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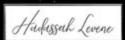
























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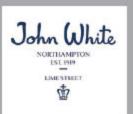




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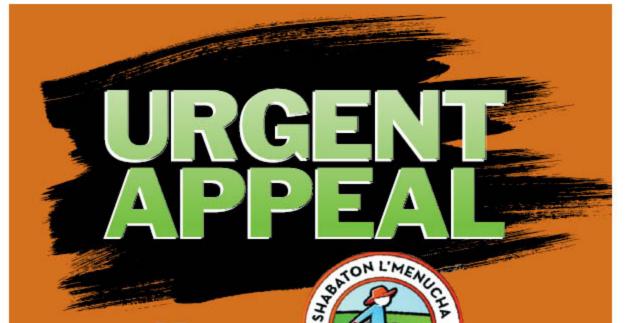
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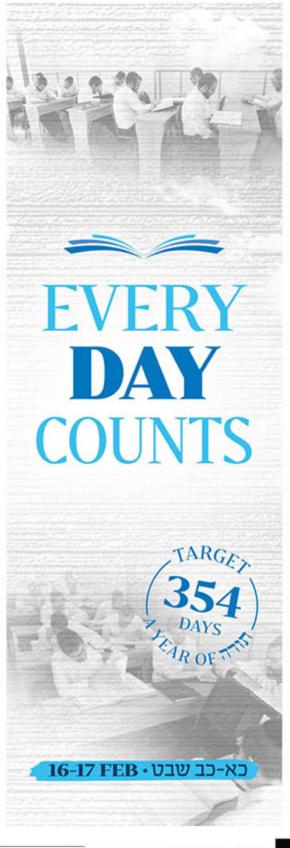
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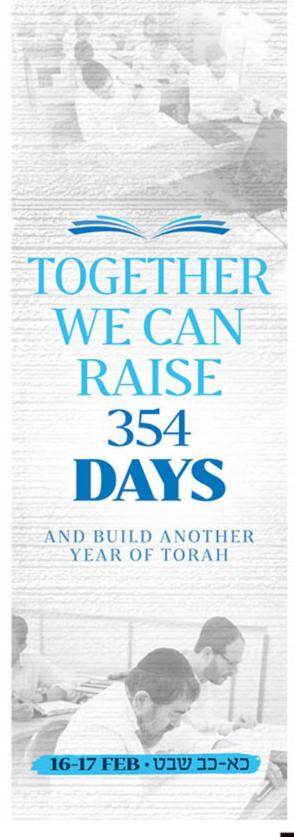
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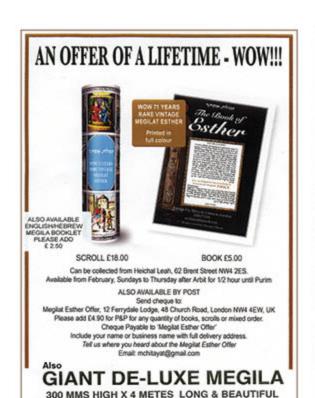






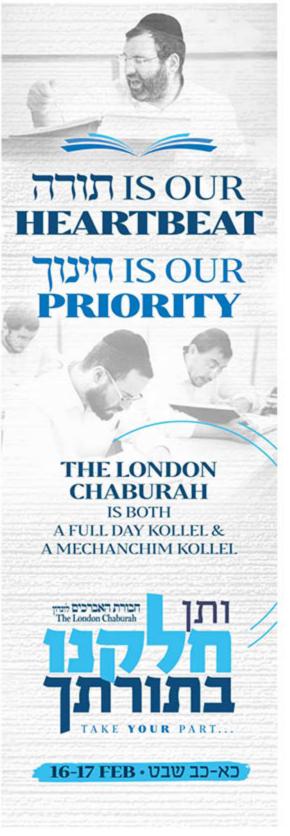






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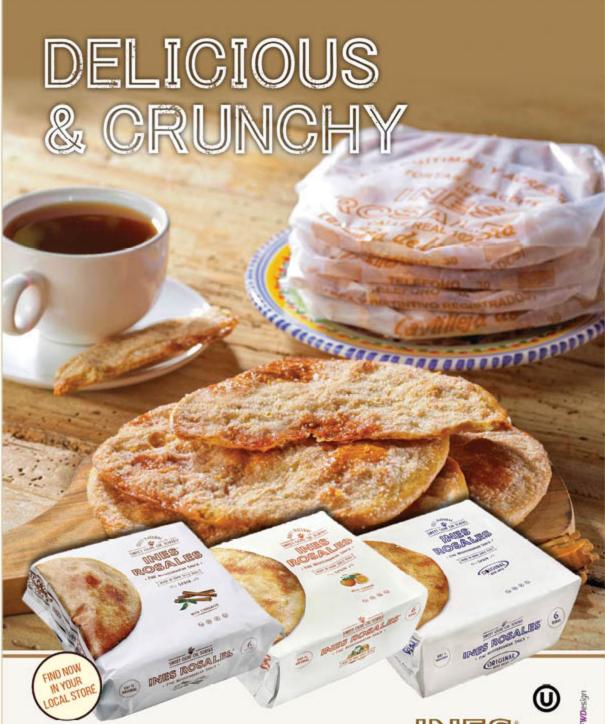




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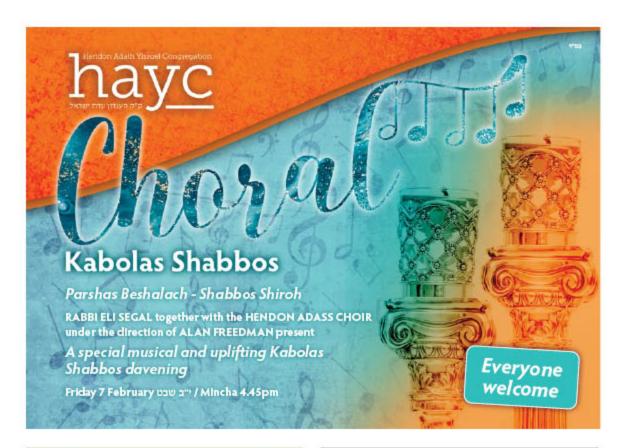
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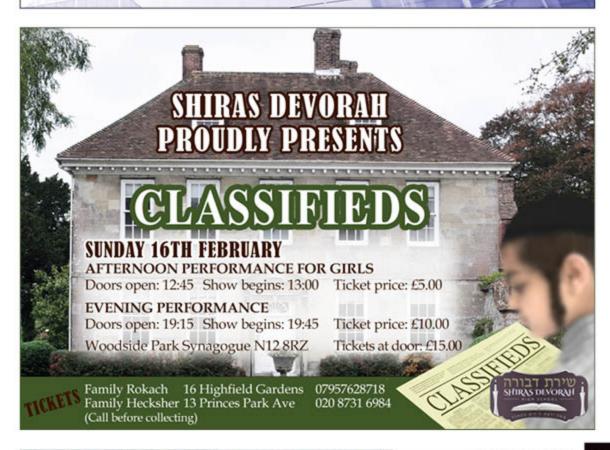
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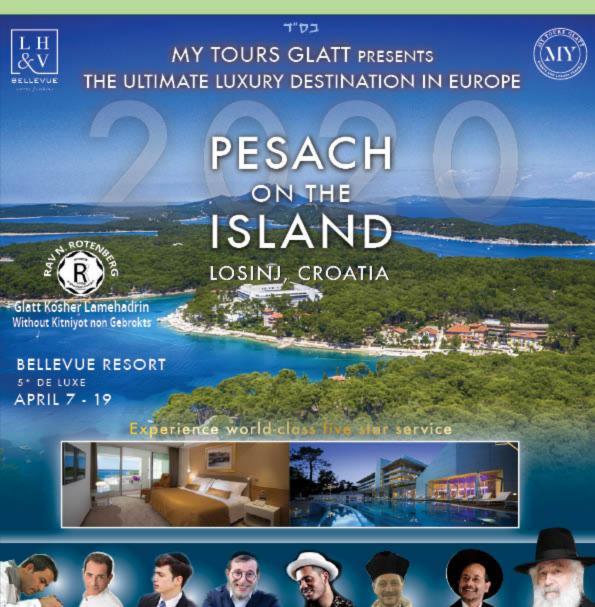
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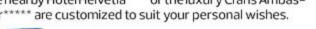


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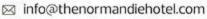


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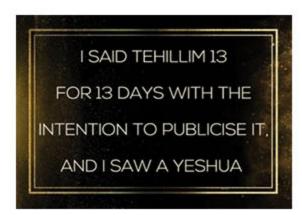


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by Ruthie Pearlman

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE cont.

"Who you really are? Why? Who are you really? An ax murderer? An evil psychopath?" Her words were jocular; her tone was not. Lucy was badly frightened by the Colin she now saw in front of her.

Colin did not smile. "None of those things. But I led you to believe I was a non-Jew, whereas the reality is I am Jewish. And I come from an Orthodox background like the Hardmans, the Weisses, and Avi Pincus. All the people in this case, they are part of my culture, part of my past, part of me, Lucy. It's a part of me I sought to escape ten years ago; the party was the catalyst. No, not the party. Shake. I sought to escape it, but look what's happened. It's come back and grabbed me by the throat, dragged me back inside. I have become involved with the very culture I have tried so hard to avoid, and all of a sudden, it doesn't feel so wrong anymore.

"Peter noticed. He noticed that I seemed to be for the people I had been so against. When I first took this case on, Lucy, the most terrifying aspect of it was not the fact that a kid had been abducted, nor the fear of failure. No, my greatest fear was being sucked back in to all this stuff I had tried so hard to escape from. But you know what, Lucy? I don't seem to mind the idea so much."

"You're Jewish and were Orthodox." Lucy grappled to assimilate this.

Yes. I ignored my past for so long, I almost managed to persuade myself that the story I told you, the invented past that suited me better than the genuine one, was real. You do come to believe lies if you tell them often enough, don't you. Well, I believed mine. My parents live right here in Golders Green, but they don't know me. I never go to see them or telephone them. I broke their hearts when I left my home

and my faith behind, along with all my religious clothes - the white shirts and dark suits, the black hats, the yarmulkes and tzitzis, the tefillin I used to put on every morning since I became bar mitzvah. At the end, I was wearing Native American headbands to keep my long hair out of my eyes so I could put my tefillin on in the mornings; it must have broken Dad's heart, but I did it anyway. He was so afraid of losing me altogether if he made a stand. Well, he did in the end. I haven't seen or spoken to my parents in the best part of ten years. Well, that's not strictly true. I sometimes caught glimpses of them in the street, but I made sure to avoid a meeting. It's amazing how you can do that, work in a community and avoid meeting someone who lives in it."

"You wore black hats and those fringey things that stick out of trouser waistbands," Lucy said, incredulous.

"The more I got to know the Hardmans and the people around them — the kids in Josh's class, their mothers, Leora Jakober — the more comfortable I felt being around religious people again. But being comfortable around a different culture one tried to alienate oneself from isn't the same at all as wanting to be back in it, Lucy." Lucy looked at the stranger before her. "No, but it's a good way along the line," she said, "especially if it's your own culture in the first place."

"Perhaps. I don't know," Colin said.

"Nor do I," Lucy agreed. "I don't know you. I

thought I knew you, but I don't."

"I don't know me either right now," Colin replied. "Well, I don't like being lied to, and I hate the idea of having spent several years of my life with someone I thought was someone else entirely. But for now, let's put that aside. The immediate issue is Josh Hardman and how this Shake of your past fits in with him. That I don't get. I mean, I don't understand why the Fox would want to attack you, as he seems to have achieved



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his purpose in putting you off your religion. But if he did still want to attack you, why go for someone else's kid, for heaven's sake? It doesn't make the least amount of sense to me."

"Nor me," Colin admitted miserably. Despite Lucy's willingness to put the issue of his lies to one side for the present, he felt immensely uncomfortable knowing that important and probably unpleasant discussions were on the cards for them both.

"You said," Lucy said after a moment's unhappy silence, both deeply aware that their relationship was at a crossroad, "that you were taken to the party by a friend called Ben. Is there any way you can contact him?"

"I suppose I have the number I last knew him to be at, the one I moved into after I left home." Again the shame flushed through him, like water through a newly opened manhole. Thinking of the Hardmans made him realize for the first time the anguish he had put his parents through. But there was one difference: Ilana had the small comfort of knowing her son had not deserted her willingly.

"Well, get on with it!" Lucy said with a false attempt at brightness. Her earlier mood, full of excitement and pride at being the source of the big break, had dissipated. She looked ahead at her relationship with Colin and saw only dust. She couldn't believe she had been with Colin for so long and it had all been a lie. The carefree policeman with an uncomplicated past (well, except for "my parents died in a car crash when I was six; I was brought up in children's homes... didn't do me any harm, though") turned out to be a lapsed Orthodox Jew with a past as twisted as gnarled tree roots.

Lucy had nothing against Jews. She was of the "some of my best friends are Jewish" school of racial tolerance. Living as she did in a community where Jews were not a rarity, she

had grown accustomed to seeing them around and was tolerant of the differences in the way the Orthodox Jews lived and dressed. But tolerance of a different culture was very different from accepting that one's boyfriend was from that culture. Whether or not he was "reformed" now, he had been like them once and seemed to be showing a marked degree of sympathy for them

"Yeah, let's get to it!" said Colin equally brightly and equally falsely. His confession to her had been terminal, and they both knew it. All the time they had been together he had known that if she ever found out his true past it would be over between them. The difference was that once he would have minded very much. Now... Now it seemed to fit. He was saddened because he was genuinely fond of Lucy, but he no longer felt things were right between them. He knew she was not overfond of Jews; even though she pretended not to mind, he knew she did. It was almost as if he had revealed himself as a scalvskinned alien monster with only a superficial outer skin of a human being, a skin which might burst open at any moment, revealing the horror of the reptilian creature beneath. For reptilian, read white shirt, dark pants, black hat, and tzitzis, thought Colin bitterly. Same difference. For the moment, an uneasy truce reigned between Lucy and Colin. They were joined in a

common goal - to trace the Shake of the party ten years before.

"I have Ben's number at home, I think," Colin

"I'll come with you, if you like," Lucy offered. "If you like," Colin said stiffly. It was all so difficult, like dismissing an employee but having to be polite to him while he worked out his notice, when all you wanted was for him to go.

To be continued....



DOKU PUZZLE



EASY PUZZLE

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3								
		9			7	5	2	
		7		8	4	1	5	6
4	6	1	3	9		7		
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DIFFICULT PUZZLE

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Each puzzle consists of a 9x9 Sudoku grid containing areas surrounded by gray or dotted lines. The object is to fill all empty squares so that the numbers 1 to 9 appear exactly once in each row, column and 3x3 box, and the sum of the numbers in each area is equal to the clue in the area's top-left corner



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8 Feb Sunday

13°c / 6°c

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Monday 10 Feb

9 Feb

Thursday

Tuesday 8°c / 4°c 11 Feb



גאלדערס גרין מנין צעטיל תש"פ

פ' בשלח

מנחה שבת ערב שבת 12.35 כר ישראל 12.48 אור חדש, בית אברכם מנחה גדולה ברידוע ליין 12.45 נארד הענדאר, עץ 12.45 עץ חיים 4.44 הדלקת הגרות 1.15 בית ישפר חום boorne Gdns 1.30 2 Highfield Gardens מנחה וקבלת שבת 4.40 נארד הענדאן, תורת חיים 0710K 712 3.00 11s Green Lane 2.36 4.42 מחזיקי הדת 4.44 אברכים, אור חדש, אמרי שפר 2000 3.63 אג כינכיה 4.00 אטרטים, עץ 4.04 בית ישטר די 4.04 בית תפילה בית אברהם, בית ישראל בית תפילה, גור, סיני, עץ חיים קהילת אהל משה, שערי תפילה jle 4.30 אור חדש, בית אברדם 4.45 ברידוש ליין, ג"ג ב"ה הענדאן עדת, נר ישראל מחילה אחל משה SAGE 4.47 בית ישכר דוב היכל מנחם, נארד הוננו 4.52 היכל מנחם 4.44 סאסוב, תפארת ישראו 4.45 בית ישראל, בית שפח מורת חיים במישון 4.49 4.54 בית שמואל, נשמת ישראל סאסוב, תפארת ישראל 5.00 עטרת צבי אסרי שפר, בית ישכר דוב נשטת ישראל, שטרת צבי 1.00 השראל שטרת צבי 1.00 השראל שרת 23 Green Walk

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