

“Instructions for Goys 101?”

“Correct. You’re off to a good start. Hang in there. You’ll like this. It’s some stuff from Lenny Bruce.”

“Who’s that?”

“*Gottenyu!* Did they build a wall around West Germany too?”

“I can see we’re into high ethnochauvinism here. And did *you* ever hear of Wolf Biermann?” she demanded.

“Yes! I can even sing one of his songs. Nya nya nya nya nya.”

“I give up. You’re a superior being. Who’s Lenny Bruce?”

“It doesn’t matter for the moment. A Jewish comedian. OK. The key section in your present—since it’s a guide for goys—is the exposition and development of the concept of goy.”

“I know the basics: goys are non-Jews.”

“Right. Them. But if you’re going to hang out with Jews, you have to be a little less objective and definitional about it. From our point of view, goys are where the pogroms come from. Goys are the stupid, insensitive, and violent folks out there. But it’s subtle. There are all kinds and levels of pogroms. Lime Jell-O, for instance.”

“Lime Jell-O is a pogrom?”

“You’ll see. You’re a quick study. You have a Jewish soul, I can tell. So here, I’ll read you from page 49.”

It was an intense lesson, being tutored and grilled by a trio from Hell—Lennie

Bruce, Arthur Naiman, and Alan Krieger all at once. Ursula hacked her way through a jungle of Talmudic distinctions: the Jews Count Basie, Eugene O’Neill, and Beethoven versus the goys Eddie Cantor, Milton Berle, and Henry Kissinger.

“OK,” she offered, “the pattern is becoming clear. Passionate blacks are Jewish soul brothers, and silliness or violence is goyish.”

“Blacks, maybe,” answered the teacher. “But you’re on to something. Now Goyish 102. It gets more refined.”

More refined was hardly the descriptor. It takes a refined soul to intuit the grave distinction between cherry Kool-Aid (goyish) and black-cherry soda (Jewish).

And then the intergoyish distinctions: lime soda goyish but lime Jell-O *very* goyish. And on into dangerous goyish, like trailer parks and the U.S. Marine Corps. The student was zinging along now, into the high realms of theory.

“Lime Jell-O. Thin, and a cool color. Lime soda even more,” she recited. “And trailer parks—stereotypical scenes of violence—though I have to say they are the closest thing to sixteenth-century East European shtetls I know.”

“True. We might need a second edition annotated by Dr. Seraphicus. But you’re doing quite well, and you’re ready for graduate-level Goyish 201.”

Where Ursula encountered the mysterious distinctions between balls (goyish) and tits (Jewish), and the odd (to the unthinking) fact that all Italians are Jewish.

“You getting it?”

“I think I’m getting it.”

“Good. Then on to your Ph.G. exam. You identify Jewish or goyish and put them

in the right piles. Sort of like the ramp at Auschwitz.”

“Alan, stop being cruel. Or I won’t play.”

“Sorry. Marlon Brando?”

“Jewish as Stanley Kowalski, even though violent, and goyish as Mark Antony, even though articulate.”

“Bingo. Student of the Year award. You will therefore understand Naiman’s Aggadic commentaries: *Talk is Jewish. Silence is goyish. Thin is goyish. Fat is Jewish. Blue is Jewish. Green is goyish. Atheism is Jewish. Got it?*”

Ursula nodded slowly as angry light began to glow behind the glitter. Alan sang out Naiman’s text—with motions: “*Computers are Jewish. Rifles are goyish. California is goyish. France is Jewish. The ’30s were Jewish. The ’40s and ’50s were goyish. The ’60s were Jewish; the ’70s goyish—*”

“Alan ...”

“*Teddy Kennedy is Jewish. Nancy Reagan is the most goyisha person who has ever lived. Marie Osmond is second. Tricia Nixon is third. Richard Nixon, however, is too much of an open maniac to be a goy.*”

“Alan, stop.”

“What about Clinton? George Stephanopolous?”

“Alan, I mean it. You can’t have all the good people for yourself.”

“Jesus—Jewish, of course.”

“This is all your *verdammte* Chosen People bit come home to roost. It’s what gets you in trouble all the time.”

“We *are* the Chosen People.”

“Alan, what does that mean?”

“Jewish *sechel, yiddishe kopf*. We’re passionate and smart.”

“So are the Berrigans. So is Susan Sarandon.”

“They’re Jewish.”

“They’re not. You’re so arrogant and stubborn!”

“And you’re antisemitic.”

“What? *What?*”

“What did your father do during the war?”

“He practiced psychiatry.”

“Where?”

“In Frankfurt and Bonn.”

“And who was chancellor?”

“What has that got to do with anything?”

“It has everything to do with anything. All the responsible Germans left. All the good Germans stayed behind.”

“That’s stupid.”

“Where was your father killed?”

“Leave my father out of this, Alan! Get your oedipal rocks off somewhere else!”

“A stoning of fathers, huh? Like they did to mine?”

“Who’s ‘they’? What do you mean? When?”

“Nineteen sixty-eight.”

“What happened?”

“So-called community control. The shvartza school board wanted all the Jews out of the schools those Jews had built so carefully, so brilliantly, over thirty years. Poisoning their children with their Jewishness, you know. They just fired a whole bunch of teachers—bam. No notice. Pack up and move out. My father was in the Teachers’ Union, leading a strike.”

“And?”

“And he was stoned.”

“What do you mean?”

“What do you think I mean, LSD? Someone threw a rock at his head.”

“And?”

“And he died of a heart attack in his wheelchair two years later.”

“You never told me.”

“You never asked me.”

“You’ve got tears in your eyes,” she whispered.

“Precious bodily fluids ...”

“Come here. Let’s stop fighting.”

“Hey, fighting is the Jewish thing to do.”

“Yeah, but I’m not Jewish, remember?”

“Can I ever forget?” he asked.

“Come here, *mein Schatz*.”

“You trying to seduce me?”

“No, I *am* seducing you. Turn out the light.”

“What about the cockroaches? They’ll come back and crawl all over us.”

“You’ve converted me.”

“You don’t want to stay up and read?”

“Uh-uh.”

“I hear the Angel of Death passing over.”

“That’s a police helicopter. ... You’ll get to interview the Angel of Death later. ...

There’s a good Henry Jekyll. ...”

It may not have been standard Freudian technique, but as an intervention, it was effective.