHORUS. THEY PUT ON TALISES.

MURRAY  
Business is bad enough as it is and it's all because of those *shvartzas* and Puerto Ricans. That's why all those rotten Jews left! Yesterday, sixteen people, and it's a good picture, you should see it, "*On the Waterfront.*" The projectionist made more money than me, and it's those sonofabitches fault. They take our apartments, our jobs, but do they come to the Fenway? I hate them all!

SHAIYA  
You hate them all, how can you, isn't Buster one of them?

MORRIS  
*Buster's just as Jewish as ve are. Doesn't he come to shul every morning?*

HYMIE  
It took me all night, but I finally figured out how much he'll say I owe him?  
(Voice)  
"According to my little black book Uncle Hymie, you owe-me a bundle."

GERSH  
You owe him a bundle and what should I say?  
I'm ashamed to say how much I owe him.

MURRAY  
Him, who's him,

12  
HYMIE

Who do you think *yutz*? There's only one  
*him*...

MURRAY

...You mean Pinky? Pinky's him, right?

GERSH

I'll tell you if Pinky's *him* Murray, but  
it's gonna cost you a quarter.

MURRAY

(change from pocket, waves quarter)  
Hmmm, look at this one, all nice and shiny.

GERSH

(takes quarter)

What a beauty. Okay Hymie, tell Murray  
how much you owe *him*.

MORRIS

*Du hearst Monya? Dhey owe Pinky a  
fortune. Dopes, they're all dopes.*

MURRAY

And who told you to take all that money from  
Pinky, who forced you? Think about it,  
could any of us stay in business without  
Pinky?

HYMIE, ABIE, GERSH, MURRAY

Without him, not a day.

MORRIS

*Dhank G-d I don't owe Pinky a dime, not a  
dime and you know why? Because, I'm too  
smart for Pinky, I always vas, ask him.*

ABIE

(sniffles)

You're smart? You were never smart,

dummy. You're just retired and if you still had the grocery, you'd owe Pinky too, maybe not as much as me, but you'd owe him.

HYMIE

It's a crying shame no one eats kosher meat any more, no one. If I could only find someone to buy my butcher shop. Maybe I should just give it away... Hey, that's just what I should do. What an idea, perfect. I'll give *him* the business and we'll call it even-Steven. Am I brilliant or am I brilliant? Let *him* have the headaches. In fact, I say let's all give *him* our headaches and then we won't owe *Him* a dime.

GERSH

How long have I been trying to sell my Men's Emporium and how much am I asking, 15, \$20,000. That's what I owe Pinky and paying *him* off with it, brilliant, what an idea. Between this cold winter and the robberies I need the Bronx like a '*loch 'n kupp.*'

MORRIS

*Gersh, would you bring me a CUP also?*

HYMIE

What kind of cup, what kind of cup?!

MORRIS

*He just said a CUP tea, didn't he? A CUP tea.*

HYMIE

A cup tea, he just said '*A loch in KUPP!*'  
 What kind of cup tea?! I can't take him any more. I'm giving *Him* the business and I'm getting out of here before I go  
 (shivers and screams)  
 OOOEEAAA!

MORRIS

*You don't have to shout. What do you tink*

*I'm deaf?*

HYMIE

(ala Morris)

*What you deaf, are you kiddink?*

SHAIYA

*Nu, Hymie, I hope you're having a better week this week?*

HYMIE

A few chickens, 15, 20, not that many. There was a time I would sell that many before eight o'clock and now a little flanken, a couple pieces of liver, eight pullets, and a dozen steaks...

MURRAY

At least you did a little business, I had sixteen people all day, can you imagine, sixteen people, eight popcorns.

HYMIE

We know all about your eight popcorns. Enough with the popcorn and your projectionist made more than you. So, what else is new, New York, New Jersey?

GERSH

...I don't know how much longer I'll be able to take it. I believe they're going to turn the phone off in my store. I'm telling you, Shaiya is right, Long Island sounds better every minute. (MORE)

GERSH (Cont'd)

That's where most of them went, isn't it? Please, Pinky, you call me

(pleads to heaven)

your favorite uncle. Take my Emporium and let's call it even-Steven, let me start over in peace.

LEYZER

I vote Israel, because that's where my beloved father used to go, *Eiretz Yisroel*,

that's definitely where you guys should go.

SHAIYA

(sings Hatikva)

*"Kol od ba lay vov, pehneee-ee-mah..."*

LEYZER

Thank you.

SHAIYA

Don't I always?

HYMIE

Israel, Miami Beach, if you ask me, "Too Jewish," they both have too many Jews.

MORRIS

*Dhe News? Only communists read dhe News, now, dhe Post, dhat's a paper.*

ABIE ENTERS CARRYING A PACKAGE. AS IF BY SIGNAL, ALL SNEEZE, COUGH, SNIFFLE AND MAKE SOUNDS AS THEY WELCOME ABIE.

ABIE

Now, that's what I call a greeting,  
*Gehzunheit...!*

MURRAY

Abie, we were just talking about moving.  
I vote we go to Miami, Leyzer says  
Israel and Gersh wants Long Island.  
What do you think?

ABIE

I hate to tell you this, but I'm moving to  
Texas.

MORRIS

*Texas, vith all deh horses, all of a sudden you vant horses?*

ABIE

(dreamy)

Yeah, I'll never forget this Roy Rogers movie I saw at Murray's a couple of weeks ago, or was it Gene Autry?

16  
GERSH

And what about Tom Mix, he's bad?

ABIE

Anyway, he looked like he was having such a good time, riding and roping, you should

(sings)

Have heard him singing, "*I'm an old cow hand, from the Rio Grand.*" That's why I'm moving to Texas.

MORRIS

*What taxes, I already paid my taxes, dope.*

HYMIE

Texas, not taxes! Why the hell don't you get a hearing aid G-ddamnit?

MURRAY

(to Leyzer)

So tell me Mr. Attorney, why should Gersh and Hymie be the only ones starting out free and clear? What about me, don't I count? So, should I do it, should I move too?

SHAIYA

You're asking the wrong person if you should do it. Trust me, if it's in your heart, in the long run, if you're lucky you won't regret doing it, maybe.

LEYZER

Listen to my brother, he doesn't know how to spell regret. He always did what he wanted.

MURRAY

And after 40 years in business why should I be the only one with regrets, what am I a dope? Tomorrow, I'm giving Pinky the Fenway. Let's see how many popcorns he sells.

17  
HYMIE

You should have done it fifteen years ago when it was still worth something. When all the *Yidlachs* left, we should have gone too.

GERSH

Just think, maybe we should all move in together?

MAX

(enters looking bedraggled)

I'm sorry I'm late... The snow, traffic was

(puts on talis)

terrible. Pop, we finally brought Wendy home yesterday. Sorry I didn't call.

LEYZER

*Mazel Tov.* So, how is my beautiful granddaughter?

SHAIYA

Is she any better...?

MAX

The doctors think she is. Let's hope for the best.

LEYZER

With G-d's help, with G-d's help.

SHAIYA

Where was your G-d when she got sick in the first place...?

LEYZER

Shaiya, it's not our place to question the Almighty.

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND SMILE AS A DAPPER PINKY ENTERS.

PINKY

(puts on talis)

Sorry I'm late. Okay, get my favorite '*Schvartza*' and the *Shamos* and let's get

going, because G<sup>18</sup>-d waits for no one, right boys?

HYMIE

Except you Pinky.

PINKY

Not even me.

THE SHAMOS and BUSTER ENTER.

SHAMOS

I'm sorry we're late. Some *momzeh* broke a window again last night and I had to help Buster fix it. That's what you get for being a *Shamos* now-a-days. When your father was alive, '*olev ha sholem*,' I was respected, I ran the *shul*, I took care of the day-care center and I made sure everything was in order. 35 years later I'm a G-ddamn super.

BUSTER

There's nothin' wrong bein' a super. My papa didn't mind being a super, 'cause he was the best super there was.

LEYZER

That's telling him Buster.

SHAIYA

Good for you.

PINKY

Boys, please, I haven't got all day. Can we please get on with it? I mean, don't you guys have to open your stores?

THE SHAMOS PUTS ON HIS *YARMULKA* AND *TALIS* AND BUSTER PUTS ON *YARMULKA*. WE HEAR SHAIYA AND ALL CHANT SHARCHARIT. AFTER, THEY SHAKE HANDS AND AS THEY BEGIN TO DEPART, ABIE TAKES PINKY TO THE SIDE AS HYMIE WITH OPEN HAND TRIES TO COLLECT QUARTERS.

ABIE

...*Nu* Pinky.

PINKY

If I knew, I'd win the fifth at Yonkers tonight. So, what can I do for my uncle

Abie? How much do you need this time?

ABIE

Not that much *boichic*, 5-600 tops. Its not my fault I keep borrowing, business is terrible, it's not my fault.

PINKY

*The neighborhood's changed*, it's not your fault that everybody's leaving, but we'll make it, we always have, do we have a choice?

ABIE

Yeah, 5, \$600, it's not that much. The rent, gas and electric, the telephone, believe me, before you turn around, you're right, we'll make it, and we have to.

PINKY

(looks at black book, counts, give money)  
Here's eight that makes it an even eighteen grand. *Zai gehzunt* uncle Abie and give Con Ed my best.

ABIE

Thank you Pinky, one day I'll pay you back.

PINKY

You know how I'm counting on it..

ABIE WAITS AS GERSH COMES TO PINKY.

GERSH

*Nu* Pinky, how's my favorite nephew?

PINKY

Not bad, but what's important is, how's my uncle Gersh?

GERSH

How should Gersh be? I'm asking you, with business so lousy. Listen, I can use \$700, what do you say?

20

PINKY

(looks at black book)

Why don't you take nine hundred and make it an even twenty thou.

GERSH

That much huh? Okay, what the heck, if you insist.

PINKY

(counts and gives money)

No, you insist, Con Ed...?

GERSH

...And the rent, I had to buy two new fluorescents, don't ask... Thank you, Pinky.

(Puts money in wallet)

One day I'll pay you back.

PINKY

I sure hope so. Anyone else, Murray, Hymie?

MURRAY

Maybe next week, Pinky,  
maybe next week.

HYMIE

I'll call you later.

PINKY

All right, I gotta get moving. I gotta lotta business to attend to. Anyone wants a lift to anywhere within reason. Hey

(Leaving, to SHAIYA)

Caruso, give Sylvie my regards, tell her I'll call her tonight.

SHAIYA

Sure Pinky.

ALL DEPART EXCEPT THE SHAMOS, LEYZER, SHAIYA, BUSTER and ABIE.

LEYZER

Why does he keep calling her?

21  
SHAIYA

You know how much he likes her.

ABIE

(Gives box)

Buster, with this weather, I thought maybe you could use these. Nobody's left to buy them anyway. Use them in the best of health. You need sneakers? I got plenty; I'll bring you tomorrow.

BUSTER

(Opens package and shows boots)

Why, thanks Abie, I sure could use these boots... Always giving me things. If it wasn't for you guys, I guess I don't know what I'd do. Can't get too far on Social Security these days.

ABIE

It's my pleasure *boichic* and I thank you, because, if not for you, would we still have a *minyan*? *Zai gehzunt*.

(Exits)

SHAMOS

(Looks at boots)

Let's see those galoshes he gave you... Oh, these are very good for the snow, very nice. Thank G-d there are still Jews left in this world, right Buster...?

BUSTER

Thank you Jesus.

LEYZER

Personally, I think someone should tell the boys to stop borrowing from Pinky; they must owe him a fortune by now.

SHAIYA

If they don't borrow from Pinky, whom are they supposed to borrow from, the man

in the moon? <sup>22</sup> How would they stay in business with out borrowing from 'him' and now it looks like it's our turn.

LEYZER

I've told you a hundred times, forget it.

SHAIYA

Leyzer, don't you understand, we haven't paid our utility bill for the last six months. I told Con Ed that our donations have declined considerably and we'll pay them as soon as possible. If we don't ask Pinky for his help, we're going to have to close. Come to think of it, that just might be a blessing in disguise.

BUSTER

There are still a few people that really depend on this *shul*, including me and ev'rybody knows it means more than anything to Pinky. Why don't you give him a chance to help us? He'd sure appreciate it.

MAX

We could sure use his help Pop. Tell me, how much longer can you hold out?

LEYZER

According to your beloved grandfather, may he rest in peace, forever, right Shaiya?

SHAIYA

And this *yutz* still believes him.

BUSTER

Lets have a bingo game. Our Lady of Victory has a bingo game every Monday night and they make a fortune. I'll ask my friends to come, I'll make potato *latkes*, chopped liver, and they'll love it.

LEYZER

There aren't enough Jews left to play

Chinese checkers and you want to play bingo, and you remembered I love potato *latkes*, what a guy.

BUSTER SMILES.

MAX

I wonder what *Zeydey* would do if he was in our shoes?

SHAIYA

Probably take them off.

SHAMOS

Your father never had such problems, because he had a million people coming to *shul*. Now, we don't even have enough for a *minyán*, we can't pay our bills and it's been six months since any of us got paid. How long can this go on, don't I have to eat, pay rent? Leyzer, why don't you speak to Pinky, what are you waiting for?

LEYZER

Again with Pinky?

SHAIYA

You got any better ideas?

LEYZER

I certainly do. Let's go see our little Wendy. Dear G-d, please make her better.

CUT: INT: 6: P.M.: SAME DAY: BUSTER'S ROOM: 6  
 BUSTER IS LYING DOWN AND SORT OF LISTENING TO THE T.V. WHEN  
 SUDDENLY WE HEAR A WINDOW SMASH. HE JUMPS UP AND GRABS A  
 BAT

BUSTER

That's the back window. Must be those sons-a-bitches again. Paintin' those swastikas  
 Wasn't enough, now they throwin' bricks  
 (We hear a bang)

Through the windows. Jesus, I think I hear them in the *shul*. Wish I could get my hands on their parents, 'cause it's gotta to be their fault. Ain't nobody born an anti-Semite, that's something you are taught.

HE STEALS HIS WAY INTO TEMPLE AND IS STUNNED WHEN HE SEES A NUDE, SHIVERING WENDY, CRYING HYSTERICALLY AND WAVING A KNIFE MANIACALLY.

WENDY

*...Come out, come out where ever you are.*

(Laughs maniacally)

*Ready or not, here I commme.*

BUSTER

(Nears her)

Oh, my G-d, Wendy, my sweet little Wendy, its Buster, remember me?

WENDY

(Waving knife)

*Ready or not, here I commmme... Come out; come out where ever you are.*

BUSTER

It's me, Buster we used to be best friends. Oh, sweet Jesus, what am I going to do? She's gonna freeze to death. Don't go anywhere Wendy I'll be right back,

(Runs and exits)

Right back.

WENDY

(Sort of singing)

*"I'm going to kill you, I'm going to kill you."*

BUSTER

(Returns with blanket)

Here sweetheart, why don't you put this around you, you must be freezin' sweetheart.

WHEN SHE PUTS KNIFE DOWN AND TAKES BLANKET, BUSTER GRABS KNIFE.

25

WENDY

(Almost delirious Cries)

*Come out; come out where ever you are.*

BUSTER

Why, I remember when you were a little girl, that's exactly what you use to say when we played hide-and-seek. Remember how you use to always hide, and I'd try to find you? You used to love when I was 'it' so, I guess I was 'it' most of the time, just so I could hear you laugh and how you'd laugh.

WENDY

*Ready or not here I come...*

BUSTER

*...Come out, come out where ever you are.* You're even prettier now than when you were a little girl. You had the greatest laugh I ever heard...

WENDY CRIES.

BUSTER (cont'd)

Oh, my little sweetheart, you don't want to cry, you want to laugh... Why don't you take a little nap? Your eyes are so red, might do you a little good.

WENDY lies down in front of ark.

BUSTER (cont'd)

That's a good girl, go to sleep and dream of pretty things... Your Mama and Papa must sure be worried about you.

He kisses her, dims the light, looks through phone book, goes to phone and dials.

...Trudie, it's Buster. I found Wendy. Yeah, just like the last time... She's here, sorta sleepin'. Can you come and get her...? I know it's *Shabbos*, but she's in bad shape. I don't think you should wait... Should I call an

ambulance...? <sup>26</sup> Well, all right, I'll try to get a  
cab...

CUT: INT: ONE HOUR LATER: MAX and TRUDIE'S LIVING ROOM. LEYZER AND SHAIYA ARE DRINKING WINE AND PACING. 7

LEYZER  
Some brother, you forgot again.

SHAIYA  
May I ask what I forgot again?

LEYZER  
This Friday will be six years that Rivka died.

SHAIYA  
I didn't forget, in fact that's exactly  
what I was trying to do, forget... Your  
wife was my best friend.

LEYZER  
They say time heals all wounds, so how come  
I still feel so rotten? The loneliness still  
makes me feel like I don't want to go on.

SHAIYA  
And I do? When Pessie passed away, for a  
second I thought I was... Don't you  
remember, I also wanted to die. If it  
wasn't for my girls and Wendy...

LEYZER  
...And my Max.

SHAIYA  
And you, you only saved my life. No big  
deal and if you didn't make me move into  
your beautiful home...

LEYZER  
...Our beautiful home, remember?

SHAIYA

I don't know what I would have done. I'll never forget what you did and still do for me and I don't know why I'm rambling like this?

LEYZER

I Think Freud might say it's probably, because it's still on your mind.

SYLVIA and TRUDIE enter.

TRUDIE

*NU!* So, where are they already? It's been over an hour since Buster called.

SYLVIA

I can't believe you told him to take a cab just because it's *Shabbos*. Why didn't you go get her, she's still your daughter isn't she?

TRUDIE

Exactly, she's *'my'* daughter not yours. Besides, 'til I get there, they would be here.

SYLVIA

So, why aren't they here yet?

LEYZER

How long since she's been home from the institution, a year? We waited this long, we can wait another few minutes.

SHAIYA

For Wendy, I'd wait forever.

MAX

The doctors said she was much better. One minute she's laughing and the next minute she's crying, or babbling. Hear her, "*Come out, come out where ever you are?*" Thrilling.

LEYZER

*Neboch...*

SHAIYA

How could this happen?

MAX

They said we could take her home for a while,  
(Sobs)  
see how things went. So, you see, I knew she  
wasn't better, I just knew.

LEYZER

Don't cry Max, you've cried enough.

SHAIYA

At one time or another, we've all had our  
share of tears.

SYLVIA

That's why I keep telling you let me  
work with her, what do you have to lose? I've  
helped so many people, why won't you let me  
help your daughter, why?

TRUDIE

Because you want to hypnotize her, right?

SYLVIA

Exactly.

TRUDIE

Hypnosis is for idiots and my daughter is  
no idiot, thank you and I wish you'd forget it.  
Every time she comes home, you ask me and  
I say no, NO, NO, NO, forget it, will you  
please forget it?!

SYLVIA

Don't you understand, I'm a psychologist that  
uses hypnosis, I can help her, I know I can.

TRUDIE

Help yourself damn it, help yourself and find  
a husband. Who's asking you for help?

MAX

Don't you two start fighting,  
Sisters are not supposed to fight.

LEYZER

don't start don't start that  
again, we have enough *tsores*  
already.

TRUDIE

Only *goyim* believe in hypnosis.

SYLVIA

That's not true, why Freud himself...

SHAIYA

...Freud, *shmoid*, you have so many other  
patients to hypnotize, what do you want from  
my poor Wendy?

SYLVIA

(To Trudie)

How many times have I told you that  
something traumatic, something terrible must  
have happened to her? I know it, I can feel it.  
Why won't you let me find out what it is?  
Why, what are you afraid of damnit, tell me!

LEYZER and SHAIYA try to divert attention.

LEYZER

*Gutsten dank* Buster found her again. Isn't  
that something?

SHAIYA

He's some guy that Buster, wonderful just  
wonderful.

MAX

The best... I love him 'cause he's a such  
*mensch*.

SHAIYA

The perfect gentleman...

LEYZER

So, what are we going to do...?

SHAIYA

*Azoy gaites*, do we ever have a choice?

LEYZER

She'll be here any minute. Better we should think of something good.

There is a knock on the door.

SHAIYA

You see, I told you she'd be all right.

TRUDIE and MAX rush to open door and find PINKY and BUSTER standing there with blanket wrapped around a nude WENDY.

LEYZER TRUDIE SYLVIA SHAIYA MAX PINKY  
Oy, *gehalt*. Oy, my Wendy. Wendy! Oh, No. Oh, my G-d. Shit!

SYLVIA and TRUDIE rush to WENDY and take HER into bedroom. SHAIYA and LEYZER inundate BUSTER. PINKY listens as HE stares out window.

LEYZER

(Hugging Buster)

Not since Abraham, the father of our people has there been someone as noble as you my dear friend. You saved my granddaughter; I don't know how to thank you.

BUSTER

Aw, it wasn't really anything Leyzer and besides, since she was a little girl, I've always loved Wendy like she's my own daughter.

SHAIYA

5,000 years ago, Moses saved some lost Jews and today you saved a lost and bewildered little Jewish girl, my granddaughter.

LEYZER

So, tell me Buster, where did you find her?

BUSTER

...She broke into the temple.

SHAIYA

That's where you found her?

LEYZER

Just like the last time, remember?

BUSTER

I heard a window break and I thought it was those punks again, but when I turned on the light, it was Wendy, she was completely naked...

SHAIYA

Poor sweetheart.

PINKY

Why?

LEYZER

I wonder why.

BUSTER

And she was waving this knife and singin' that hide-and-seek song.

LEYZER

Unbelievable.

SHAIYA

This time she took the kitchen knife, *oy*.

BUSTER

*"...Come out, come out where ever you are..."*

PINKY

Didn't she go back to *shul* the last time? Seems like something in the *shul* bothers her. What the-hell could it be?

BUSTER

It don't seem possible, does it Pinky?

Heavy silence. After a beat.

32  
PINKY

And what's this, Buster telling me that nobody's taking a salary? I'm making millions, living high off the hog, while the only family I have starves. Not a chance, because from now, and that means until our *shul* gets on it's feet again, you're all taking a salary immediately, because, like it or not, I'm taking over and that's on one condition, I don't want you to tell Sylvie.

BUSTER

Well, you know I won't say anything.

LEYZER

As always, you are more than generous, but I can't take your money.

PINKY

Why not, it's not dirty. Every dollar I have, I made honestly. My money is not *traif*, so what is it, why won't you let me help you? Who's more important to me than you and the *shul*?

SHAIYA

I hope you're serious Pinky, because are we in hot water.

PINKY

I couldn't be more serious if my life depended on it.

SHAIYA

I'll give my brother an extra glass of wine tonight and he'll be happy, he always is.

PINKY

Why didn't you tell me things were so bad? I got more money than I know what to do with and since your gorgeous daughter Sylvie won't have anything to do with me, I thought, maybe if I save her father's *shul*, maybe she'll  
(Writes check)  
give me a shot, but you can't tell her. Here

and if you need more, you got my number.

SHAIYA

(Looks at check)

If this is a bribe, then I accept and I'll speak to Sylvia and put in a good word as soon as possible.

PINKY

I'd appreciate that Mr. Caruso. Now, remember, if Sylvie finds out, the deals off.

LEYZER suddenly clutches side and sits down.

SHAIYA

Leyzer, what's the matter?

LEYZER

I don't know, suddenly I don't feel so good.

SHAIYA

Sit down, should I call Finkel?

LEYZER

(Rubs head)

I don't need a doctor; I don't need a doctor...

CUT: Time stands still as LEYZER speaks to HIS FATHER,  
WHO APPEARS AS IF IN A DREAM.

8

FATHER

...You need a doctor like I need a *'luch 'n kupp'* and did you say *'Yisker'* for me today? And you know why *'My' shul* is broke Mr. Attorney? As smart as you think you are, do you know how much money you've wasted all these years on your *fahcockte* Law Journals and all those books you've bought about your segregation? The hell with segregation and your Supreme Court those anti-Semite bastards. It looks like you forgot what I taught you about *'tsdoke.'* You could

34  
have used all that money you wasted on 'My'  
*shul, my shul.*

Cut: WE return to the present: LEYZER sighs and sits as TRUDIE 12  
and SYLVIA enters from bedroom.

SHAIYA  
So, how is that sweet *mommaleh*?

TRUDIE  
She's fine Papa, she's taking a bath.

LEYZER  
(Groans)  
*Gutsen dank... Oy.*

SYLVIA  
What's the matter Uncle Leyzer, you don't  
look so good.

LEYZER  
There's nothing the matter sweetheart, I'm  
fine I'm fine.

TRUDIE  
(diverting attention)  
I don't know how to thank you for finding  
Wendy, Buster.

BUSTER smiles as TRUDIE touches BUSTER'S face. SHE and SYLVIA walk  
over to PINKY.

TRUDIE (Cont'd)  
And thank you for being there Pinky.

PINKY  
(Hugs her)  
Thank you is unnecessary, we're family  
aren't we?

SYLVIA  
Really, since when?

35  
TRUDIE

(To Pinky)

How did you find her?

PINKY

I guess it was destiny, it was snowing so hard I couldn't see a thing. We were driving, maybe five miles an hour. Ya see, I was in the neighborhood and I passed the

(MORE)

PINKY (Cont'd)

*shul*, looking to see if anyone needed a lift, when Buster, suddenly jumps in front of the limo. Luckily, Eddie was able to hit the brakes and stop; otherwise he would have nailed him for sure. So, I get out of the car, and who do I see on the coldest night, in the middle of the worst freakin' blizzard in years, Buster, with a blanket wrapped around Wendy, freezing their Asses off.

SHAIYA  
No.

LEYZER  
Oh, my G-d.

TRUDIE  
I can't take this.  
(Exits)

PINKY

I couldn't believe it. Sylvie, are you listening to me, or what?

SYLVIA

Do I have a choice...? Really Pinky there's so much going on, I wish you would stop.

PINKY

(Sits on couch)

...So, we put them in the car and I head here. Listen Sylvie, I know this is not the right time, but how about me and you going to the Copa tonight, Sinatra's closing, I'll get us ringside seats. Then we'll go to Jilly's and hoist a few, or, we can run over to Birdland, Sarah Vaughn's opening tonight.

36  
SYLVIA

Tell Frank and Sarah I'm sorry, but I have to pass.

PINKY

Didn't I just save your niece's life, doesn't that mean anything? What do I have to do, stand on my head and do cartwheels? How long are you going to torture me?

(MORE)

PINKY (Cont'd)

(Takes off ring from pinky)

You see this ring, its emerald, and four carats, cost me a bundle. Here, take it, it's perfect.

SYLVIA

(Coyly looks at ring)

Are you sure it's perfect?

PINKY

Almost as perfect as you are, because, to me

(Sings)

you're number one, and "The most beautiful in the world."

SYLVIA

Too bad I can't say the same for you.

TRUDIE enters.

SYLVIA (cont'd)

(Turns to Trudie)

Thank G-d she's home safe and sound.

TRUDIE

And thank G-d she finally fell a sleep.

LEYZER clutches side and groans.

SHAIYA

Leyzer, what's the matter...?

MAX

...You look terrible Pop, how do you feel?

37  
LEYZER

My enemies should feel the way I do, *Oy*...

SHAIYA

Maybe I should call the doctor.

LEYZER

I don't need a doctor.

PINKY

Listen, I just got an idea, since Leyzer doesn't feel so good, how about I drive all of you home, I mean I got this big stretch limousine down stairs and what the hell am I payin' Angelo all that money for, to sleep behind the wheel?

MAX

...Leave it to Pinky, he always gets great ideas. Come on, you should go before he changes his mind.

SHAIYA

You're sure we won't be taking you out of your way...?

PINKY

Let's get going, I've got to get some sleep. I can't be late for our *minyán* tomorrow morning can I? Come on Sylvie, I'll drop you off too.

SYLVIA rises and puts coat on.

LEYZER

(Clutching side)

*Oy*, suddenly I got such a pain...

ALL are panicked.

MAX	SHAIYA	PINKY	SYLVIA	TRUDIE
A pain?	LEYZER?	Where?	Are you all right?	Uncle Leyzer.

MAX

There's something the matter, look how pale he looks...

SHAIYA

...And he's sweating.

As LEYZER falls PINKY catches HIM.

MAX	SHAIYA	PINKY
He needs a doctor!	Leyzer, what's the matter?	Let's take him to the hospital.

SYLVIA

HURRY, he looks sick!

TRUDIE

...I'll call Dr. Finkel and tell him to  
meet us at Bronx hospital...

SYLVIA

...You can't go, you have to stay here with  
Wendy. We'll call you soon as we find out  
what's wrong.

PINKY

Well, let's get going!

SHAIYA

(Hugs Leyzer)

Listen you sonofabitch, I need you, you're  
my only brother remember?

SHAIYA and PINKY help LEYZER. ALL leave. TRUDIE calls  
doctor.

TRUDIE

(On phone)

Dr. Finke, Trudie. You have to hurry they're  
taking Uncle Leyzer to Bronx  
Hospital... You're leaving right now,

(Hangs up phone)

thank you.

MAX

I hope Papa's okay.

39  
TRUDIE

He'll be fine.

MAX

Yeah, but how come I'm still worried?

TRUDIE

As usual your Father probably drank too much and felt a little dizzy.

MAX

If anything ever happened to Papa...

TRUDIE

He'll be fine. Tell you the truth; I'm more worried about Wendy.

MAX

I guess, so am I?

TRUDIE

What are we going to do?

MAX

We're not going to do anything. We're going to let her have a good night's sleep, and in the morning everything will be fine.

TRUDIE

You really think so?

MAX

No.

TRUDIE

(emotional)

I just don't understand, for the last six or seven months, every time we went to see her she was perfect. All the doctors thought she was ready to come home, they said she's made great progress. What is it here that triggers her off, one minute she's happy and the next minute she's...

MAX

40

You know, after seeing a million psychiatrists, something still doesn't add up honey. Children that are disturbed usually are born like that, Wendy only became like that when she was...

TRUDIE

...Seven-or-eight.

MAX

Ya know, I hate to say this, but I've always thought your sister was right, something terrible must have happened to her and she never told either one of us. What else could it be?

TRUDIE

Since you're as crazy as my sister, why don't you let her hypnotize you, you idiot and maybe I'll finally find out what's wrong with you too.

MAX

I wish I knew, then, maybe I'd know what to do for Wendy. Let's go to sleep.

CUT: THE FOLLOWING DAY: IN TEMPLE:  
ALL ARE STANDING AROUND AND TALKING:

9

SHAMOS

I remember when his poor father had the same problem, that's what killed him.

PINKY

That was 30, 40 years ago. Come on, it's only a kidney not a heart. He'll be better before you know it.

SHAIYA

It's not just a kidney, my brother has very rare blood, A.B. negative.

MORRIS

*Didn't you hear?* **41**

MURRAY

Look who asking, didn't you hear?

HYMIE

Our all-knowing deaf sage.

MORRIS

*His father, olev ha sholem also died from  
his kidneys.*

GERSH

I know this ain't the right time but, anybody  
got an extra quarter, I could sure use one.

ALL look for quarters.

ABIE

Poor Leyzer needs a transplant and this

(Gives quarter)

*shmuck* is still asking for quarters... Here's  
your quarter cheapskate. What a '*nuhdge*.'

PINKY

That's what I like about you Gersh, you  
never stop.

GERSH

That's because Hymie says I got a one-track  
mind, quarters and aren't you glad?

HYMIE

We gotta find him something else to do.

PINKY

You talked me into it uncle Gersh. '*Zai*

(gives quarters)

*gehzunt*, here's three '*queters*.'

ABIE

How selfish can you get?

MURRAY

(Gives)

42

G-d forbid, but what happens if he...? Here  
*nuhdge...* if he...?

GERSH

(loud)

...You got rare blood, Mo? Come on, tell  
me the truth.

MORRIS

*What?*

HYMIE and GERSH

YOU GOT RARE BLOOD?!

MORRIS

*WHAT?*

MURRAY

AB NEGATIVE, YOU GOT AB  
NEGATIVE BLOOD?

BUSTER

You say AB negative?

GERSH

Don't tell me you're going deaf too?

BUSTER

I ain't goin' deaf, but I think I got, yeah,  
I'm pretty sure that I got the same kind of  
blood.

SHAMOS

Don't be ridiculous, how can you have the  
same type of blood as Leyzer, you're not  
Jewish.

BUSTER

Even though I wasn't raised Jewish, according  
to my pappy, his grandfather was born in  
Lema, South Africa and he swore he was  
Jewish. Never ate pork, circumcised the  
boys, guess that's why he did me, even said  
we come from Aaron. You know, Moses'  
brother. Far as I'm concerned, that makes us  
all brothers, and that's what they used to say

when I was a kid; I got AB negative blood.

Who knows? All I know is what I know.

MAX  
Fantastic!

SHAMOS  
Impossible!

SHAIYA  
*Halavai*

PINKY  
That's my Buster

MAX

Oh Buster, would you really consider giving my father one of your kidneys, you'd save his life.

SHAIYA

It's a very dangerous operation, don't feel as if you have to.

BUSTER

Why, for my man Leyzer I'd do anything.

You guys are my best friends. Always have me over for *Chanukah, Rosh Hashanah*, all the holidays. Even make sure I always have a Christmas tree. 'Magine that, havin' a Christmas tree in a synagogue. I love Leyzer, since the day I met him.

SHAIYA and MAX hug BUSTER.

HYMIE

Still hate them all Murray?

MURRAY

Didn't I tell you not Buster, Buster's a *mensch*.

MAX

We better rush you over to the hospital immediately.

SHAIYA

I'm sure they'll have to do a million tests.

BUSTER

(sort of laughs to ease tension)

Well, I never was too good taking them 'arithmetic tests, know what I mean?

SHAIYA

Oh Buster, what can I say...

MAX

Don't say anything. Let's leave before he changes his mind. Come on Uncle Shaiya, I'll get the car. He has to go home and get his toothbrush, doesn't he?

MAX, BUSTER and SHAIYA exit.

HYMIE

A kidney still has to do with the pecker, right?

GERSH

Kidney, pecker, pecker, kidney, yeah, I believe it does.

MURRAY

Of all the luck, I bet Leyzer's *shmeckle* grows six inches.

MORRIS

*And a lot good it will do him. He hasn't looked at another woman since Rivka died, what a waste.*

SHAMOS

Waste or no waste, to me it's still a sin.

MURRAY

Sin, what kind of sin?

SHAMOS

Where is it written in the Bible that you are allowed to mix Kosher with *traif*? And what is Buster's kidney made of, one hundred per cent *traif*.

HYMIE

And you call yourself Leyzer's friend? Without Buster's kidney, Leyzer could die.

SHAMOS

His father didn't die for a long time, eight-ten years, and what kind of a black man would risk his life for a Jew? Is that normal? Ask yourself, *traif* is *traif* and a *goy* is a *goy*, always.

CUT: INT: THAT AFTERNOON: LEYZER'S LIVING ROOM  
WENDY CRIES THROUGHOUT:

10

SYLVIA

What's the matter pussycat, what's the matter? Please don't cry, visiting hours are almost over and Mommy will be home soon. Why don't you come to Aunt Sylvia and let  
(Wendy comes to SYLVIA)  
me give you a hug. Now, would you like me to brush your beautiful hair, you always liked when I brushed your hair.

(takes brush from purse and starts to brush hair)

Now, don't you worry about a thing pussycat, I know you're worried about your Grandpa Leyzer, but he'll be fine.

WENDY

(sobs)

Are you sure Grandpa'll be all right?

SYLVIA

Am I sure? As sure as I am that you are getting more beautiful by the minute.

WENDY

(sobs)

You're only saying that.

SYLVIA

Hey, I just got a fabulous idea. Remember how we used to play all those games when you were a little kid? How would you like your favorite Aunt to play a game with you?

WENDY

What kind of game?

SYLVIA

The most wonderful game you ever played.

WENDY

Really, better than pick-up sticks? Oh, please Aunt Sylvie, pretty please. I want to play, I really do.

SYLVIA

Okay wise guy, now except for the needle, *nothing* is going to hurt.

WENDY

NEEDLE?!

SYLVIA

I'm only kidding, now listen pussycat, this is a very tricky game, so you have to do everything I say if you really want to have lots and lots of fun...

(takes gold watch from neck and swings it)

Now, I'm going to swing this watch back and forth, I want you to follow it with your eyes.

When you get sleepy, just close your eyes and think of all your best friends. I'm going to ask you questions. Think of good things d

(she kisses Wendy)

and speak very slowly. *Now, iz you ready baby?*

WENDY

*Iz ready baby.*

SYLVIA

Think of a warm sunny day. You are in Hawaii, floating on a raft in the middle of the blue Pacific Ocean. You see a dolphin and you pet it, a beautiful Macaw lands on your shoulder and sings you a song, a puppy licks your face, you are getting tired...

(MORE)

SYLVIA (Cont'd)

Keep looking at the watch, isn't this fun? You are walking on the Moon and pick a star.

"*Twinkle, twinkle little star.*" You make a wish and meet Prince Charming. "*My, how beautiful you are,*" the Prince says as he takes you in his arms and kisses you... You are getting sleepy, sleep, sleep my precious... Keep looking at the watch. Sleep, you are asleep...

(Wendy is under the influence)

Speak slowly and tell me your wish.

WENDY

I wish I never have to go back to the institution.

SYLVIA

Go on.

WENDY

I wish I could be with Mommy and Daddy all the time.

SYLVIA

You are four years old, what do you like best.

WENDY

Going to the zoo and riding on Daddy's shoulders, eating cotton candy, hot dogs and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

SYLVIA

You are now five years old tell me what you like best.

WENDY

I LOVE KINDERGARTEN AND MY TEACHER, MRS. PORILES, I like learning the A, B, Cs, playing house, Mickey Mouse, but most of all I love my friend Genna...

SYLVIA

I remember your friend Genna she was wonderful... You are now six years old tell me what you like best.

WENDY

I love Daddy best. He taught me how to ride my bike I love to ride my bike... Mommy is teaching me how to read. I like that because none of my friends can read yet, but I can and I like chocolate pudding, *Mmmm*, it's really delicious, and the Lone Ranger and Tonto, and don't forget Superman, he's my favorite, and now Janet's my best friend too. Genna and Janet, they're the greatest.

SYLVIA

Yes, they were... Okay, we're really growing up, you are seven years old now young lady, what do you have to say for yourself...?

WENDY

I like going to the Y, even though I can't play ping-pong that good... I don't like Hebrew lessons too much, but I have to go because of Grandpa Shaiya and Grandpa Leyzer... I love Grandpa Shaiya, but he always gives me wet kisses and Grandma Rivka bakes the best cookies. She always sneaks me one before dinner and Mommy doesn't know. I just love Grandma Rivka.

SYLVIA

You are just doing wonderful sweetheart. Now, you are beginning to reach old age; you are eight. What do you remember, you old lady...?

WENDY

I like Billy, he's so cute and Grandpa Leyzer  
(starts to weep)  
takes me to *shul* every Saturday, I don't like to go to *shul*, I hate it, I hate it, I hate it!

WE see TRUDIE tip toe in and listen.

SYLVIA

Why do you hate going to *shul*? Tell me why you hate it.

WENDY

(sobs)

Because he wants to... He touches me all over, he put it in my mouth. *Come out, come out where ever you are. I'm going to kill him I'm going to kill him.*

SYLVIA

Who touches you all over?

WENDY

I just hate it *and I'm going to kill him...! Come out come out where ever you are...*

SYLVIA

Who touches you all over...?

TRUDIE steps forward screaming.

TRUDIE

Who do you think...?! Don't you remember she used to play hide-and-seek with Buster! I'm going to kill that sonofabitch, do you hear and then I'm going to kill you! I don't believe it, my own sister. How dare you, how dare you...?!

SYLVIA

TRUDIE! What the hell are you doing here? You are not allowed to interrupt when someone is... Get out G-damnit, get the hell out!

TRUDIE

I'm going to cut his heart out, then, I'm going to kill that sonofabitch and then I'm going to kill you! Do you hear, I'm going to kill you! How dare you, after I told you not to! How dare you!

SYLVIA

TRUDIE, WILL YOU PLEASE LEAVE?! Do you know what this can do to your daughter? Oh, my sweet Wendy. Now, when I count to three and snap my fingers, you will wake up and forget everything

that just happened, <sup>50</sup>one, two three.

Awakening, sensing something is wrong, WENDY cries and hides in corner.

TRUDIE

That black, ungrateful sonofabitch! I'm going to kill him, do you hear, I'm going to kill him!

SYLVIA

How can you be so sure it was Buster? She never said it was him.

TRUDIE

You can rest assured it was him. Who else could it be, who else played hide-and-seek with her and how can you go behind my back, my own sister, LIAR, YOU'RE A LIAR!

SYLVIA

She was just about to tell me when you... How can you be so sure?

TRUDIE

(rushes to phone and dials)

I'm going to tell everyone, you hear, everyone, and right now. I don't know who I hate more you, or Buster, and I'm going to tell them that too...! Papa, oh Papa, you won't

(into phone)

believe what Sylvie did.

WENDY

(steps forward)

*Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of Water, Jack fell down and broke his crown and Jill came tumbling after.*

CUT: HOSPITAL: LATER: LEYZER and BUSTER ARE IN BED AS SHAIYA SNEAKS IN:

12

SHAIYA

Shhh, how are you Leyz?

LEYZER

They say I'm still alive.

BUSTER

Don't believe them.

SHAIYA

I have to talk to you, it's very important.

LEYZER

Okay, let me have it.

SHAIYA

I mean in private.

LEYZER

I'm afraid, this is as private as it's going to get for a while, unless you give me a piggy-back around the ward.

SHAIYA

I said private and I mean it.

BUSTER

(Smiles)

How's about I close my eyes?

LEYZER

Are you going to tell me, or what? Now, what's the big secret?

SHAIYA

(looks at Buster)

I just spoke to Trudie.

LEYZER

*Mazel tov*, and how is my beautiful niece?

SHAIYA

She walked in and caught Sylvia hypnotizing Wendy.

LEYZER

World War three?

SHAIYA

*Nuch erge*, worse than Hiroshima, they're

52  
not talking. Sister's *nu*? She said she  
heard Wendy say... Remember when we used  
(points at Buster)  
to bring Wendy to *shul* and she played  
hide-and-seek with you Buster?

BUSTER

Sure do and I loved ev'ry minute. We played  
for years, and then something happened to  
her, poor kid.

SHAIYA

Something happened all right.

LEYZER

So, what happened?

SHAIYA

Would you like to tell us, you pervert!

LEYZER

PERVERT, are you crazy? Buster's no  
pervert.

SHAIYA

I'm not crazy, Trudie told me that Buster  
molested her and I'm going to kill him.

LEYZER

Buster molested Wendy?

BUSTER

What do you mean?

SHAIYA

According to Trudie he did. She just told me  
that's what made Wendy...

LEYZER

Oh please, do you actually think our Buster  
would do such a thing? You're talking about  
the man that's about to save my life  
remember?

BUSTER

Don't get yourself so excited Leyzer, it's all  
right, don't worry, 'cause it ain't true.

SHAIYA

It's just because he feels guilty, don't you Buster?

LEYZER

He doesn't have to feel guilty about anything and he doesn't owe me a thing. We're friends remember, the three of us.

SHAIYA

I'm no friend of this, this.

LEYZER

Shaiya, you can't mean what you just said.

SHAIYA

Every word, every word!

LEYZER

Buster's been with us for fifteen years and for fifteen years you've called him a prince, a *mensch* and I called him the same.

SHAIYA

Well, I was wrong and so were you, Trudie didn't call him a prince, she called him a pedophile.

BUSTER

Pedo what?

LEYZER

Did Sylvia say it too, she did the hypnotizing, didn't she?

SHAIYA

I didn't talk to Sylvia yet.

LEYZER

Well, what are you waiting for? I'm sure Trudie misunderstood her, she's definitely mistaken, you're talking about a man I love and you love him too and you know it. This has to be a misunderstanding. Where are you going?

54

SHAIYA

(exits)

To talk to Sylvia!

LEYZER

Buster, I'm sure there's some mistake.

BUSTER

How could Shaiya, of all people accuse me?

CUT: THE NEXT DAY: HOSPITAL: LEYZER AND BUSTER 13  
ARE IN HOSPITAL BEDS. A BLACK NURSE IS LISTENING AND  
PREPARING:

LEYZER

Don't tell anyone, but I think I'm really  
scared.

BUSTER

Tomorrow's when you should be scared,  
'cause that's when they're doin' it, today  
they're just doin' tests. One's gonna hurt real  
bad. The nurse is here to give us a shot and  
put us out.

LEYZER

She better put us out because even though I  
hate needles, I hate pain more.

NURSE

Now, don't you mind, you won't feel a  
thing and I think you sure are special.  
Imagine, a rabbi giving one of his  
kidneys to a colored man. The whole  
world should know about this.

LEYZER

Hey, wait a minute, you got that all  
wrong, Buster's giving me one of his  
kidneys, not the other way around.

55

NURSE

Are you sure?

BUSTER

You better tell those doctors not to give me one of Leyzer's kidneys, no way.

NURSE

(laughs)

Oh, I'll tell them, but they never listen to me, always too busy.

BUSTER

Are you kidding? They better listen this time.

NURSE

I ain't kidding, now, I want you two to roll over like nice little boys. I have to prep and give you a shot.

BUSTER

(cowering)

I hate needles.

NURSE

(laughs)

I betcha we're related, 'cause I hate needles too. Guess that's why I'm giving it to you instead of me.

LEYZER

Please make sure they get it right.

NURSE

(gives shot - looks at ass, shot)

Don't worry. Now, roll over Beethoven, you're next... What a cute heinie.

BUSTER

Oh my G-d, do you feel what I feel Leyzer...? I'm flyin'...

Buster, are you okay...? Oh boy, I'm not feeling too much pain myself.

NURSE exits.

CUT: IN TEMPLE: ALL ARE THERE: THE SHAMOS IS PACING 14  
NERVOUSLY:

SHAMOS

The reason why I called this emergency meeting is, I blame myself for what happened to poor little Wendy, that sweet *buhbala*. It was I, not you that allowed that *shvartza chorlehrya* to live in my shul the last fifteen years and why, because I had pity on him, G-d should only have pity on me. I'll cut his evil heart out, that's what I'll do. I'll show him some pity I'll show him some pity all right!. How could I be such a fool and Abie kept *schtuping* him with shoes no less.

ABIE

He's been my friend for years.

SHAMOS

And how many steaks did you give him Hymie and I mean prime T-bones and how many sweaters and jackets did you give him Gersh? We're all fools.

GERSH

If caring about a friend makes you a fool, then I'm a fool.

MORRIS

*Cool? Ve got so much steam here and you're cool? Murray, are you cool too?*

MURRAY

(slaps Morris five)

The coolest, give me five, pops.

SHAMOS

I thought we were talking about getting rid of Buster? He should only rot in hell.

ABIE

For years we've been friends. Now, all of a sudden he should rot in hell? Isn't he giving Leyzer his kidney?

HYMIE  
It's crazy.

MURRAY            GERSH            MORRIS  
We're friends. Doesn't make sense.    *Mishiga*

SHAMOS

As soon as the operation is over we have to kill him immediately, then I'll cut his heart out.

HYMIE

Kill him are you crazy?

MORRIS

*Poisonally, I don't believe he did it. Not Buster.*

ABIE

Neither do I.

SHAMOS

YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT, YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT?! TRUDY SAID HE DID IT. I'M TELLING YOU HE DID IT!

ABIE

He's giving his kidney to save Leyzer's life. Buster never.

MURRAY

To me he's always been a pussycat.

ALL drink. There is a knock on the door. MORRIS looks under the pew.

HYMIE

Morris, what are you doing?

MORRIS

*I thought I heard something drop.*

HYMIE

That was a knock on the door.

MORRIS

*What?*

ALL except SHAMOS  
THAT WAS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

MORRIS

*More, I don't have any more. I've given  
you enough G-ddamnit, no more and I vant  
rent, I vant rent, I vant rent!*

PINKY

(enters)

Gentlemen... So, what's this big emergency  
that it couldn't wait 'til the morning and  
it better be good.

SHAMOS

Pinky, I'd like to talk to you in private.

PINKY

Private huh, emergency huh?

PINKY and the SHAMOS go to the side.

PINKY (cont'd)

Okay shoot, what is it?

SHAMOS

I want you to do it for me.

PINKY

Do what?

SHAMOS

(Fist movement)

You know, give it to him.

PINKY

Give what to whom? Will you talk English?

59

SHAMOS

(whispers)

Buster, I want you to kill him. Cut his heart out, he deserves it, doesn't he?

PINKY

(loud)

This is your emergency? Are you crazy or what?

SHAMOS

Please, I'm begging you.

PINKY

(walks to guys)

Kill him yourself and leave me alone, will you please? This *shmuck* wants me to...

HYMIE

...Kill Buster.

PINKY

Exactly.

ABIE

Who does he think you are, Elliot Ness?

PINKY

You mean Al Capone?

MORRIS

*Der phone, dey closed your phone Abie? I'm sorry and I was just going to call you too.*

SHAMOS

Forget about the phone, we have to kill Buster. The bible says, "*An eye for an eye.*"

PINKY

Nobody's killing anybody... yet. We just have to wait 'til after the operation, then we'll find out exactly what happened. If Buster molested Wendy and that's a big if, then we'll deal with it, one way or another.

CUT: HOSPITAL: NURSE GIVES LEYZER A SHOT AND HE STARTS TO HALLUCINATE: WE SEE RELAPSE OF PAST AS HIS FATHER ENDS SERMON AS IN PRIOR SCENE: THE SHAMOS, LEYZER AND SHAIYA WILL ALL CONVERSE:

LEYZER (cont'd)  
(Hallucinating from shot)

Papa?

FATHER

And so my dear friends, here in the Bronx, with my two beloved sons and the *Shamos* to lead you, I can assure you that *Besmedresh HaGadol* will last forever, I promise. May you continue to do good deeds and may your doors always be open to strangers in need and even though this is officially my last day, my door as always is open to each and every one of you. I love you all, now go home and have a *zeesen Pesach*.

LEYZER

(crying)

Papa, don't make us do this.

SHAIYA

What us, you mean you shmuck, you mean you!

SHAMOS

...After what your father's just has been through. How many operations did he have and you dare to disobey him again?

SHAIYA

You got it and if my older brother wasn't such a *yold*, he'd tell him to shove it too. Do you actually think I'd waste my life being a cantor in his *shul*, are you crazy? What the hell did he ever do for Leyzer or me, besides make us feel like we were never worth his time. Well, I hate to tell you this Pa, but your prophecy has come true, I'm definitely not worth your time, no way.

FATHER

You'll see, you'll be sorry, without me, you'll

be sorry and then we'll see what becomes of you and your life.

SHAIYA

I can't wait, can you?

LEYZER

Shaiya, please don't go. Forgive papa you have too, he's...

SHAIYA

...Are you trying to say he's dying? Well spit it out. You've been calling me every week telling me that he's dying. He's been dying the past ten years hasn't he?

LEYZER

Make up with him, before it's too late. You better clear up what ever it is between you and Papa while you still have time, or you'll be miserable for the rest of your life.

SHAIYA

And you'll be happy, right?

FATHER

Goodbye and good riddance to you and your big mouth. You were never like my Leyzer, my Leyzer always listens...

SHAIYA

...To what, your bullshit, save it for your congregation, they're dumb enough to buy it, but my own brother, I don't believe it.

LEYZER

I want to be an attorney more than anything and one day I'll do it, but right now, someone has to take over. What'll happen to the *shul* if I don't? What else can I do Shaiya, what about G-d?

SHAIYA

You and your G-d, where was your G-d when Mama died... How can you still

believe in G-d, when there is no G-d?

LEYZER

Don't blame G-d, it wasn't *His* fault that mama died. I can't, I can't let go...

(sobs)

He made me promise, he made me he made me.

SHAIYA

So, what else is new? I was always the bad one, because I wouldn't take it, you took it you always took it. This is nuts. Since you were a kid, you were destined to be a lawyer... Don't you understand? Didn't you promise mama you'd become a lawyer...? He's warped he's a selfish bastard that only cares about himself and '*His shul*'. How many times have you called him a selfish bastard behind his back? Well, go ahead, be my guest, see if I care, just me sure after Papa's gone, you try and have a good time in

(MORE)

SHAIYA (Cont'd)

the *Besmedresh HaGadol*. That's spelled with a capital P, for prison, your prison, you'll

(Laughs - exits)

always be in prison and I'll be free. Ha, ha, ha.

FATHER

Did you see how he exploded?

SHAMOS

Terrible, just terrible, he was always like that.

LEYZER

Don't worry Papa, he'll come back, he has to.

FATHER

He'll come back all right, on his knees, begging to sing in my *shul*. You'll see, mark my words.

63  
SHAMOS

(hugs Father)

Children, I'll never understand them.

CUT: THE NEXT DAY: MAX AND TRUDIE'S LIVING ROOM: 16  
ALL ARE THERE: TRUDIE AND SYLVIA IGNORE EACH OTHER.

SHAIYA

Please, Trudie I'm begging you. Make up  
with your sister, she didn't mean anything.

TRUDIE

She didn't huh? I told her not to hypnotize  
Wendy didn't I, didn't I and what does she do  
behind my back?!

SHAIYA

She's your sister, your best friend. How  
many sisters do you have?

MAX

I wish I had a sister.

TRUDIE

You better shut up, I'm warning you Max.

MAX

If you won't do it for me do it for your  
Uncle Leyzer. You want him to come home  
and see you two not talking?

WENDY enters and cries.

TRUDIE

Hi ya sweetheart, did you have a good sleep?

WENDY shakes head no.

TRUDIE (cont'd)

Are you hungry, would you like something  
to eat?

WENDY shakes head no.

MAX

Sweetheart, Wendy... Lets go to Van

Courtland Park and make a snowman, or how about a fast game of pick-up sticks gorgeous?

WENDY starts to cry and hold ears.

MAX (cont'd)

What did I do? Will someone please tell me?

SYLVIA

You didn't do anything Max.

TRUDIE

(loud, angry)

That's right, that black sonofabitch raped my daughter and you haven't done a thing about it!

SYLVIA

(loud, angry)

How the hell do you know he did it? You barged in before she had a chance to tell me who did it, didn't you?

SHAIYA

Oh my G-d, you mean you didn't hear her say it was Buster?

TRUDIE

(screams and cries)

SHE SAID HE TOUCHED HER WHEN THEY PLAYED HIDE-AND-SEEK! WELL, WHO ELSE DID SHE PLAY HIDE-AND-SEEK WITH? IT WAS BUSTER IT WAS BUSTER, IT HAS TO BE HIM!

MAX embraces TRUDIE.

CUT: Hospital – WE GO BACK IN TIME: TEMPLE: SHAIYA  
ENTERS SINGING:

18

SHAIYA

(enters singing)

"Old man Leyzer, that old man Leyzer, He don't say nothin', but must know somethin', but old man Leyzer, he just keeps rolling..."

LEYZER and SHAIYA

(sings)

"...A-long."

LEYZER

Gee, it's good to see you. How the hell are you Shaiya? There's sure been a lot of water under the bridge, hasn't there?

SHAIYA

A tidal wave; a regular tidal wave and for some strange reason, suddenly I feel better. Almost as good as the last time I saw you and that '*soitenly*' means better.

LEYZER

Me too. How's Pessie and those beautiful girls?

SHAIYA

(hesitant)

Great, just great, I, I don't suppose you're still looking for a cantor Mister?

LEYZER

Only the best *boichic*, only the best.

SHAIYA

Sorry to tell you this, but the old Caruso's not singing anymore, how's about the new one?

LEYZER

I'd take you in a minute.

SHAIYA

\$150 a week, plus two weeks off for good behavior?

LEYZER

Make that three weeks and we got a deal.

SHAIYA

Well, I accept your generous offer.

LEYZER

You do, you really do? Oh, thank you, thank you.

SHAIYA

I decided that my family's been making do with out, long enough. I need a job with a steady paycheck and, what's, more steady than Papa's *shul*. I've had enough standing ovations, two in the last ten years is enough, wouldn't you say?

LEYZER

But it was wonderful, wasn't it? Doing what you want, singing, the applause, how many people ever have one standing ovation? I'm proud of you. Always was, wonderful, just wonderful.

SHAIYA

You and your wonderful.

LEYZER

Go ahead tell me your standing ovation wasn't all you've ever dreamed of.

SHAIYA

Yeah, but unfortunately dreams and two standing ovations don't pay the rent. And when the girls were born, one right after another, I mean Pessie started working two jobs, and most of the time I did nothing but change diapers... My wife was working two jobs and I was changing diapers.

LEYZER

So, you struggled a little, but it was worth it, because you were happy, really happy. I don't know what happy means, sure I have my family, but how can I make them happy if I'm not, never.

SHAIYA

Papa was right when he said I'd come crawling back with my tail between my legs?

67  
He always said I wasn't such a good singer,  
that I'd never have a steady job.

LEYZER  
'*Gott tse dank,*' now you do. You need a  
paycheck every week and I've been looking  
for a good Cantor. That's why I should  
thank you.

SHAIYA  
I'm sorry Leyzer.

LEYZER  
For what?

SHAIYA  
I never forgave myself for not being there  
when Papa died, leaving you alone with the  
shul, I'm sorry.

LEYZER  
You're lucky you weren't there.

SHAIYA  
It wasn't luck Leyz... I just couldn't handle it,  
that's all.

CUT: SHAIYA DISAPPEARS: LEYZER SLEEPS: BUSTER  
AWAKENS:

19

BUSTER  
Leyzer, Leyzer are you up?

LEYZER  
(awakens)  
Unfortunately.

BUSTER  
How do you feel?

LEYZER  
I think they gave you my kidney by mistake,  
because I feel like I'm dying.

BUSTER

68

Seems like I'm dyin' some too. But nothin' hurt when you were out, right? Felt real good didn't it, but now, sure wish they'd give me another shot, don't you? Ha, ha, one, two, don't think I got past three and I was gone. Had me the most beautiful dream. I can see all now, let me tell you about it...

CUT: BACK IN TIME: WE SEE BUSTER AS A YOUNG BOY HOLDING HANDS WITH HIS FATHER, WALKING IN THE PARK: THE SUN IS SHINING, BIRDS ARE SINGING, BUTTERFLYS ARE SEEN AS HIS FATHER SKIMS A ROCK HALF WAY ACROSS A LAKE. THEY GO ROWING: 20

CUT: WE ARE BACK IN HOSPIYAL: 21

LEYZER

That was some beautiful dream, all I had was a nightmare, the same nightmare I've had for 35 years. It started just before my father died. We talked, I mean he talked and I listened. What else? Ask my brother.

BUSTER

But, you still got some dreams too, don't you Leyzer?

LEYZER

I suppose...

BUSTER

Don't suppose you could go on living too long without havin' at least one good dream. Don't suppose you'd want to. What kind of dreams do you have Leyzer? You tell me yours, 'cause I just told you mine.

LEYZER

Before I tell you my dreams, I must thank you for saving my life, and if I had the strength, I'd give you a kiss.

BUSTER

Seems everybody's been thankin' me, including you. What'd I do? I gave my best

friend my extra kidney, which I had no use for in the first place and besides, I know you would have done the same for me. This just gives me a chance to take it easy, sorta lay out, 'cause the Shamos has been workin' me night 'n day, that's why I'm calling this my vacation, know what I mean? Now, you were about to tell me your dreams, long, long ago.

LEYZER

(after a beat, sighs)

I dream about my Rivka, my darling Rivka and hearing my mother laugh. She had this laugh Wendy had the same laugh... Mama would laugh every time she introduced me as her little attorney...

BUSTER

I still miss my mama too. Who would've ever thought, guess we all wanna be something, don't we? Well count me in, see, I grew up two blocks away on Park Avenue, ya know, along the train tracks, the same Park Avenue that goes into Manhattan where the rich folks live. Well, my papa used to be the janitor in the same building I grew up in. I hated him bein' a janitor, because people were always callin' up for him to fix something, even three o'clock in the morning, "My toilet is stuck and it's overflowing!" "Why isn't the dumbwaiter working?" "My sink is leaking all over my kitchen floor." He was never around to even play catch with me. Not even when I went to school on the first day. Sure hated him being a super. I hated livin' there... Leyzer, I swear on my mama's grave that I never touched little Wendy, so help me Jesus.

LEYZER

You don't have to swear for me, I believe you.

NURSE enters.

NURSE

Why hello, how nice to see you both awake and congratulations, the operation was a huge

success. Apparently, the both of you are going to live a very long time... At least 'til 11:30. (looks at watch and laugh

Now, tell me the truth, how do you two stars feel?

THEY moan.

NURSE (cont'd)

That good huh? Well, it's time for your shot again.

BUSTER

Did you tell them?

NURSE

They were too busy.

RABBI

You mean?

NURSE

Shut up and let me see your, how do you say (gives shot)

It, your '*Tookes*.' and seems like you've become a celebrity around here, Buster. Uh huh, the whole hospital's talking about you.

BUSTER

Does that mean you too, Gerty?

NURSE

Not really. Now shut up and let me see that cute heinie of yours. *Mmmm*, sure is cute isn't (gives shot exits) it? Now, nighty nighty boys, sweet dreams.

BUSTER

Remember what I told you 'bout getting that (falls out) shot? See ya, I'm gone. One, two...

LEYZER

How ironic, he hated his father being a janitor and what did he become, and me, what am

I...?

71

CUT: TRUDIE'S HOME : MAX AND TRUDIE ARE TALKING:

22

MAX

Are we lucky, or are we lucky?

SYLVIA

You must have '*Dahvened*' pretty good.

MAX

Everyday, I '*Dahven*' everyday.

TRUDIE

Yes you do darling, yes you do.

MAX

Do I detect a bit of sarcasm, '*Darling?*'

The door opens and in walks LEYZER, PINKY and BUSTER with much trepidation.

PINKY

(announcing)

Taaa raaa! Introducing two of my closest friends, the man of the hour, Leyzer and the man that saved his life, Buster.

WENDY

(comes out of it)

ZEYDY, OH ZEYDY YOU'RE HOME!

LEYZER

Of course I came home. I had to see you didn't I?

LEYZER and WENDY hug and kiss.

TRUDIE

(To Buster)

How dare you come here, you pervert! Get out of my house this instant!

BUSTER

Trudie, I swear I never touched Wendy.

WENDY hugs BUSTER.

72

WENDY

Oh Buster, I love you for saving my Zeydy's life. I'll love you forever, forever.

BUSTER

Why if you was my own daughter, I couldn't love you more, Wendy...

MAX

I believe him honey, I really do. You know I never interfere, but maybe you should let Sylvie do her thing again. Once-and-for-all, lets' find out what's going on. Please, let your sister try to help.

TRUDIE

(coy)

Sylvie, I didn't mean those things I said, I'm sorry I was just so upset.

SYLVIA

Me too Trudie, me too... I'm so sorry.

TRUDIE

Uncle Leyzer, are you tired? Maybe you should lie down.

SHAIYA

Go ahead, why don't you both take a nap. We're going out to have a bite. We'll be back before you wake up.

PINKY

Ya know, I was just thinking the same thing. How's about I take you all to Ratner's for lunch and we'll leave Sylvie here to watch Wendy.

73  
SHAIYA

Tell you the truth I could go for a bite. Let's go.

MAX

*Nu*, so what are we waiting for, let's go.

TRUDIE

Oh G-d, was I wrong. I should have listened to you Sylvie... Wendy, sweetheart, remember that game

(MORE)

TRUDIE (Cont'd)

Aunt Sylvie played with you? We're going out for a while, so why don't you stay with Aunt Sylvie and play it again?

ALL exit as SYLVIA removes gold watch and starts to swing it. WENDY rushes to her.

WENDY

(giggles)

No needles?

SYLVIA

(sort of sings)

Cool it you *momzeh*. Here it is.

WENDY stops and stares at moving watch.

WENDY

Oh, Aunt Sylvie it's beautiful.

SYLVIA

(swings watch)

And so are you. Now, follow the watch.

WENDY

(staring at watch)

It's so beautiful.

SYLVIA

Almost as beautiful as you are... Keep staring at the watch. When you get tired, close your eyes and think of your best friends, Genna and Janet. You are a pretty butterfly and you

land on a rose. It smells wonderful. A sparrow tickles you and you laugh so hard as it flies you across the Grand Canyon. There, you rub noses with a little raccoon, it's so cute, then you play tag with some red nosed reindeer. You are getting sleepy, sleep, sleep...You're swimming in a school of a thousand goldfish in a secluded pond. It is mysterious and quite romantic. You are getting very tired sleep my precious.

(MORE)

SYLVIA (Cont'd)

You see a rainbow and at the end of it you find a pot of gold and become the richest girl in the world.... You are asleep. You are eight years old and Grandpa is taking you to shul.

WENDY

(Begins to sob)

I don't want to go to *shul*, I don't like it I don't want to play hide-and-seek.

SYLVIA

Why don't you want to play hide-and-seek, sweetheart?

WENDY

(sobbing)

Because...

SYLVIA

Because why? You can tell Aunt Sylvie why you don't want to play hide-and-seek...

WENDY

Because he touches me all over and makes me do bad things, but, I'm going to kill him, you'll see, I'll kill him.

SYLVIA

Who touches you all over who are you going to kill?

WENDY

Him, I'm going to kill him.

75  
SYLVIA

Tell me who he is Wendy; tell me, you must tell me!

WENDY

I can't, he said if I ever tell, Mommy and Daddy would die.

LEYZER and BUSTER tip-toe in.

SYLVIA

Mommy and Daddy won't die, I promise, now tell Aunt Sylvie who touched you all over when you use to play hide-and-seek... Hmm... Buster said that when you played hide-and-seek, you'd always hide and he would be '*It*.' Oh, my G-d, he would be '*It*' and you would be alone with him, I don't believe it, it isn't Buster, it's the...

WENDY, SYLVIA and LEYZER

...The Shamos.

WENDY

(crying)

The Shamos touched me all over and made me...

SYLVIA

(hugs Wendy)

...Yes, I know it was the Shamos. It's all right, sweetheart. He'll never touch you again. I promise... Now, when I snap my fingers and count to three you will wake up and forget everything you just said, one, two, three.

LEYZER

*Oy, Gut-n'-himl*, I don't believe it.

SYLVIA

(sobs)

Uncle Leyzer, Oh Uncle Leyzer, you'll never believe it...

76  
LEYZER

(hugs Sylvia and Wendy)

I know sweetheart it was the Shamos.

CUT: A WEEK LATER: IN SHUL: ALL ARE THERE:

24

SHAIYA

I asked you all to come, because we have to discuss what my brother Leyzer refuses to accept, the survival of our *shul*.

GERSH

(to Leyzer)

Shaiya's right Leyzer, except for us, there's nobody left.

ABIE

I think it's disgusting. One time, there were hundreds of *shuls* in the Bronx, right Mo? Remember going for a walk on the Grand Concourse...

MORRIS

*...And what about Crotona Park? It was so bad? Now, I'm afraid to go for a walk myself. Nu, what can you do?*

HYMIE

They moved in and it's cost me a fortune. Everybody left. It's because of them I'm closing my store? Business has been *facockte* for years.

SHAMOS

What do we need this shul for do I get paid? When was the last Bar Mitzvah or wedding I made, you remember? I vote lets pack it in. Tell you the truth, things are just not the same any more, they're just not the same.

MURRAY

I vote we should all move.

SHAIYA

Sounds like a unanimous vote to me, Leyz.

LEYZER

I can't do it, not as long as there's one orthodox Jew that needs the Besmedresh HaGadol, Papa would turn over in his grave if we ever did it.

SHAIYA

I hate to tell you this mister, but now a days everybody's reform or conservative, we're just a relic, an endangered specie.

MORRIS

*Are you telling me dhat all of sudden, reform and consoivatives have taken over? What about us, plain and simple orthodox.*

TRUDIE, SYLVIA, MAX and PINKY enter and will stare at the SHAMOS.

LEYZER

Well, it's about time, don't you think?

SHAIYA

You know how these youngsters always have so much to talk about.

TRUDIE

We were talking all right we were talking all right! Look at him, Judas Priest himself.

SYLVIA

(grabs Shamos' shirt)

What should we do to him?

SHAMOS

What are you doing, leave me alone, what's the matter with you?

78  
PINKY

I'll tell you what's the matter you freaking  
pervert!

MAX

I say hang him. What do you say?

LEYZER

I'm not certain that this is the correct  
procedure, but he was definitely there. In any  
event, in a court of law, we are  
innocent until proven guilty, is that not  
correct, Mr. Shamos?

PINKY

Lynching would be too easy for this  
sonofabitch too fast Max. I want to see him  
sweat.

MAX

If you want to see him sweat, it will be my  
pleasure to put him in the oven, *boichic*.

(bows with great bravado)

*Nu*, Mr. child molester, what do you have to  
say for yourself?

SHAMOS

Child molester, you dare call me a child  
molester? Are you crazy, what do you think  
I'm a priest, a goy...? I'm the Shamos.  
The same Shamos that was loyal to your  
father, Leyzer, the same Shamos that held you  
at your *Bris, Shaiya*. The same Shamos that  
gave his life to the shul that your father loved  
so much... I love so much. And you call me  
a...

TRUDIE      SYLVIA      MAX

(chants)

A CHILD MOLESTER!      CHILD  
MOLESTER! BASTARD!

79  
MORRIS

*The S.S. liked little Jewish goils. It vas horrible.*

GERSH

Now I understand why he wanted us to kill Buster.

ABIE

You mean...

MURRAY

...He's a...

HYMIE

...He is, I know he is!

GERSH

Do you like little boys too, you, you pervert?!

HYMIE

He's worse than a pervert he's a lecher.

ABIE

And all these years we didn't know, I didn't know.

MURRAY

All those poor children, we ought to kill him right now.

ABIE

He used to play with my nephew too. Did you touch my nephew, you bastard?

TRUDIE

(chants)

HE DID IT, HE DID IT, HE DID IT!

MAX

(grabs the SHAMOS, cries aloud)  
LET'S KILL HIM RIGHT NOW! He made my daughter crazy...

PINKY hugs MAX.

PINKY

...It's all right, Max, everything's gonna be all right.

SHAMOS

I DIDN'T DO IT I DIDN'T DO IT! I SWEAR I DIDN'T DO IT!

SHAIYA

My daughter Sylvia doesn't lie.

SHAMOS

SHE'S LYING SHE'S LYING BECAUSE SHE NEVER LIKED ME! ASK HER WHY SHE'S LYING ASK HER!

LEYZER

Sylvia, would you please tell us what Wendy said happened when she used to play hide-and-seek.

SHAMOS

What's the difference...

TRUDIE

Shut up you bastard!

LEYZER

Try and take it easy on him Trudie. I'm sure our trusted Shamos has lots to say, so why don't we give him a chance to explain.

TRUDIE

Explain, I'll explain! Wendy said that when she was a little girl, eight years old, the Shamos raped her when they played hide-and-seek.

SHAMOS

It was Buster not me. He used to play with us too, ask him.

BUSTER

But I was always 'It' and you always hid with little Wendy, didn't you.

SHAMOS

I was 'It' too. You don't remember, because you're too old, I was 'It' plenty of times.

BUSTER

At first I couldn't believe that you would do something so terrible, but I was wrong. You were never 'It,' never... It was always you and the kids and I didn't know. Guess I should have known, shouldn't I...? I'm so sorry.

PINKY

Take advantage of a little girl. Why I oughta...

SHAMOS

(outraged)

She says meshugeneh Wendy told her that story and she expects everyone to believe what that crazy little girl said? You think they're crazy too? They know me. I'm the Shamos. I run the *shul*.

SYLVIA

You run the *shul* all right and you also played "Hide-and-seek" with Wendy, didn't you...?

TRUDIE

...And that's when he did it... to my little girl... Kill him, that's what I should do, kill him.

PINKY

We'll hire someone. In this neighborhood it shouldn't be too difficult.

SYLVIA

Too easy, too fast, I want him to suffer, don't

you?

PINKY

In spades.

SHAMOS

I did nothing! This is absurd. How can you believe anything a crazy person says?

ABIE

And how could you blame Buster, of all people.

MURRAY

But none of us believed him, right? We knew, we felt it.

MORRIS

*Because Buster is Buster.*

SHAIYA

You're finished! Where are you going to hide? You did it and everybody knows everybody.

LEYZER

Hold on there, don't jump to conclusions, I'm sure the Shamos has a valid explanation for everything, don't you.

SHAMOS

(screams, begins to lose it. Paces)  
What do they know, what do they know, what do they know?!

SHAIYA

They know that you're a pedophile, a child molester...

LEYZER

I told you not to jump to conclusions. If the shoe fits, I'm sure he'll wear it soon enough.

ABIE

And everybody knows what happens to child molesters, they get the electric chair.

HYMIE

Even that's too good for him.

ABIE

Then we'll give him poison.

MURRAY

I say let's fry 'em.

GERSH

Let's cut him up into little pieces and feed him to the dogs.

HYMIE

What an animal.

MORRIS

*What a chorlehrya.*

MAX goes to grab the SHAMOS but PINKY prevents him.

SHAMOS

(about to go mad)

You are accusing me of being a pedophile?!  
57 years of my life I spent taking care of  
this *shul* and that's how you thank me...?  
Who started the day care center who, opened  
up the shul? Don't you understand, she was  
(laughs)

Hypnotized and you know what they say  
about hypnosis, everyone does! Only people  
with weak minds can be hypnotized! She's  
crazy, I'm telling you she's absolutely nuts!  
Always, or do you think I'm crazy? That's it,  
I'm crazy and she's not. Well, then why is she  
in a mental institution and I never spoke to a  
psychiatrist even once? Because she's a  
loony and I'm not! Don't you understand,  
she's *meshugeh* and you're even more crazy  
for believing her, you're all crazy, all of you  
and did you ever care about me, did you ever  
give me boots in the winter, did you ever

84  
(MORE)

SHAMOS (Cont'd)

think about my needs? Buster this and Buster that. Since when did he become a *'Tsadik...?'* But, I, who gave my life to this *shul* got nothing, not even a little respect. Have you forgotten that it was I that made *Simcha Torah* for the children, my beautiful children, the children loved me and I loved them, they respected me, they listened to me, they always did what I told them. Did you teach Sylvia the *alef bez*, or did I? She was so lovely, so delicate and Gertrude, did you help her with her Haf Torah? She was lovely, with

(Dreamy, starts to move erotically)

such beautiful lips and Wendy, such a pretty little girl, such lovely skin and so beautiful... And Sammy, had such a lovely mouth and so did Rosalie and Irene and Marvin... They were

(Has lost it)

The only ones who really loved me, the only Ones who cared about me... The only ones who

Did what I told them to do, my *Moishele*, my *Rivkala*, my *Sorele*, my *Sheyndele*.

CUT: LATER ON: LEYZER'S LIVING ROOM

27

A knock on door, SYLVIA opens it and PINKY enters carrying flowers.

PINKY

(Kisses SYLVIA on cheek and gives flowers)

Hi ya, SYLVIE, gee you look beautiful. I hope you don't mind me popping in like this, but I was just in the neighborhood and I thought I'd say hello. Hi, I got you these...

SYLVIA

Flowers for me, why thank you Pinky,  
What, a lovely surprise. I love yellow  
roses.

PINKY

Don't I know, they just looked so beautiful  
that I thought of you, here's to you baby  
happy New Year.

SYLVIA

Why, thank you, Pinky, how sweet. They  
smell wonderful.

PINKY

(Hugs SYLVIA)

Almost as good as you.

SYLVIA

I was very touched by how you went to  
Buster's defense, we all were and thanks for  
helping the *shul*.

PINKY

Your father told you?

SYLVIA

You knew he would. You're quite a guy Mr.  
Slimowitz.

PINKY

You really think so? You almost sound as  
if you care.

SYLVIA

Maybe I do.

PINKY

Well, it's about time, don't you think...?  
I've been running after you for nine million  
years and I'm getting tired...

SYLVIA

Well, why don't you have a seat on the couch next to me and we'll talk about it, Dewars on the rocks?

PINKY

I never drink alone.

SYLVIA fixes two drinks and gives one to PINKY.

PINKY (cont'd)

*L' chaim* baby, to us!

THEY drink.

PINKY (cont'd)

And not to change the subject, now that freakin' pervert is gone, I wanted to have him eliminated. I hear our illustrious *minyán* is finally going to move, can you believe it?

SYLVIA

Why should they be different? Everybody else has left the Bronx, haven't they?

PINKY

They certainly did. They said they were going to... Who knows where they're going to. Those idiots said they couldn't pay me back, so they all gave me their stores. In turn, I gave them each twenty grand to start over, and who asked them for anything and I need their stores like a hole in the head. What the heck do I know about a men's clothing store, a butcher shop, shoe store, even a movie theater? Anyway, I'm looking for a top lawyer, or a C.P.A, somebody to run my new found empire. What do you say, baby?

SYLVIA

Sorry, but I'm not a C.P.A.

PINKY

Thank G-d I hate numbers.

SYLVIA

I was wondering, since my uncle Leyzer doesn't have to be a Rabbi anymore and you know how he was number one when he got his law degree, I mean who's smarter than my  
 (nestles up to him much to his surprise)  
 Uncle? Since he's familiar with all the businesses, I think he'd just be perfect to run them, don't you?

PINKY

Maybe I should have defended Buster ten years ago? We'd probably have fifteen kids by now.

BOTH laugh

SYLVIA

You always said my father has the most beautiful voice and you know lots of people in show biz, don't you Pinky and you know my father's wanted to sing more than anything...They've both been so frustrated all these years.

PINKY

Marry me you no-good psychologist and I'll do anything you ask, including getting your father a gig on the Borsht circuit, anything and for your Uncle Leyzer. Soon as we tie the knot, not only is he going to run all my businesses, I'm going to make him executor of my will. Who better to protect our kids interests than their own grandfather.

SYLVIA

(Swoons)  
 Oh, Pinky...

PINKY

(on one knee)  
 Will you marry me?

SYLVIA

Are you starting again? How many times have I told you, I can't marry you Pinky.

PINKY

Would you please tell me why?

SYLVIA

Because you're a...

PINKY

...I'm a what?

SYLVIA

...A shylock.

PINKY

A shylock, me, are you crazy?

SYLVIA

Everyone knows how long you've been lending money to the *minyans*. I'm sure you didn't do it for your health, and now, all-of-a-sudden you own all their stores, come on.

PINKY

I own four of the biggest and most successful bars in Manhattan and they all make a fortune. What the hell do I have to be a shylock for? I got more money than I can spend... I'm stinkin' rich and the reason why I've been lending, or should I say giving the guys all that bread these past couple of years is because I love all those old bastards... When my father was alive they were the best of friends. My father was a house painter and he had a hard time making a living. They lent him, or should I say gave him plenty.

(MORE)

PINKY (Cont'd)

Maybe it was because none of them ever had kids, who knows, but they always treated me like I was theirs, all of them. Murray used to

take me to Orchard Beach. Stanley, Yankee Stadium, Morris, the Paradise Theater, Abie the Zoo. When I used to shine their shoes, instead of fifteen cents, they'd each give me a

(nostalgic)

buck, imagine that, a buck... Pinky never forgets. They loved me and I loved them back... I guess I always will. That's why when we drive them to the airport and kiss them goodbye, as our wedding present, I'd like to tell them they don't owe us a red cent and that's including the twenty grand. It's okay with me, what do you say, that is as long as they don't ask us for any more bread from where ever they're going to. Hey, I'm not a sucker know what I mean?

SYLVIA

You really are something, aren't you.

PINKY

(Takes off ring and puts it on SYLVIA'S finger)  
Will you marry this something for the thousandth time?

SYLVIA

Is that a proposal?

PINKY

Yes, say yes...

SYLVIA

Well, what took you so long sucker? You think I'm getting any younger, dope?

They kiss.

SYLVIA (cont'd)

What should I tell my father?

PINKY

Tell him I expect the ceremony to be on the house.

They kiss.

CUT: Hallucinating again, LEYZER sees his FATHER, who comes to him: HE IS hesitant.

LEYZER

Papa, is that you, Papa, what happened, Papa, are you all right?

FATHER

All right, how can I be all right? What the hell did you do to my *shul*, what happened to the 885 families I gave you, with their children, more than 3000 people, and now you don't even have enough for a *minyan*? What did you do to my *shul*...?! Of course, I should have known; your like you're brother, a good for-nothing.

LEYZER

Let me explain Papa.

FATHER

Explain nothing...! What did you do to my *shul*? I promised the congregation that you would take care of the *shul* and you made me liar. You should have made those doctors liars. They're the ones that decided my kidneys were no good they were no good. They should only rot in hell, and they said they didn't know how much time I had left and just like that, poof I was gone. But I made you promise to take care of the *shul* didn't I?

LEYZER

Yes you did your honor.

FATHER

You know what you can do with *your honor*. You're not the only fool in this country that wasted his life trying to become a lawyer, but I saved you didn't I, because the only law that matters is the Torah, The

Torah and when I died, I gave you my *shul* and what did you do to it? You don't even have enough men for a *minyan*, not even enough for a *minyan*. What a *shanda*.

LEYZER

Papa, things have changed in 35 years. The Bronx is not the same. Instead of Jews in the neighborhood, it's Puerto Ricans and coloreds.

FATHER

Don't tell me about my neighborhood, I built that *shul* with my own two hands; the *Besmedresh HaGadol*. You promised me that you'd take care of it forever, you promised. Don't you remember, don't you know what a promise is?

LEYZER

Please, I'm almost 60 years old. How much time do I have left...? Poor Mama remember how she laughed when ever she

(Laughs)

called me her little attorney, ha, ha... I bet mama would say, the *shul* closing is a sign from heaven... At the cemetery, you were *dahvening* with all your friends while Shaiya and I stood there all alone. He cried and I cried even more... To you, all that mattered was G-d and your *shul*. Not even Mama, or Shaiya, or Mama's little attorney. When I graduated college, I had job offers from all over the country, the finest firms. Imagine that, your son could have been a high-class attorney and what did I become...? Even though Shaiya came back

(MORE)

LEYZER (Cont'd)

he never wanted to be a cantor.

FATHER

I don't care about that... The *shul* must survive.

92  
LEYZER

Animals survive, I'm tired of surviving, and I want to live. Enough, it doesn't work, it never worked, so forget it, I'm begging you it's over.

FATHER

Never mind. Didn't mama teach you, lest we forget, a promise is forever?

LEYZER

Please, don't you understand, it's not up to me anymore. There's nothing I can do it's over. There are no more Jews left, no more it's over, '*Fartik*,' finished!

FATHER

I promised the congregation that you would take care of the shul. Have I ever lied, are you a liar?

LEYZER

Papa, why don't you ask Shaiya if there are any Jews left?

FATHER

Don't tell me about Shaiya, I have nothing to say to him, nothing. As long as there is one Jew left, the *Besmedresh HaGadol* must go on, it must. Promise me Leyzer.

LEYZER

(sobbing, kisses father)

I'm sorry Papa, I'm sorry.

CUT: Sometime later: In Shul: MORRIS, GERSH, MURRAY, HYMIE and PINKY are drinking wine.

30

GERSH

I can't believe that bastard would do such a terrible thing.

MURRAY

And did you hear how he said he's not a priest?

HYMIE

If you ask me, I say we should still cut his balls off.

PINKY

Gentlemen, gentlemen, knowing that we know his having to live with himself will be punishment enough, after all, where is that sonofabitch going?

MORRIS

*He's a puhvoit, right?*

PINKY

He's a pervert that's happens to be a pedophile, which is worse.

GERSH

I always knew there was something wrong with him, because that cheap pervert never gave me a quarter, never and I say lets forget about that low-life and think of something good. Here's to Pinky, may we all live to dance at his son's Bar Mitzvah, Amen.

ALL drink

MURRAY

Personally, I think we should cut his

(Laughs)

*'shmeckle'* off. Save Sylvia a lot of is appointment.

ALL laugh.

HYMIE

How'd ya do it Pinky? What made Sylvia suddenly say yes after all these years?

PINKY

She liked how I defended Buster.

ABIE enters with a black eye.

MORRIS

ABIE, are you all right?

MURRAY

What happened to you?

ABIE

When I was closing up, two chorlehryas,  
wait'll you hear this.

CUT: WE SEE ABIE ABOUT TO CLOSE WHEN TWO BLACKS WITH GUNS BEAT AND ROB HIM: 31

CUT: WE ARE BACK: 32

GERSH

Did you call the cops?

ABIE

For what, they're going to do something...?  
I can't take it anymore. Thank G-d it's my  
last day, Pinky. Thank G-d and, thank you  
for the money.

PINKY

It's my pleasure and I'm sorry Abie. Can I  
do anything?

ABIE

Thank you Pinky, but we're all moving to  
Arizona on Monday...

GERSH

Arizona, I cock on Arizona. I told you where  
we're moving to, tell'em Hymie...

HYMIE

...With all the money we got, Switzerland.

PINKY

What the hell are you guys going to do in Switzerland, yodel?

GERSH

And ski.

ABIE

Just forget about what these meshugenehs say, they're only kidding about Switzerland, we're really moving to Wyoming and that's final. Horses, I just love when they run, gorgeous, just gorgeous.

PINKY

(starts to exit)

Well, I don't know what to say, but '*Gay gehzunte hait*' and always remember, if you ver need anything...

GERSH

Good you reminded me, maybe you got an extra quarter on you?

PINKY

(looks, gives quarters)

For you always here's five no make that

(Exits)

six, see you *mañana*.

GERSH

Six quarters, I don't believe it. This must be my lucky day.

MURRAY

He just made a buck-and-half just like that. What a racket. All these years, a quarter everyday, it's gotta add up, no?

ABIE

He must be loaded and he's holding out on us, he always holds out.

HYMIE

How much of my money have you saved, cheapskate?

ALL

Yeah, how much?!

GERSH

Do I know, I put them in jars. The small jars hold \$38.

MURRAY

\$38, \$38, I don't believe it.

ABIE

And I'm sure you got big jars, don't you?

GERSH

\$62.

MURRAY

\$62, I don't believe it, and how many bottles do you got?!

HYMIE

And we want the truth damnit, how many?!

GERSH

100's, maybe thousands, maybe more, all my closets are filled and who knows how old they are.

ABIE

No wonder his freakin' closet was always locked.

HYMIE

It's gotta be more than 35 years that you've been *schnorring* me for a quarter everyday and I want it back!

97  
GERSH

And don't think it was easy, listening to all  
(different voices)  
of you complain. "Again you're asking for  
quarters? What is it with you and quarters?  
Everyday it's quarters, quarters and more  
quarters." Tell me, if I asked you for a  
dollar everyday would you give me, not a  
(Laughs)  
chance, but a quarter a day... Would you give  
a friend a quarter? Would you? I have to do  
laundry. Please, what's a quarter?

HYMIE  
(Spits in disgust)

I'll give you what's a quarter you chiseler!  
He became a millionaire on my back. I don't  
believe it.

MURRAY

He's gotta have 6 or \$7,000 of my money in  
those freakin' jars and I want it back.  
Please, Hymie, I need it, I really do I'm  
moving.

ABIE

We're all moving and we need it, because  
we're broke...

HYMIE

...We only lent you the quarters Hymie, now  
you have to give them back. Mo's first, he's  
the oldest and I'm next 'cause it was my idea  
to ask, what ask, I demand my money back!

MORRIS picks up pen and paper and writes.

HYMIE (cont'd)  
(whispers to GERSH)

What's the *mishugehneh* doing?

GERSH

98  
(whispers back to HYMIE)

You're asking me, ask Morris.

MORRIS

I'm writing Pinky, I'm telling him any time he comes to Tel Aviv he should definitely stop by, we'd love to see him *Shalom*.

ABIE

Hey, wait a minute Gersh, you just whispered to Hymie and Hymie whispered back and Morris heard the both of you I don't believe it. *OOOEEAAA* can hear!

MORRIS

*Of course I heard him, what do you tink I can't hear?*

MURRAY

You sonofabitch, all these years you made us think you were deaf.

MORRIS

*VHAT?!*

ALL laugh.

GERSH

Listen, anybody got an extra quarter, I need it for the cigarette machine

HYMIE

You don't smoke.

GERSH

Well, maybe I'm thinking about starting and have we decided where we're going?

HYMIE

We have, but we're not telling UNLESS YOU GIVE US OUR MONEY BACK!

ALL

WE WANT OUR MONEY BACK!

ABIE

I still say Miami.

MURRAY

(sings)

"I like Miami in the Spring time."

HYMIE

And I say Texas.

MORRIS

*Again vit deh taxes, I told you I paid my  
taxes, G-ddamnit!*

GERSH

I'm going to Switzerland and that's  
final...

CUT: THE FOLLOWING DAY: On the way to Shul, LEYZER and  
SHAIYA will become so happy that THEY will almost dance.

34

SHAIYA

Right now I don't even remember what that  
sonofabitch looks like.

LEYZER

You can say that again.

SHAIYA

Right now I don't even remember what that  
sonofabitch looks like.

LEYZER

Thank you, Sir Echo... I still say we should  
make him rot in jail.

SHAIYA

For what, to have a trial, would it do Wendy  
any good? Would it do any of us any good.

LEYZER

You're right. I believe Socrates said  
vengeance is for fools, or was it Lewie the  
lip, or big Georgie porgy?

(loves his brother)

You should have been in show biz.

SHAIYA

I was.

LEYZER

You don't say? How wonderful. Ever get a  
standing ovation...?

SHAIYA shows two fingers.

LEYZER (cont'd)

Twelve standing ovations, well isn't that  
wonderful.

SHAIYA

And we mustn't forget you envy me.

LEYZER

More than you'll ever know.

SHAIYA

As usual, you probably got a good reason, but  
what's really important is no more Hymie, *ha  
cha-cha...*

Both sort of dance the *cha-cha*.

LEYZER

...No more Abie, *ha cha-cha...*

SHAIYA

...No more Murray, *ha cha-cha...*

LEYZER

...No more Gershie, *ha cha-cha...*

101 SHAIYA

...No more Morris *ha cha-cha*...

LEYZER

...Vhat...?

BOTH Laugh.

LEYZER (cont'd)

I'm laughing and crying at the same time. I've wanted this to happen since Papa died. Some how it's not easy saying goodbye.

SHAIYA

Don't you remember, it never is... You think saying goodbye to my darling wife was easy, or saying goodbye to Wendy when she went to the hospital was easy? Nothing's easy.

Unbeknownst, the shul became a part of our life, my life. Unfortunately, I think I'll miss it too, not as much as the opera house in Milan, but I'll miss it.

LEYZER

I wonder what Papa would say, *His shul The Besmedresh HaGadol* becoming a clinic for poor people?

SHAIYA

I think he might approve.

LEYZER

You really think so?

SHAIYA

For yours and Pete's sake, I sure hope, so brother, didn't it seem like forever?

LEYZER

At least.

SHAIYA

The *Besmedresh HaGadol* is finally gone, finished.

LEYZER

(cups hands and talks to heaven)

Did you hear that Papa, no more *shul*, there are no more Jews left, *Gornisht!*

SHAIYA

'*Schluf gehzunte hait*' and leave my brother alone Papa, it's over Leyz, our endangered species no longer need your services, so what are you going to do be when you grow up mister?

LEYZER

According to your new son in-law to be, a brilliant businessman who just acquired a movie theater, a butcher store, a shoe store and a men's store, not to mention all his successful bars and he owns real estate, don't ask. The man said someone very close to him, thought it would be wise to seek my employment. After all, if you can't trust the executor of your own will, no less your personal attorney, who can you trust? He wants me to make sure that all his enterprises

(MORE)

LEYZER (Cont'd)

are on the up-and-up. *Nu*, who would of thought that one-day Pinky would become your son-in-law?

SHAIYA

Me.

LEYZER

You, since when?

SHAIYA

The minute Pinky said to me, 'Pops,' I hope you don't mind but I just booked you for a month at the Concord and then, any where else I want to sing. The Borsht circuit is mine. Believe me, I knew right then and there that I'm getting one hell of a

son in-law. I'm really <sup>103</sup> impressed.

LEYZER

Seems he understands everything and I mean everything.

SHAIYA

Max is not bad either.

LEYZER

Personally, don't you prefer singing at the Concord?

SHAIYA

You have to ask?

LEYZER

Don't mention it... We're free Shaiya, for the first time in our life we are free.

SHAIYA

Shall we say our goodbyes Leyzer?

LEYZER

What do you think Caruso?

SHAIYA

How does Long Island sound?

LEYZER

And what about New Jersey?

SHAIYA

Well, why didn't you say so in the first place?

Facing the shul, THEY hug.

SHAIYA (cont'd)

At last Counselor...

LEYZER

Yes, finally Mr. Caruso...

CUT: THEY open door to shul and we see the SHAMOS hanging.

THE END <sup>104</sup>