

New story series: "From Shadows to Sunrise"

Posted by davidt - 07 Aug 2025 02:14

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*The hotel room was dark, the glow from the shattered phone screen flickering like a dying flame on the floor.*

*His hands were trembling. Not from cold from truth.*

*She didn't scream. She just looked at him. Her eyes, which once sparkled with simplicity and loyalty, now shimmered with disbelief and pain.*

*"I don't care about the scam," she whispered. "Just tell me it's not true... Tell me the rest isn't true..."*

*He couldn't.*

*And for the first time since he was eleven years old when he first learned how to delete browser history he felt something inside him truly break.*

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## **Chapter 1: *The Perfect Bochor***

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To the outside world, Shaya was the dream.

A *masmid*, a *baal kishron*, *mevakeish emes*. In yeshiva, people said he was the next rosh yeshiva. Even the mashgiach once said at a *mussar shmues*, "If you want to see what it means to live with yiras shamayim, look at Shaya."

He smiled. He nodded. He kept his head down.

But he also knew how to work filters. How to erase data. How to cry on Yom Kippur... and fall the next night.

No one ever guessed. Not his rebbeim. Not his friends. Not his chaver chavrusah of six years who sat inches from him every morning at 7:00 a.m.

Only Hashem knew the truth. And it haunted him.

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Re: New story series: "From Shadows to Sunrise"

Posted by davidt - Yesterday 15:13

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## **Chapter 14: The Plan**

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Shaya arrived early at HHM's house, gripping the steering wheel like it might keep him from falling apart. He hadn't slept. The cold morning air bit at his face as he walked up the path. HHM opened the door before he even knocked.

Inside, the table was already set with two steaming mugs of tea. HHM sat down, no notebook this time, just steady eyes.

"Tell me everything," he said.

Shaya did. The threats, the photo of his car, the knot in his stomach so tight he could barely breathe.

HHM listened without interrupting, then leaned back. "This is bigger than you can handle alone. We need a plan two plans, actually. One for these men. One for your own fight."

### **First, the outside threat.**

"You need legal help," HHM said firmly. "Someone who knows what's real and what's just intimidation. I know a lawyer who's discreet and honest. You're going to call him today. No waiting, no excuses."

Shaya swallowed hard. Just the thought of explaining everything to a stranger made him feel sick, but he nodded.

### **Second, the inside battle.**

HHM spoke carefully. "These late-night habits aren't just a side issue. They make you weaker. You're foggy, anxious, hiding, so you make worse decisions. We need stronger guardrails."

He laid them out clearly: Shaya would add a second layer of filters, share his check-ins earlier in the day, and start meeting HHM in person every week, not just on the phone.

### **Finally, Leah.**

HHM's tone softened. "You don't have to tell her everything right now. But she knows something's wrong. If you keep shutting her out, you'll break her trust and you need that trust more than ever. Start small. Tell her you're under pressure with some bad business deals and you're getting guidance. Let her feel you're not alone."

Shaya felt his stomach twist. "And if she asks questions?"

"Then you answer what you can without lying. Hiding has been your enemy. Honesty is your ally now."

They ended with a short tefillah, HHM's voice steady, almost fatherly. As Shaya walked to his car, the threats were still real, the fear still sharp. But there was a map now and someone walking with him.

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Re: New story series: "From Shadows to Sunrise"

Posted by tzitzis dude - Yesterday 22:38

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Gosh, I can't wait for the story to take a nosedive, to lead into the introductory scene. I love me a good downer in an awesome story. Makes it more relatable to real life.

**Warning: Spoiler!**

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Re: New story series: "From Shadows to Sunrise"

Posted by davidt - Today 00:23

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## **Chapter 15: The Nosedive**

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Shaya thought he was holding it together. He had spoken with HHM, put up new guardrails, even scheduled a meeting with the lawyer. For a few days, it almost felt like the ground under his feet was solid. But fear has a way of finding the cracks.

On Wednesday afternoon, Leah called him while he was driving. Her voice was tight. "Why did someone come by asking for you? Some men in a dark car, they didn't give a name." Shaya's heart slammed against his chest. He mumbled something about a delivery mix-up, but his voice shook. Leah went quiet the kind of quiet that means she doesn't believe you.

That night, the panic was too loud to ignore. His old cravings flared up like fire, promising just a few minutes of escape. He fought it at first. He even typed HHM's number into his phone... then erased it. Instead, he went to the laundry room and dug out the hidden phone he swore he'd thrown away.

The spiral came fast. One click, then another. A rush of images, chats, strangers who didn't care about his name or his fear. For two hours, the threats, the shame, the look on Leah's face all of it blurred into nothing. When he finally looked up, the room smelled like detergent and sweat, and his soul felt like it had been dragged through mud.

The next morning he woke up late, groggy, angry at himself. On his way out the door, an envelope slid under his car windshield. No words just a picture of Leah walking down the street. Shaya's stomach twisted. The walls weren't just closing in anymore they were crushing him.

He skipped the lawyer's call. He ignored HHM's text. That night, he stayed up again with the

hidden phone, trying to shove down the terror with something darker than fear. But when the screen finally went black, all he could see was Leah lighting the Shabbos candles in his mind, her lips whispering prayers he didn't deserve.

By Friday, Shaya was shaking so badly he could barely put on his tefillin. The guardrails were broken. The lies were back. And the men who wanted his silence were getting closer.

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Re: New story series: "From Shadows to Sunrise"  
Posted by stopsurvivingstartliving - Today 03:38

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Wow! I just came across this thread and read through every post!

So much pain in there. It must have been oh so hard. I really respect "shaya" for where he is holding (as of chapter 15)!

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