

EZEH YOFI

"Pilot"

Written by
Esti Heller

INT. LIEBERMAN KITCHEN

A bowl of challah dough sits on a plastic-wrapped countertop next to a package of flour. A pair of hands pick up the dough and place it on the plastic. On the right hand is a faint ring indentation.

A knife cuts into the dough, severing it into several thick pieces. One piece is selected and lifted from the others.

The chosen piece is rolled into a strand with a rolling pin. This is done three more times with other pieces.

The four strands are placed side by side. A hand pinches the tops of the strands together and begins to braid them.

Over, under, over, under. The first braid is complete. The second challah is prepared but the braid does not come out as well. The challah is balled up and begun again.

The doorbell rings and SHANA LIEBERMAN, a 41-year-old mother of three, looks up from her work. Stubborn, hot-headed, and highly conscious of what others think of her, Shana wears a long skirt and her hair is covered by a tichel.

INT. ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Shana tries wiping the sticky dough from her hands onto her apron to no avail. Exasperated, she uses her elbows to turn the knob on the front door.

After a few tries the door opens to reveal RINA BECK, 43 and ambitiously optimistic--when it comes to herself. Instead of a tichel, Rina's hair is covered by a sheitel--a long black wig that has been carefully combed into a perfectly straight hairstyle. She carries a covered tin.

Rina immediately lets herself into the house, but not before raising one hand to the mezuzah on the doorframe and then to her mouth.

SHANA

Rina! What--

Rina brushes past Shana and drops her extravagant purse on a side table, knocking two family photos down in the process.

Rina turns to Shana and smiles widely.

RINA

Shana! How are you?

(noticing Shana's hands)

Oh, did I interrupt you making challah?

(MORE)

RINA (CONT'D)
 I'm so sorry, dear, I just assumed
 you'd make it in advance like
 everyone else.

Rina starts to head towards the kitchen. Confused, Shana hurries after her.

SHANA
 Well, I would have, but--

RINA
 I brought my world famous
 rugelach. I know you've been
 busy with your...

Rina looks around the house, then back at Shana.

RINA
 Whatever it is you're doing
 nowadays. What is that again?

SHANA
 I--

Rina turns and heads into the kitchen.

INT. LIEBERMAN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Rina struts through the door and Shana follows her, glancing back at the front door which had been left open. Rina sets the tin down on the counter.

RINA
 Oh, never mind, dear, I'm sure it's
 just fascinating but I can't seem
 to come up with the time to listen.
 You know how hectic things can get
 in my house before Shabbat,
 especially with all the people I
 host.

Rina paces around the room, stopping at the fridge to look at an honor roll certificate awarded to Noa Lieberman. She straightens the certificate and turns to Shana.

RINA
 Have you hosted anyone in the past
 month, Shana?

Shana begins to fidget with her hands.

SHANA
 Uh, no. No, not in the last--

RINA

Oh, that's too bad, you really should! Although I suppose you'd have to find a more... capable home in order to fit your guests. I mean, really, Shana, are you sure this was the best house on the market? You know I could have helped you with your search. My husband--you know my husband, Zev--he's an excellent realtor.

Shana sighs--she knows where this is heading.

SHANA

This was all I could afford, Rina. You know Ari didn't leave me with much.

Rina perks up at this.

RINA

Oh, yes, Ari! Oh, I do miss him. Have you spoken to him recently?

SHANA

To my ex-husband? No, Rina, I can't say that I have.

RINA

Oh, that's too bad. Things didn't end well there, did they?

SHANA

No, Rina, my marriage did not end well.

RINA

And why is that?

SHANA

I'd rather not discuss it.

RINA

Oh, come on, dear, this isn't some A list celebrity's relationship, it's two people from a suburb. Two Jewish people, I might add. It's not every day something like this happens, I think we all deserve to know what caused it.

Shana crosses her arms and doesn't respond. Rina huffs in disappointment.

RINA

Well. Blame a woman for trying. I suppose we're not as close as I once thought.

Rina leans against the counter, sulking. Shana sighs.

SHANA

I... heard you had a nice dinner last week. Do you want to talk about that?

Rina shrugs.

SHANA (CONT'D)

Wasn't it with that new rabbi at Beth Shalom? What was his name again?

RINA

Rabbi Yosef.

SHANA

Right, him.

RINA

Yes, we had him over. He really is what everyone says, Shana. Such a mensch. If Tovah wasn't married I'd suggest you set them up.

SHANA

Well, Tovah seems very happy with Moshe, so--

Rina presses on, now engaged with the new topic.

RINA

And is she still planning on going to business school? Isn't that a bit ambitious of her? Besides, if she was going to become a Jewish stereotype wouldn't medical school be the better option?

SHANA

Rina, I don't think--

RINA

Ooh, and what about Dov? Has he started dating yet or is he still on the fence about those things?

(MORE)

RINA (CONT'D)

Really, Shana, you'll have to get a grip with that one, he's just too much trouble!

Rina walks over to the fridge and snatches a stick figure drawing from it, sending countless other magnets and papers flying from their places.

SHANA

Rina!

Rina holds out the drawing for Shana to see, shaking her head with disapproval.

RINA

Is this the kind of standard you want to set in this house?

SHANA

He drew that when he was six!

Rina dramatically drops the drawing and turns away. Shana grabs it before it can hit the floor, then, realizing her mistake, tries to shake it loose from her sticky hands. The paper holds on for a while before detaching and drifting onto the kitchen tiles.

Shana grabs a towel and wipes her hands clean, then begins to pick up the fallen papers. Rina moves on, unconcerned.

RINA

Oh! I just remembered, Rabbi Yosef loved my brisket. I'll have to make him some and bring it over to his house later. So sad that he lives all alone in that little house, isn't it? No close family, no home-cooked meals, can you imagine that?

Rina looks at Shana, who is sitting on the floor surrounded by the stray papers.

RINA

(realizing)

Oh, well I guess you'd know something about that now, wouldn't you, Shana?

Shana stands up and places the pile of papers she'd collected onto the kitchen counter.

SHANA

What's that supposed to mean?

RINA

Oh, you know. I just can't imagine you'd want to re-enter the dating pool now, at your age.

Rina turns to look at the challah on the counter.

RINA (CONT'D)

Oh, Shana, no! These braids are much too tight, you'll never get them to brown evenly. Here, let me fix that.

Rina begins to head over to the sink and wash her hands. Shana runs over to block her.

SHANA

You know, Rina, I can't believe I forgot to mention. I'm hosting a very important dinner tonight, so I need some time to myself to prepare for it. Would you mind stepping out so I can get started?

RINA

You're hosting a dinner? With who?

SHANA

Um... Rabbi... Yosef. Yeah. Rabbi Yosef.

Beat.

RINA

Rabbi Yosef is coming here? To this house?

SHANA

Um... yeah. Yes, at this house. Tonight. At 6:00.

RINA

Candle lighting is at 6:00.

SHANA

Did I say 6:00? I meant 7:00. 7 o'clock at the Lieberman house. So I'll need some time alone to get things ready.

Shana gestures towards the front door. When Rina doesn't move, Shana sighs and walks out of the kitchen. Flustered, Rina follows.

INT. ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Shana makes her way back to the front door. Rina hurries after her.

RINA

Well... that's great, Shana! Look at you, finally entertaining. I'm sure you'll find a way to clean all this...

She gestures widely around the house, which has approximately three things out of place.

RINA

... up. You'll let me know how it goes, won't you?

SHANA

Uh--yeah, sure.

RINA

Oh, you know what? I'm going to be at the shul a little early tomorrow. Maybe I'll speak with Rabbi Yosef and ask him about it.

SHANA

Oh, Rina, I wouldn't want you to bother--

RINA

Oh, it's no trouble! Besides, don't you want to hear his honest opinion? He certainly won't give it to you.

SHANA

What's that supposed to mean?

RINA

Oh, just... never mind, dear, I'm sure it will be great. Do you need anything for tonight? Meat, fish, challah? We've got extra!

SHANA

I think I'm capable of making my own meals, thank you, Rina.

Rina pouts sympathetically.

RINA

Oh, I know you are, dear. I just worry about you, dealing with so much on your own now. Maybe I should stay to help you set up--

SHANA

No, that's really not necessary.

RINA

Oh, you're right. Such a strong woman, aren't you? Well, I must get going now. We're hosting the Horowitz's and the Weinstains tonight. Fifteen children under one roof, can you believe it?

(laughing)

Oh, well, at least our house can handle it.

Shana forces a quick laugh and holds the door open for Rina, who takes one step toward it before retreating back inside.

RINA

Are you sure you don't need anything, Shana?

SHANA

I'm fine, Rina. Thank you.

RINA

Are you positive? I can make something for you in just an hour!

Rina starts to make her way back into the house but Shana blocks her path.

SHANA

I'm really okay, thanks.

Rina smiles.

RINA

Oh, so brave. Okay bye, dear!

Rina exits and Shana immediately shuts the door.

SHANA

Shit.

Shana takes out her phone and dials a number.

SHANA
 (on phone)
 Hello, Rabbi Yosef? Hi, this is
 Shana Lieberman. I'm sorry to
 bother you, but... are you doing
 anything tonight?

INT. HEBREW ACADEMY HALLWAY

The bell rings. Students flood into the hallways, heading home for the weekend.

NOA LIEBERMAN, 13 and wise beyond her years, or so she hopes, is among these students. She exits a classroom and immediately checks her phone. Displayed on it are various messages from a contact named IMA.

ON NOA'S PHONE SCREEN:

The texts read:

"Are you on your way home yet?"

"We're hosting Rabbi Yosef from Beth Shalom tonight."

"Probably gonna invite Tovah and Moshe too."

"And the Goldbergs."

"No fuck the Goldbergs they're going to the Feldmans."

"Don't tell Dov I said fuck."

Noa shakes her head in disbelief as she exits the school.

NOA
 What the what?

EXT. HEBREW ACADEMY

Noa stops at the top of the school's steps and searches through the crowd of teens heading home for the weekend. After a few seconds, Noa spots DOV LIEBERMAN, 18, the "rebel" of the family. Like Shana, Dov is stubborn and hotheaded, but where she is comfortable in her Judaism Dov is unsure.

Noa hurries over but slows down just a few steps before she reaches Dov. Acting as casually as possible, she walks up to his side.

NOA
 So Ima's inviting a bunch of people
 over tonight.

Dov jumps and looks over at her.

DOV
Jeez, where'd you come from?

NOA
You're gonna have to help me clean
the house.

Dov's phone vibrates. He reads the message he received and
shuts it off.

DOV
Uh, actually, I'm heading out with
some friends.

Noa looks between Dov and his phone.

NOA
What friends?

DOV
Just... some friends. You don't
know them. We don't have to know
all of each other's friends.

NOA
We do when one of us is screwing
the other over by ditching them to
hang out outside the house.

DOV
I'm allowed to miss one dinner,
aren't I?

NOA
No.

DOV
Well, tough luck. I'm not going.

Dov starts to walk away. Noa hurries after him.

NOA
Dov, I can't organize this whole
thing alone. I mean, maybe if I had
a few days notice but Ima just
sprung this on me! You have to
help.

Dov ignores her and continues walking. Noa narrows her eyes.