

THAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED

Written by

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For Leo Roos

INT. OPEN KITCHEN - MORNING

We open on CHARLIE (male, 16) rushing to get ready for school. His house is full of futuristic digital screens and robots.

CHARLIE

Toro, what's the weather?

A ROBOT ASSISTANT, TORO, comes over to Charlie.

TORO

It is 62 degrees Fahrenheit outside.

CHARLIE

Will I be warm enough in this?

TORO

Hold on... scanning...

Toro scans Charlie's outfit. A long sleeve shirt and shorts.

TORO (CONT'D)

You'll be fine, Charlie. If you want to be safe, I'd put on a pair of pants. Your shorts are seven inches. Something more like 15 inches would certainly keep you warm today.

CHARLIE

Okay thanks Toro, power off.

Toro goes back to the corner and shuts off.

INT. FUTURISTIC CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie sits in the passenger seat, swiping on the fancy digital dashboard. No one is in the driver's seat; the car is self-driven.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - LATER

Charlie walks through the hallways timidly. He's wearing a necklace with a Jewish star on it. He gets dirty looks from a lot of people.

HEAVY GIRL

It's February. Why are you wearing shorts, you dumb kike?

Charlie looks at her up and down, sighs, and keeps walking.

CHARLIE
(muttering to himself)
Oh sha, you zaftig shiksa.

He passes a group of BIG GUYS. They corner him.

BIG GUY #1
Nice necklace, Chuck!

CHARLIE
Thanks! Same to you!

Big guy #1 is wearing a cross necklace.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
It's good to be proud of your
religion and having it shape your
identity. Wouldn't you agree?

BIG GUY #2
Yeah, good one. Come here.

They grab Charlie's necklace, made of silver, and hold up a lighter to it. Charlie resists, and eventually breaks free.

CHARLIE
It's silver. It's not flammable,
you schmucks.

BIG GUY #3
Keep talking in your made up
language!

Charlie walks away. He's got scratches on his neck from that encounter. He walks up to a group of two girls, MAYA and BRIT, both his age.

MAYA
Charlie, what the fuck?

BRIT
Hide your necklace for now. Take my
scarf.

Brit gives Charlie his scarf, but he hesitates for a moment.

MAYA
You're getting hurt, Charlie.

Charlie finally wraps the scarf around his neck, hiding his necklace.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

At first, dead quiet. Charlie sits with Maya and Brit, eating lunch. They're not talking. Finally, background noise fades in and we hear chatter throughout the cafeteria.

Charlie eats oatmeal and yogurt out of a rusty, old Mason jar. The big guys walk past Charlie. Big guy #1 tries to hit the jar off the table. Charlie holds on tight and keeps it in place.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. BASEMENT - CELL - DAY - BLACK AND WHITE

Young CHARLES (6) is in a cell with dozens of other people of all ages. They each have one Mason jar full of food. Through the window, we see an explosion. The basement shakes. All their Mason jar caps are blown off. They all rush to eat their food.

INT. DEN - DAY

Charlie's dad, DAVE, sits on a chair next to young Charlie (11-years-old).

DAVE

There were wars going on around them. There'd be explosions that would blow the caps of their jars off. So, they'd have to rush to eat their food, so it wouldn't go bad. "I never ate so well," your great grandpa Charles told me.

Dave hands young Charlie the rusty Mason jar. Charlie smiles.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

Back to present. Charlie continues to hold the Mason jar tightly. Big guy #1 fails in pushing it off the table. Charlie stares him down as he walks away.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Charlie sits in a classroom with roughly 30 other students. They are being lectured by a robot. The robot sounds like a person, constantly shifting its tone, is formally dressed, and writes on the chalkboard neatly.

On the board, "LEADERSHIP 101" is written.

ROBOT PROFESSOR

Leaders that pushed their agenda against all resistance. Getting rid of checks and balances. Whatever it takes. You look back a couple decades earlier: Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong. These tactical, influential leaders. The key to successful leadership is gaining a loyal following who will support your vision at all costs.

Everyone takes notes. Charlie doesn't.

INT. OPEN KITCHEN - MORNING

New morning. Charlie's eating breakfast.

CHARLIE

Toro, play the news please.

TORO

Coming right up, Charlie.

Toro's face becomes the news.

NEWS ANCHOR

And today is a day we will always keep observing. International Holocaust Memorial Day. January 27th. We remember the six million Jews and many others murdered during World War II under the terror of Adolf Hitler.

Charlie becomes a bit emotional.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - LATER

Charlie walks to class, still watching the news on his small digital screen.

NEWS ANCHOR

Events are taking place across the world to mark International Holocaust Memorial Day. Held each year on the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp. We also remember those who were murdered because of their sexual and gender identity.

Charlie walks into class.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is seated as the robot professor lectures the class.

ROBOT PROFESSOR

It's a very special holiday today.
I think you guys are gonna be excited.

Charlie looks confused. The robot professor walks outside of the classroom. Everyone is antsy.

Finally, the robot professor walks back in with 30 small chocolate cakes.

ROBOT PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Happy... NATIONAL CHOCOLATE CAKE
DAY!!!

The class cheers. Charlie looks lost. He types into his phone: "When is National Chocolate Cake Day?" The result is: "Today, January 27th."

CHARLIE

(to himself)
How is that even a fucking holiday?

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. BASEMENT - CELL - NIGHT - BLACK AND WHITE

Young Charles sits in a cell with his parents. They hear loud music and talking above them.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - BLACK AND WHITE

Right above them, German soldiers enjoy chocolate pastries.

INT. BASEMENT - CELL - NIGHT - BLACK AND WHITE

Back to Charles and his parents. They look starving.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The whole class is talking and enjoying their chocolate cakes. Charlie sits alone, not eating, staring into space.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charlie storms into his house. His dad is sitting on a couch.

CHARLIE

I can't do it anymore.

DAVE

What happened?

CHARLIE

It's International Holocaust Memorial day. And they celebrated National Chocolate Cake day in school.

DAVE

Well, they're certainly not observing Holocaust Memorial day.

CHARLIE

Yes! And that's the fucking problem!

DAVE

I'm sorry Char. I don't know what you want me to do.

CHARLIE

Change my school.

DAVE

It's this or private school. Which I'm not paying for.

CHARLIE

Another public school.

DAVE

We live here. You go to school where you go. Plus, they're all probably like this around here.

CHARLIE

Dad, I can't go to school with these people.

DAVE

I know, Char. I'm sorry. Two more years and you're done. But at least you have brilliant robots teaching you. When I was in school, I had Mr. Hartnett who smelled and rubbed his nipples all class.

CHARLIE

It's 2045, everyone has robot teachers. I'm the only Jew in my school. Probably the only Jew in the whole damn state. I want to get the fuck out of here.

DAVE

I can't, Char. My work is here. I love you, and I'm proud of you for speaking up for yourself. But it's just gonna have to be like this for now. I'm sorry.

Charlie shakes his head, defeated.

EXT. TRACK - DAY

Charlie's at track practice. The track is like a backwards moving treadmill, so you have to run fast to move forward -- very futuristic. Charlie's running pretty slow. All 3 big guys pass him.

BIG GUY #2

Sorry, Charlie. I saw on Instagram today that it's "International Holocaust Day."

He makes sure to put extra air quotes around that one.

BIG GUY #2 (CONT'D)

And who was it you did a presentation on last year? Your great, great, great grandpa? He was a "survivor?"

Charlie looks at him blankly.

BIG GUY #2 (CONT'D)

What? Was it another great?

BIG GUY #3

And he wasn't one of the millions of people killed in the "gas chamber?" Cause that's plausible and that actually happened. The "Holocaust."

CHARLIE

Yes, that actually happened.

Charlie starts sprinting past the big guys, putting them to shame.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Back to the classroom. The robot is lecturing.

ROBOT PROFESSOR

So, if you start snoring to the point where it disrupts your sleep, or if you have recurring strep throat infections, those are two signs that you need to get your tonsils removed.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. HECTIC STREETS - DAY - BLACK AND WHITE

Charles is getting carried by his MOTHER through the chaos of Amsterdam. There are sirens and people running in all different directions. Charles and his mother arrive at a building. A GUARD is at the front.

GUARD

(DUTCH)

Sorry ma'am, you can't go in there.

CHARLES' MOTHER

(DUTCH)

But my son needs to get his tonsils out! We have an appointment!

GUARD

(DUTCH)

I'm sorry, the doctor isn't in the office due to the invasion.

Charles' mother angrily walks away. Charles is crying.

CHARLES' MOTHER
(DUTCH)
It's okay Charles. It's okay baby.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charlie's dad is telling young Charlie a story.

DAVE
And that was the day Germany
invaded Holland. May 5th, 1940. He
lived his entire life with his
tonsils. He never got them removed.

Charlie and his dad both laugh.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Back to the present, Charlie's still in class.

ROBOT PROFESSOR
Okay, now time for History class.

The robot goes through a weird transformation, changing color, shape, and its voice.

ROBOT PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
So, let's pick up where we left off
last class. In 1651, Thomas Hobbes
wrote *Leviathan*, one of the
greatest American works. It
criticizes the human race for
consistently being inherently
wicked and evil. And this has held
up to this day. Humans continue to
steal, spoil... obstruct our daily
peace. Our livelihoods.

Charlie raises his hand.

ROBOT PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
Yes. Charlie.

CHARLIE
What about the viewpoint, more so
the fact, that the human race is a
synergetic one.
(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

A codependent, yet healthy,
compassionate group of individuals.

ROBOT PROFESSOR

Unfortunately that's incorrect
Charlie.

Students laugh in the background.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. BASEMENT - CELL - NIGHT - BLACK AND WHITE

Charles and his parents are in the cell, tired. We still hear
the robot professor's answer to Charlie.

ROBOT PROFESSOR

(V.O. (voiceover))

Believing that humans are so
exceptional is what we call a false
sense of optimism.

A soldier comes up to the cell. A beat. We don't know if he's
going to kill or save them.

ROBOT PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

We must learn to trust no one and
be ready for anything that these...
animals can throw at us, at any
point in our lives.

The soldier opens the door and gives Charles and his parents
a friendly nod. They hesitate, then walk out.

ROBOT PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

Cause that's what humans are at the
end of the day. Animals.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT - BLACK AND WHITE

Charles and his parents run through the streets, free.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Story time again for Charlie and his dad.

CHARLIE

I don't understand why they would
just let them be free.

DAVE
Soldiers were humans too. Capable
of sympathy. Emotion. Change.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Back to the present. The robot keeps giving a lecture, but its words are blocked out. We focus on Charlie. He packs up his things and walks out of class. Everyone watches. He doesn't care.

He walks through the hallway and takes off his scarf. He lets his Jewish necklace hang free. He's finally come to peace with his school.

THE END.