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APPLE

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**Time/setting:**

Contemporary Australia and sites of ancient Bible stuff (Canaan, Eden, that sort of thing).

The set can be a postmodern space that indicates a synagogue, classroom, and Biblical times.

**Characters:**

All of the characters in this play can be played by 2 performers. I encourage the producer to collaborate with artists from diverse backgrounds and gender identities in the realisation and presentation of this work.

- Shoshana: a twelve-year-old Bat Mitzvah girl with a good head on her shoulders and a propensity for getting in trouble.
- Miriam: a woman in her 20s, working out her place in the world.
- Agatha: a motivational coach in her 30s who has got it sorted out.
- Rabbi Adam: an Orthodox Rabbi
- Various Biblical matriarchs and ancient figures or forces: Leah, Rachel, Rebecca, Wind, Eve, Snake.

**Suggested doubling:**

Shoshana / Agatha / Leah / Rabbi Adam (at times) / Wind / Eve

Miri / Rachel / Rebecca / Rabbi Adam (at times) / Snake

**Guide to symbols:**

The presence of a “...” or just “ ” as a character’s entire line usually means this line should be that character’s chance to respond to something just stated/asked, but they don’t know what to say.

## Prologue

*An empty stage, maybe a disco ball, maybe a sudden confetti drop. An MC backstage introduces the act with breathy enthusiasm.*

SHOSH: (as MC) Ladies! Fellas! Chaverim'ot outside the binary!

Boys! Girls! Yeladim, yeladot, yeladim'ot!

Please welcome to the bimah...a sneak peak of her upcoming Bat Mitzvah...the soon-to-be woman who's already running the show!

Shoshana!!!!!!!

*Shoshana bursts out. She's in good-girl shule clothes but has a swagger.*

*The bass line of Gangsta's Paradise starts playing. She psychs herself up. Then launches into verse.*

SHOSH: As I thumb through the pages of the book of Genesis  
Use my critical eye – Rabbi—  
'n ask where I fit?

I've been reading and kneading for ages  
To see if there's a version of me  
In these pages

Every morning I get up and I pray  
My brother next door –  
What does he say?

*She lo asani nisah –*  
Is he trippin'?  
He's thanking the big guy that – sigh -  
He's not a woman!

It's hard to admit, but I'll say, when I pray  
I'm not praying to a guy  
Not some old dude in the sky  
Who will meet me when I die –

*She starts to lose the Coolio and move into her own direction.*

But a woman, with curly hair – down to there –  
Jewels dotted everywhere –  
She's got a piercing "try me" stare

Blood red lip – moves her hips –  
Tells me "baby, take a sip,"  
It's a potion, and it reeks,  
It will take me on a trip –

I take it, drink and sigh,  
Now it's time for me to try,

Reach an old world in the sky,  
Will you join me? You and I?

*She hears clapping and basks in it.*

*Then she realises the clapping is actually someone trying to wake her up. It's Miriam, 24 years old, modestly dressed, sitting next to her, trying to rouse her without getting the attention of all the ladies in the Ladies Section of an Orthodox synagogue.*

MIRI: Shoshana. Wake up.

SHOSH: Oh no. Did I fall asleep again?

MIRI: You must've during the Torah reading.

SHOSH: I dreamt you made me rap in Art Torah.  
My own version of Gangsta's Paradise.

MIRI: Gangsta's Paradise?

SHOSH: You know – the most famous rap song of all time?

MIRI: I don't know what to tell you.  
Maybe contemporary music isn't my thing.

SHOSH: It's ancient!

MIRI: I'll look it up.

SHOSH: My Bubbe is going to kill me for falling asleep in Shule again.

MIRI: Don't worry about your Bubbe. Worry about yourself.

SHOSH: I am worried about myself!  
My Bubbe has spies in the ladies section!  
They tell her when I fall asleep in Shule, and then she tells me off  
when I visit her nursing home.

MIRI: Then maybe you should stop falling asleep.

SHOSH: I would if I could, Miriam!

MIRI: Is it that you're bored?

SHOSH: I mean, yeah, but isn't everyone?

MIRI: The other people here enjoy Shule. They're not bored.

SHOSH: You mean the ones who gossip consistently between 9.30 and  
midday every Saturday, until they get shushed by the Rabbi  
downstairs?

MIRI: That's only some of the women. The rest of us come to the  
synagogue to pray. And it means something to us. It's the one patch

of sunlight in a long, exhausting week of fitting into white-bread Australia.  
Maybe by the end of your bat mitzvah journey, you'll get it. Until then, go to sleep earlier on Friday nights.

SHOSH: Like you can talk. You look tired.

MIRI: Yeah, well, I'm not sleeping so well lately.  
I've suddenly found myself head of Jewish learning at Sydney's fourth largest shule. I used to be just a substitute teacher at the local primary school. It's a very big shock to the system.

SHOSH: Imposter syndrome?

MIRI: Perhaps.

SHOSH: How did you get this job? You're still pretty young.  
Does your Dad know the Rabbi or something?

*Miri's face basically says, "yes, they are golf buddies" but she doesn't want to say it out loud.*

MIRI: I'm qualified for the role, Shoshana. I'm a trained teacher.  
I've studied Torah my whole life. Change is difficult; that's all.

I'm adjusting.

SHOSH: You should go to a motivational coach or something.  
Cut sick with new confidence.

My cousin saw one, and now she's obsessed with herself.  
She snaps back at my Uncle when he comments on her weight.

MIRI: She sounds like a real "girl boss."

SHOSH: Cringe.

MIRI: What does a motivational coach do?

SHOSH: Slice up your imposter syndrome and make you appreciate yourself.

My cousin's coach is called Agatha Bystritzsky. Movie star name.  
She found a flyer on her Shule notice board, and the rest was history.

MIRI: Is she Jewish?

SHOSH: Reform Jewish.  
She's probably even read from the Torah while on her period.  
Are you a bit scandalised?

MIRI: How sheltered do you think I am?

SHOSH: I don't know. I'm still working you out.

MIRI: I'm a teacher. You don't need to work me out.

SHOSH: That's what my Bubbe keeps telling me.

*They notice that Shule is wrapping up. Shosh is delighted.*

MIRI: You can go if you want. Get a head start on the kiddush snacks.  
I'll put your Sefer Torah away for you.

*Shosh bounces out of the synagogue, flinging her heavy Torah book into Miri's hands.*

*Miri gets up out of her seat and adjusts the bookmark string in the book to next week's reading. As she does, a leaflet flutters out of the book. She looks at it with curiosity.*

MIRI: Find your inner matriarch, with Agatha Bystritsky.  
Beat away imposter syndrome.  
Release yourself from red tent thinking.

*She considers this flyer. It seems like a sign.*