

Monday, November 1st

Mission: Register for School Without Losing Shabbat

Okay, here's the deal: I'm nine, and starting today I'm officially a public school kid. Tatty bribed Ms. Semyanova with a "get-well" gift and got her to excuse me on Saturdays for my "sensitivity." I swear, every kid wants to skip a grade--me, I just want to skip one day a week.

Unfairness Rating: 10/10 (Worse than eating cold cholent for breakfast.)

Steps so far:

- 1) Show up Monday.
- 2) Hand over fake doctor's note.
- 3) Nod a lot.
- 4) Promise to rest on Saturdays.

I'm in. Let the weirdness begin.

-- Hillel

Thursday, November 4th

Code Name: Tzitzis Ninja

We have two undercover outfits:

- Red Rag (blech) for mornings
- Tzitzis for afternoons

At home: tie on red rag -> sneak out -> swap to tzitzis in bathroom -> sit in like nothing's wrong.

Disaster almost struck today: Nurse announced surprise "back" injection, I panicked--tzitzis would show! So I yanked my shirt up, tucked them under, and said "Shoot away!" The nurse (a secret friend!) whispered, "Good boy, little rabbi." Best. Speechless. Moment. Ever.

Unfairness Rating: 7/10 (Better than missing doughnuts at recess.)

-- Hillel

Friday, November 5th

Shabbat Eve Panic

Tatty and Mommy had a serious talk: "The net is tightening." I thought they meant fishing nets. I spent half an hour imagining giant nets scooping us into Siberia. Then I realized "net" meant school registration. Duh.

Plan for tomorrow:

- 1) Hide briefcase under stairs.
- 2) Eat leftover challah for lunch.
- 3) Stay in hiding spot: under the dining table.
- 4) Resist the urge to peek at the Goldberg kids flying kites outside.

Unfairness Rating: 12/10 (Even worse than no candy on Yom Tov.)

-- Hillel

Saturday, November 6th

Operation: Shabbat Fortress

SUCCESS. I barely saw the sun. I ate five pieces of challah (Mommy said that's my mitzvah). Yankel and I built a pillow barrier under the table so no one could see our feet. I tried to peek once--door made a creak, I froze, door stayed shut.

Silver Lining: I'm now the undisputed hide-and-seek champion of Samarkand.

Unfairness Rating: -3/10 (Shabbat is awesome, hiding not so awesome.)

-- Hillel

Monday, November 8th

Summons to Principal's Office

Guess what? They found out I wasn't at school Saturday. Next thing you know: "Report at once!" I nearly wet my tzitzis. In the office were three scary grown-ups glaring.

Me: "Doctor says I must rest."

Principal: "You must rest six days, not one!"

I choked on my words, stuttered "I--I--I..."

Tatty raced in, saved the day with more fake health talk.

Mission Status: Survived, but heart will never quit racing.

Unfairness Rating: 15/10 (Even losing the biggest piece of challah felt better.)

-- Hillel

Tuesday, November 9th

Operation: New School Escape

Tatty found a school in a non-Jewish neighborhood--one hour's walk away.

WIN. No more threats, no more principal. Only problem: walking in snow-dark mornings like a zombie.

I sketched wheels on my shoes. Mommy laughed. "Maybe next year."

Today I swapped schools, bowed to new teacher, and whispered the plan again. They bought it.

Unfairness Rating: 8/10 (Better commute than Siberia, but worse than sliding on ice.)

-- Hillel

Wednesday, November 10th

Mission Accomplished

Reported back to old school? Gone. New school? Never heard of me. No one cares if I skip Saturdays. I'm free!

Achievement Unlocked: Stay home on Shabbat and still be "in school."

Final Unfairness Rating: 2/10 (Mostly because I still can't ride my bike outside.)

Conclusion: Best mission ever. I'm officially the Shabbat Survivor.

-- Hillel