

## Hillel's Secret Diary: Chapter 1 Wimpy Kid Edition

**Sunday, October 1st**

My name is Hillel, I'm 8, and my life in Samarkand is waaaaay weirder than anyone else's. Today I found out the Soviet government wants every kid in their schools-- where they teach there's no Hashem. So my family is on permanent lockdown. I can't even wave at the neighbor's cat. Unfairness level: 100/10.

**Monday, October 2nd The Special Knock Code**

Tatty taught me our secret code so the neighbors and nosy teachers don't learn there are hidden kids here. It goes:

"KNOCK-KNOCK...PAUSE...KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK...PAUSE...KNOCK-KNOCK."

Mess it up, and you get a household full of panicked adults diving behind sofas. Fun times.

**Tuesday, October 3rd Daniel's Sad Tea Party**

Mr. Daniel showed up for tea and told us he used to help the government trick Jewish parents. Now he feels terrible because kids refused treif food at school--tiny champions pressing their lips shut tight. He said, "Those children were heroes," and

his eyes filled up. Meanwhile I drank my tea, thought "Great. My life is boring compared to that," and got teary over missing recess. Hero envy: 9/10.

### **Wednesday, October 4th Teacher Hunt Day**

I spied teachers with clipboards walking block to block: registration time! They ask neighbors, "Any unregistered kids here?" I watched them ask Mrs. Goldberg. My heart pounded so hard I thought she could hear it. She shrugged "Nope," and I almost fainted from relief. Note to self: practice holding breath.

### **Thursday, October 5th Secret Cheder 1**

Living room = secret cheder. Tatty pulled the curtains, Mommy dimmed the lamp, and we learned alef-beis and Avos stories in whispers. Even the couch felt conspiratorial. Rivka scrawled letters while I practiced "I am a hiding ninja."  
Silver lining: I'm really good at hiding behind pillows now.

### **Friday, October 6th Erev Shabbos Logistics**

Getting ready for Shabbos is like planning a top-secret mission. We had to cook in stealth mode and hide the flour before 3 PM. Mommy quizzed us on the parsha, but all I could think about was riding my bike. Bike riding = forbidden mission. Sad.

## **Motzei Shabbos, October 7th Secret Melamed Arrives**

Reb Mendel came--long beard, whisper voice. He taught Alef-beis songs so quiet you'd think we're ninjas reading Torah. Whispering is cool: we're "Torah spies"! First silver lining of the week: I'm a spy.

## **Sunday, October 8th Squeaky Apple Disaster**

Mailman knocked normally. I panicked, dropped my apple, and it rolled under the couch. Hours later it's fuzzy. Apple ransom: 1 missing apple = 1 lifetime regret.

## **Monday, October 9th Friedman Family Fallout**

Heard the Friedmans got caught not in school, and the boys were shipped off to cousins far away. I LOVE my cousins, but NOT like that. I'd rather eat broccoli than live anywhere but here. Unfairness: 11/10.

## **Tuesday, October 10th Music Class Fiasco**

In music class they made us sing about Lenin and Stalin. I blurted, "I don't like your songs!" Teacher demanded I sing \*my\* song. I froze...then remembered Pinchas's Azerbaijani records. Sang a totally random tune--teacher loved it! Victory dance: 1/1.

### **Wednesday, October 11th Caught with Tzitzis**

Monday I showed up after Shabbos and everyone laughed: "Where were you?" I pretended I was the school ghost. Then nurse came for shots and I tried hiding my tzitzis under my shirt--fail! She winked, "You're a good boy, little rabbi." I felt famous but also terrified. Hide-and-seek with clothes: 10/10 stressful.

### **Thursday, October 12th Summons to the Principal**

Got called to the big office. Principal, assistant principal, teacher--all staring.

"Why absent Saturdays?" I said the doctor made me rest two days. They screamed "Saturday is not a rest day!" They threatened tatty. Tatty threatened THEM: "He's weak!" They threatened to take me away if I missed Shabbos again. Mega panic. Escape plan #42: bunk bed tunnel.

### **Friday, October 13th Operation: Go to Michael's**

Next Shabbos, I sneaked out at dawn and hid at Michael's. Tatty wasn't thrilled but said better than orphanage. I felt like a spy courier delivering secret dessert. Spy snack: ☐

### **Sunday, October 15th New School Adventure**

Tatty enrolled me in a school an hour's walk away, in a non-Jewish area, so they

won't notice Shabbos absences. I drew a map, packed emergency candy, and practiced a disguise--fake freckles. Actual disguise result: I looked like a polka-dot potato.

### **Monday, October 16th Melamed Whispers, I Listen**

Ms. Fidasya lets me stay home Saturdays for "health reasons." Win! But five miles of walking in winter, pitch-black streets...mega stress. I pretend I have night vision goggles. Silver lining: I'm getting ripped legs from all the walking.

### **Tuesday, October 17th Real Cheder Underground**

Reb Zushe's cheder moved to the dusty, manure-smelling cellar. We scratched ourselves climbing through bars, but the draft kept us cool. I actually like the spooky vibe. It's like Hogwarts, but with kosher snacks instead of Bertie Bott's Beans.

### **Wednesday, October 18th Bread Butter Boost**

Reb Zushe brings dabs of butter on bread--magic fuel for starving cheder kids. It tastes like miracle jam. I gobbled mine so fast I got a bellyache. Worth it.

### **Thursday, October 19th Reb Bentcha's Mega Stories**

Bentcha Maroz taught us about soldiers drowning to build a human bridge so others could conquer the city. He said those heroes are real tzaddikim. My brain: "Human bridge? Gross but heroic." Unfairness rank: 1/10 (I'd trade my leg cramps to be that brave).

### **Friday, October 20th Soccer Shame Lesson**

We were playing soccer in the yard when Bentcha caught us. He told us fancy elder Chassidim once did it, but then the ball hit their heads. Moral: if grown-ups don't do it, neither should we. Lesson over. Soccer ban: confirmed.

### **Motzei Shabbos, October 21st Deuteronomy Drama**

Bentcha caught a kid bragging about public school. He quizzed him on "Follow Hashem...fear Him...worship Him...cleave to Him." Then explained "fear Him = don't go communist school," etc., with cheers and table-knocks. Kid learned humility--or got too scared to brag again.

### **Sunday, October 22nd Forced to Think Big**

Mommy said other parents want secular degrees. But Tatty says "Better to be a simple scribe than a lost engineer." He's like "engineers build machines; tzaddikim build souls." My take: I'll stick with hiding ninja for now.

## Monday, October 23rd Bar Mitzvah Surprise

I'm turning 13 soon! No one thought about a Bar-Mitzvah party in Stalin's year of terror. Then eight brave relatives came over quietly. Aunt Rosa wanted winter coat, I wanted a real Torah Ohr siddur. I won. Reunion: priceless. Aunt Rosa: shocked I paid 300 rubles for a book.

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\*\*That's it for Chapter 1.\*\* My life is one big top-secret mission. Every day is a new disaster-adventure. But hey, I'm getting really good at hiding, whispering, and eating fuzzy apples. Tomorrow: another day, another code to remember, another unfairness to rate. Wish me luck!