The Chosen

Chaim Potok
The distilled page shows two hands locked together, a lightening bolt that cuts down through the middle, a long rope with a purple ribbon wrapped around the middle, and two roads heading opposite directions. The two hands locked together represent the friendship between Danny Saunders and Reuven Malter. Although their fathers believe in different “religions”, they still managed to become best of friends, fight through their differences, and become stronger together. Although they are locked together, there is a rope with a purple ribbon above them. That rope is what I’d like to call “The Rope of Friendship”. It began as a really small thread but kept growing as the boys came closer together. You can see the rope starts out a bit smaller at the edges of the page but gradually became thicker. This rope kept the two boys together but was severed when Danny’s father called upon a silence between them. After two years, the boys came back together and the ribbon in the middle represents the re-bonding. Behind the rope and the hands, there is a lightening bolt that cuts straight down the middle. It represents that eventually, the two boys will have to separate and lead their own lives. That is why there are two separate roads on either side of the bolt. However, you could also think that they could follow these two roads back and meet again. It isn’t such a sad ending.
# Table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme statements</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author Bio</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme

True friends might have differences, but they fight through them and grow stronger together.

Subordinate

Families have their own beliefs and preferences, but it is important for its members to branch out and pursue their own dreams.

The relationship between a father and son is vital to the cohesiveness of a family.

Regardless of different beliefs, friends can understand each other even if they do not entirely agree with one another.
Symbols
Sarah Hadnot

Reuven and Danny both experience a type of blindness—-a symbol in *The Chosen*—-in a physical sense and through studying the Talmud with their fathers.

While in the hospital, Reuven has to deal with only being able to see the world through one eye. He also has to confront the unfairness of Billy’s blindness. Empathy floods Reuven’s thoughts as he thinks about how Billy will never see the world as he does and how he might never be able to see the world as he once did. Gratefully, Reuven thinks about how lucky he has been to be able to see the world through two functioning eyes and hopes to be able to see it the same once more, which he does. Similar to his near-blindness in his eye, while Reuven studies the Talmud he is sometimes blind to certain meanings of parts so he and his father have conversation about the meanings of it. In this way, Reuven’s father is exposing him to other opinions of the world and how they affect what is going on in their world.
This is very different from the way Danny’s father, Reb Saunders, has raised Danny. By raising Danny in silence, he has forced him to look inside his soul for answers rather than other sources, although Reb Saunders “knew already when [Danny] was a boy that I could not prevent his mind from going to the world for knowledge” (285). The only time Reb Saunders talks, or argues rather, with Danny is when they are studying Talmud. Danny doesn’t get a chance to have conversations with his father where they discuss their personal opinions like Reuven does. Taking advantage of Reb Saunders and Danny’s knowledge of the Talmud, Reuven comes over to discuss it with them often. This opens Reuven’s eyes to other people’s opinions of the Talmud and prepares him to become a rabbi. Due to Danny’s Hasidic upbringing, he is blind to parts of the world that Reuven is knowledgeable in; he makes up for that by visiting the library daily and gathering information about other parts of the world that he has been deprived of through books and the knowledge of Reuven’s father who meets him there occasionally.

Danny and Reuven’s blindness to the world is what brought them together as such close friends. Although they have their differences of what they are blind to, they can still relate to and teach one another through that.
Author Biography

Theo Humphreys

- Early Life

Chaim Potok is an American Jewish author best known for writing The Chosen which has sold more than 3.4 million copies worldwide. Chaim was born on February 17th 1929 and passed away on July 23rd 2002. Chaim was born in The Bronx, New York where he received an Orthodox Jewish education along with his three other siblings. He was inspired to be a writer after reading Brideshead Revisited by Evelyn Waugh.

- Adult life

Chaim’s first publishing’s were in a literary magazine at Yeshiva University where he attended school. Later he became a Rabbi and became the director of the Conservative Youth Organization Leader Training Fellowship. He later joined the Army and served in the Korean war which he said was transformative. When he came back he moved to L.A. and then Brooklyn.
Author Bio Cont’d

- Adult life cont’d

- In 1967 The Chosen was published. The Chosen won the Edward Lewis Wallant Prize and it was also nominated for the National Book Award. In 1969 a sequel to The Chosen was released, it was called The Promise. He later wrote My Name Is Asher Lev, In The Beginning, Davita’s Harp, and The Gift of Asher Lev among others.

---

- The author shared several similarities to the character Reuven in The Chosen these similarities likely influenced much of the book. They both are both Hasidic Jew’s, they both became Rabbi’s, and they both grew up and lived in New York. In Korea Chaim had a life altering experience. Korea had a very small Jewish population and very little anti-semitism which he was not used to. He was brought up to believe that the Jewish population was a major population worldwide and was thus surprised by the lack of Judaism in Korea.
Setting

Jack Cooper

• The setting in this book is really important, not so much the place, or mood, but the time and social conditions.

• The setting in this book takes place on the east coast, but more importantly, it takes place during WWII. This time period is important because many Jews couldn’t believe what was happening to the people who believe the same things. This also is important because back then, they did not have all of the technology that we do today. So communicating and healing would take more effort.

• The main place in the book is in Brooklyn. these few cities had many different forms of Judaism. Many Jewish people lived in Brooklyn and New York, this can change the story line because living there would be easier. It would be easier because finding synagogues and other houses are easier to find, making it easier to stay in touch with their friends. The setting in this book takes place on the east coast, but more importantly, it takes place during WWII. This also is important because back then, they did not have all of the technology that we do today.
The Characters in “The Chosen” really do show a lot. It starts out with the narrator Reuvan, who is great at symbolic logic but wants to be a rabbi. He is very smart and is a Orthodox Jew. Then Danny, the next main character, is a Hasidic Jew with a photographic memory. He wants to be a psychologist. He is suppose to take his father position as Rebbe and Rabbi. The there is Danny’s father which is a as they say “fanatic” towards Jewish Hasidism and anti-Zionist. He is a very silent person and never talks to Danny (except during study) and has “explosions” when people talk about something opposite of his beliefs. Danny’s father is a regular Orthodox Jew who is very Zionist. He is a kind and considerate person but works hard towards his beliefs.
In this book there really doesn’t seem to be much of an Antagonist. In the beginning Danny seems to be when he hits Reuvan (protagonist). Then they become very close friends. I would have to say that Danny’s dad became the Antagonist when he wouldn’t let them talk but the real Antagonist was Danny’s Fate which prevented him from many things. Now these two really prove the our theme because even through all the differences, problems, and time they stay the closest friends and are inseparable. They are the main meaning of our theme. They really prove that nothing can break a friendship and friends understand each other sides and decision.
Hasidism
Theo Humphreys

- The word Hasidic is from a Hebrew word meaning loving kindness. Hasidism is a branch of Orthodox Judaism and the Hasidic Jew’s believe in “the fundamental aspects of Jewish faith”. Hasidism was started by the Rabbi Baal Shem Tov in the 18th century. There are dozens of major types of Hasidism and hundreds of smaller branches. The different groups have some differences and some similarities.

- There are dozens of major types of Hasidism and hundreds of smaller branches. The different groups have some differences and some similarities the similarities tend to include similar: philosophy, worship practices, dress and songs.
Hasidism Cont’d

- Traditions

  Some Hasidic Jews take part in a ceremony called mikvah in which they immerse themselves in water to achieve spiritual cleanliness or to become more holy. Hasidic men and women have many distinguishable clothing articles that they wear. Both men and women have clothing that is generally more for everyday wear and have clothing for Jewish holidays. Men also let their sideburns grow out following a Biblical commandment.

- Hasidic marriages are usually made through a matchmaker. Unlike many other arranged marriages the Hassidic marriages require consent from the couple and from the parents. Hassidic families also tend to have large families --7 or 8 children-- due to the passage in the bible that says “be fruitful and multiply”. Hasidic people speak the language of their country and speak Yiddish as a way to preserve their tradition and to distinguish themselves.
Hasidism Cont’d

- If it wasn’t for the differences between the Hasidic and Orthodox Jews than there wouldn’t have been any tensions and Danny and Reuven likely wouldn’t have met in the way that they did. Without Danny and Reuven meeting in the way that they did you either wouldn’t see their friendship develop the way it did, they may have never ended up meeting, and/or their friendship wouldn’t have been as strong as it was. One of the major parts of the story was the conflict between the beliefs of the Orthodox and Hasidic Jews and without that tension there really isn’t much of a story.
Photograph Bibliography

- *Clipart.* Photograph. Microsoft Word

Bibliography
