

The movie "the chosen" essay sample

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The Chosen is the movie adaptation of Chaim Potok's novel which depicts the friendship developed between two teenage boys of Brooklyn during the 1940s. The story starts with a baseball game in Brooklyn where Reuven Malter and Danny Saunders were on opposite teams. During the match, Danny hits the ball directly at Reuven, who was the Pitcher. Reuven's glass was shattered and he had injury in one eye. Danny went to the hospital to apologize for his misdeed and later they became close friends despite their vastly different upbringings.

Reuven's father was a professor who taught contemporary Jew affairs. They were liberals, trying to assimilate in the American society. Danny's father, on the other hand, headed a group of Hassidic Jews. Danny was an intelligent and inquisitive boy and he wanted to broaden his knowledge by reading a lot. He would often sneak into the library to read books forbidden by his father. He wanted to get liberated from the narrow lifestyle, which his father tried to impose upon him. Although he was the chosen successor to his father as the *Rebbe* of the Hassidic community, he was rather drawn to the intellectual world of Freudian psychology. His father was against the Zionist movement which sought to make Israel the free state of the Jews. This event eventually became the apple of discontent between the two friends and a rift developed in their friendship. It was basically a clash of ideology between the two families. Danny's father was a firm believer of traditional Jewish faith and he believed that only God and his messiah could deliver them. In this movie, Jewish culture has been shown with all its diversity at the backdrop of a rapidly modernized New York. Featured clips of the holocaust were also shown with Hebrew music playing at the background.

Based on Chaim Potok's best selling novel of 1967, the movie was a compelling and excellently acted tale which needs to be shown to a greater audience. This is a gently reminiscent movie, with a peek into the strict Hassidic culture with their strict code of ethics. There was strong performance by four lead characters namely Robby Benson as Danny, Rod Steiger as his father, Barry Miller as Reuven, and Maximillian Schell as Mr. Malter. Steiger's most mannered performance as Hassidic rabbi was outstanding. It appears as if Steiger was tailor-made for the role, and the way he whispered into the patriarch's beard and the way he rolled his eyes heavenward didn't seem like acting. A 1968 Oscar winner, his enactment was truly powerful. However, the one who had stolen the show was Miller as Reuven, whose acting was simply spellbinding. Robby Benson too, made a fine impression as Danny. His performance as an eager learner, his gentle inquisitiveness, won him empathy of the viewers. However, the side curls designed for him was not uniform throughout the movie and kept on changing. Steiger's beard, too, appeared to be unnaturally fluffy and long.

Although there was wealth of materials in the movie about the lifestyle of traditional Jews, the movie somehow lacked the dramatic excitement. The director tried to highlight the personal qualities needed for a strong, everlasting friendship through Reuven and Danny. However, after watching the movie, one feels that kind of a warmth missing in the friendship.

The starkly different ideology of Hassidic and Zionist philosophy comes to the fore in this movie. It shows how people from the same religious background can be world apart in their views and ideologies. An ideal family

film, *The Chosen* ought to be very appealing, particularly to the religious groups.