



Brave Like a Lion

A Story About Yom Hazikaron

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a
Lion





Avi lived in Israel, in a small apartment for all 6 years of his life. His mom, Sarah, had prepared some delicious couscous for dinner and tasty rugelach for dessert. The house smelled amazing.

"Plop," Sarah put some couscous on Avi's plate. "Tomorrow is Yom Hazikaron, Avi, the day we remember the soldiers that have died in the army fighting for our country. The siren will ring for only two minutes at 11 o'clock in the morning and everyone in the country will stand and be silent, it's not scary."





Avi remembered last year but knew that this year he would have to stand during the siren instead of when he ran to the bomb shelter because he was terrified. He had a bad feeling in his stomach like he was sick, even though he was eating some rugelach. His mind was racing like a car, he will have to go to the army when he is 18 and everything about the army was scary.

"If you are brave enough you get to go to the Yom Ha'atzmaut, the celebration of the independence of Israel, party tomorrow night and I talked to your friend Shahar and his dad and he said they would both be there and there will be dancing and lots of great food.

"I'll try," Avi said frightfully as he finished his rugelach, "I'm still scared though."



Avi tossed and turned all night thinking about the coming day. For him the siren meant a missile was coming and he had thirty seconds to run to the bomb shelter. What if there was a sneak missile attack and everyone is just standing out in the open? I want to go to the party tomorrow, he thought.



Through the quiet night Avi had a dream. There was a lion in his house. "Avi," said the lion, "Let me tell you what I've seen. I've seen Israeli boys and girls grow up. I've seen them when they leave for the army. I've seen their parents worried and proud. I've seen them come home. If you are brave, you will honor those whom I didn't see come home."

Avi said in his dream, "I want to honor those people, but then I am scared of the siren and scared of the army!"

"Be brave Avi, like a lion!"





"Honk," a car raced across the street. Avi woke up and looked outside, the sun shined a golden yellow and brushed his window. The smell of some freshly made shakshuka crawled under his door. He looked at the time, 7:00am, he remembered the siren would ring at 11:00am.

"Boker tov, good morning, Avi!" Sarah said as she put some shakshuka in his bowl.

"I don't want to do it, Mom!" Avi whined.

"Avi Chay Pinhas Shimshon, it's going to be alright!" His mom said in a harsh voice. Avi wasn't hungry, he was nervous. He ate a little and then got into his clothes and brushed his teeth. He kept thinking, what do I do? What should I do? He didn't know.



It was now 10:55 and Avi began to cry a river of tears. He was thinking about everything, his dream, the party, and those who have lost their lives. His mom rushed to him and hugged him telling him it would be alright. Avi kept crying as they went outside.

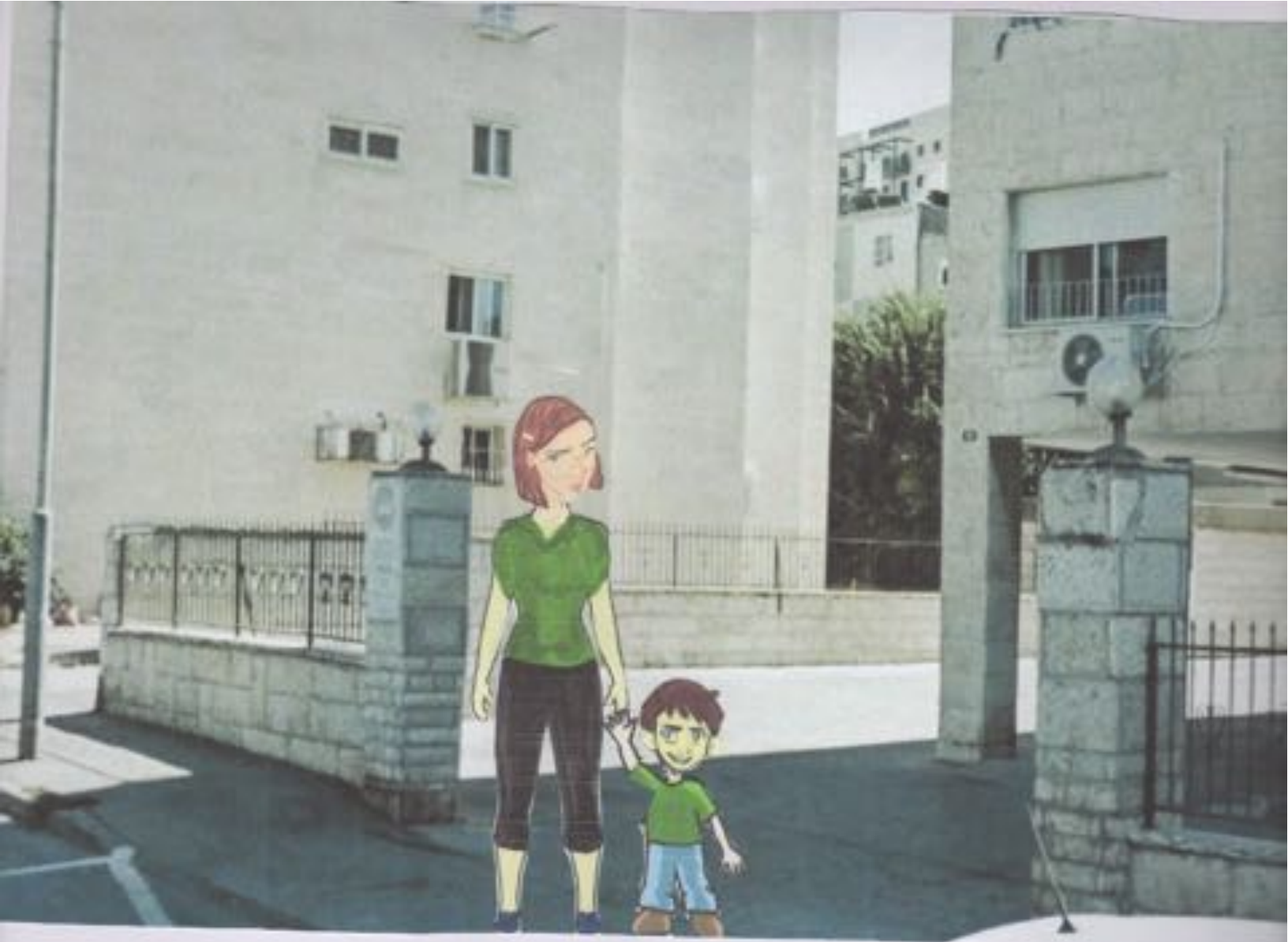


"Eeeeerrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr" Then it happened the siren rang and everyone in Israel stopped what they were doing and stood in silence. The whole country was hushed, there were no buses moving, no one running around, no one playing and no one was rushing to the bomb shelter.





Avi's heart was beating fast and held his mom's hand. He was thinking so much about how the people in the army have risked their lives to defend the country. He was thinking about that it shouldn't be scary to you honor those people.

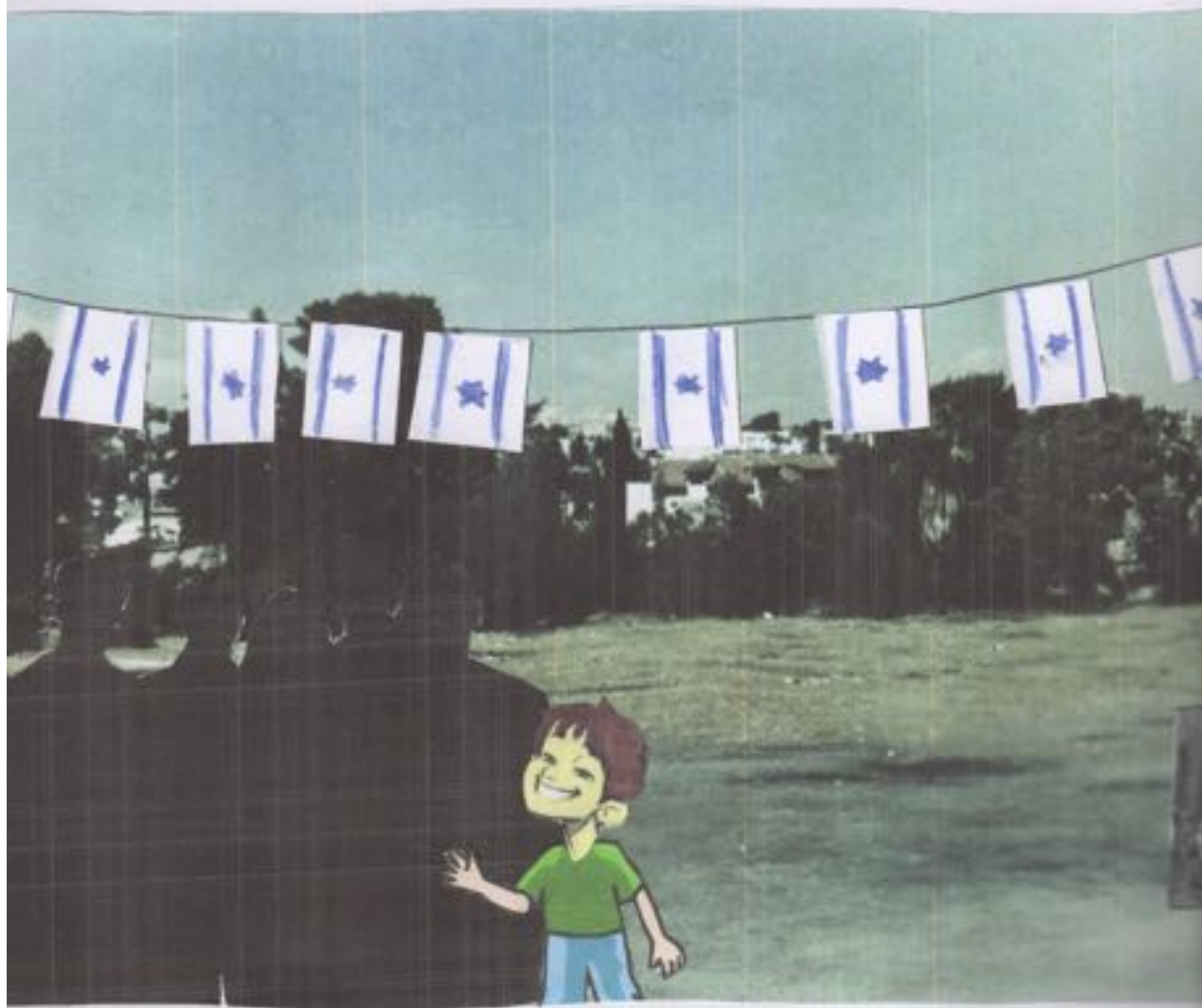


After the siren rang Avi wiped away his tears and looked at his mom. "I did it," he said. He ran back inside the apartment building with a glowing face just like the sun. He faced his fear and it felt great.

"See, it wasn't that bad, Avi," Sarah said.



Avi could not wait to go to the party. He helped his mom make some falafel and hummus. "Will you hand me the chickpeas?" Sarah said to her child. He passed the can of chickpeas and she put them in a food processor. "Vrrrrrr," the hummus was all done after it was blended with other ingredients.



It was time for the party and Avi ran out to the street. Everyone from the apartment was there and some people who lived near by were there and across the country were parties. There was music blasting and people dancing to Shavtem Mayim.

Avi looked around some more and saw Shahar. His face lit up some more as he ran to his friend. All evening they played around and laughed. When it was time to go Avi reflected on the day, I am proud to be apart of this country and I want to honor it. Avi thought about his dream last night and what the lion said. He has seen the country, he has seen the people, he has seen the siren and he has honored the soldiers who didn't come home.



Author's Note:

Yom Hazikaron is the day of remembrance for the Israeli soldiers in the Israeli Defence Force. Mostly every kid who grows up in Israel know they will go to the army when they turn 18. At some point before then they realize that they want to serve their country because it is where they live. Not everyone in the army does combat. There are teachers, medical personals and others. The Israeli army is a big part of the culture in Israel.

I was interested in this topic because I am Jewish and went to a Jewish school with many Israeli teachers who were in the army. When I went to that school we would always have a Yom Hazikaron ceremony. It was always really meaningful and there would be poems, readings and videos. I was even part of a dance with a somber music one year. I wanted to write a book about this holiday because I feel there aren't many if any books about this day. Yom Hazikaron is a special day to Israel and should be recognized more often.

This holiday is sad and it is hard to put in a children's book but with the right filter I was able to make it into a children's book. Missiles are common in Israel unfortunately and in America they are very uncommon. Kids in America should learn what Israeli children see and go through. When Israeli children come to America some ask their parents where the bomb shelters are, for them a normal thing. It was hard to make this book appropriate for kids but with the right amount of information the book is great for kids.

Words:

Couscous: Small whole grain ball like noodles.

Rugelach: (Roo-g-e-la-ah) Small cookie with dough and a filling, usually chocolate, rolled up.

Yom Hazikaron: (Yo-m Ha- zeeka-row-n) Day of remembrance for the soldiers that have died in the Israeli army.

Yom Ha'atzmaut: (Yo-m Ha-at-z-ma-oot) Israeli Independence Day, starts the night of Yom Hazikaron.

Shakshuka: Eggs, tomato and vegetable dish usually served at breakfast.

Boker tov: Good morning in Hebrew written like בוקר טוב.

Falafel: Mashed chickpeas and various spices typically deep fried.

Hummus: Mashed chickpeas made into a dip.

Shavtem Mayim: Israeli dance about water.