

Punk Mitzvah

written by

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SHOOTING SCRIPT
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1. INT. ESTE'S BEDROOM, THE ROTH HOME, AFTERNOON

ESTE ROTH (13, chronic worried eyes), is staring at her reflection in her mirror inserted into her adolescent-streaked bedroom. Her reflection showcases a horrified ESTE in her very girly, turquoise-blue dress bought specifically for her once-in-a-lifetime bat-mitzvah ceremony.

ESTE's eyes dart from her reflection to her official bat-mitzvah invitation blue-tacked to the edge of her mirror. The elegant, light purple invite is horrifically girly to a vomit-inducing degree reads:

Este Roth's Bat-Mitzvah Ceremony: 18:00, 31 March

Today's date is enough to send a shiver down ESTE'S spine. In a dress that appears to spark joy, ESTE only feels confused. When did this happen??

2. INT. SHOP, DAY, FLASHBACK

ESTE now remembers shopping with her mother, RUTH, for this bloody stupid dress a couple of weeks back. ESTE stares bluntly at her mother, who is enthusiastically browsing at dresses and hukking her way into oblivion. RUTH eventually releases a zealous gasp as she pulls **the** dress off the clothes rack.

RUTH

What about this one?

RUTH wearily holds the dress against ESTE'S figure.

ESTE

This is a extra-large.

RUTH

Well obviously not this exact one,
Este.

3. INT. ESTE'S BEDROOM, AFTERNOON

As the memory floods ESTE back into the present, regret is prominent in ESTE'S expression. She slightly pulls at the dress in hopes that it will magically morph itself to look better. It really looked better in the shop.

ESTE

What have I done?

As ESTE'S 'princess' dress glimmers in front of the mirror, the punk-infiltrated posters, from Siouxsie Sioux, PJ Harvey and Bikini Kill, on ESTE'S walls are revealed to completely contrast how ESTE is representing herself.

4. INT. LIVING ROOM, ESTE'S HOUSE, AFTERNOON

Downstairs, ESTE'S family are prepping for ESTE'S ceremony and getting additional party decorations ready to go.

1. RUTH orders JOSH (17, Este's brother) to bunch the BALLOONS together as her dear, dramatic son wrestles with them.

2. ARI pulls out a large canvas with a smaller, **black & white, awkward**, photograph of ESTE inserted in the centre of a sheet.

3. A frolic of family pictures take centre stage; cutting from a recent, awkward family portrait, childhood photos and three significant photos set out on a shelf. The set depicts dated photos of RUTH, JOSH and ARI celebrating their own bar and bat mitzvahs. An empty frame waits for ESTE'S photo to fill it.

RUTH

Josh, love, you don't need to beat up the balloons it's fine.

JOSH twirls around.

JOSH

Matthew from shul told me if they rub together too much they can set on fire.

ARI

Josh, remember what I told you? Matthew is absolutely insane.

RUTH

You don't go to shul, love, don't lie. We all know you met Matthew at gay club. It's not a secret.

JOSH

Well, actually, Mum I did see him at shul, at the challah bake, of all things- and, god, mum, it's not gay club! It's the gay-twink club!

5. INT. ESTE'S BEDROOM, HOME, AFTERNOON

In a panic, ESTE seeks a replacement in her cupboard for her disastrous decision of a dress. Giving up, she begins to pace the room as if she wishes to escape her reality.

As it becomes clear that this is impossible, ESTE'S worried eyes dart around her room to possible antidotes for her dilemma:

A belt? No.

Another necklace? Absolutely not.

Her sewing kit...maybe? But what would she do?

Well, she remembers that time that famous Youtuber fixed her dress...

6. INT. YOUTUBE SNIPPET

SEWING PSYCHO

All you need is a thread...

SEWING PSYCHO applies her threading technique to her doomed dress.

SEWING PSYCHO (CONT'D)

And then you just tear the sleeve-

RIPPPPPP

SEWING PSYCHO (CONT'D)

And then you begin the entire process of sewing it all up again and it will transform into the dress of your dreams-

FINAL RESULT: PERFECTION.

7. INT. ESTE'S ROOM, HOME, AFTERNOON

ESTE could do that. She can fix it. Youtube can help her fix it.

8. INT. LIVING ROOM, HOME, AFTERNOON

Downstairs, JOSH can't help but complain about his concerns on his sister's big day.

JOSH

This is literally all the time I've got left before the all the bobbas and zaidas at the shul come up to and start asking me where my nice Jewish boyfriend is. I have the right to rest. You can't work me like a horse!

RUTH

Joshie, look at one of us directly and blink, not once, not twice, but three times. And we will save you. Just because their parents taught their generation how to speak Yiddish to scare the gentiles off doesn't mean they get to assault you.

JOSH anxiously nods his head. He understands.

ARI

Josh, just help your mother with the portrait. You won't drop dead, for god's sake-

ARI stops as he hears ESTE'S door open upstairs. A smile forms on his face as he knows a reveal is pending.

JOSH

Took her long enough.

ESTE'S footsteps transfer from the stair case to the ground floor to reveal her outfit. The result:

Torn sleeves trailed by a flaky piece of string dangling from both sides of her dress.

The mesh front above her bust has been torn out.

The bits and bobs of tissue paper is seen sticking out from ESTE'S bust area in her own attempt un-flatten her flat chest.

Lastly, the ending flow of the dress looks like it has been into by either dog or human depending on the day.

In her catwalk moment, ESTE'S family appear frozen, attempting to mask their genuine reactions.

ARI

Her dress..

RUTH
Ari, don't.

ESTE stands in front of her family, expressing a plea for reassurance of her appearance. When a silence consumes the room instead, ESTE is forced to speak up.

ESTE
Ta-da...

Nothing. Just silence and awe.

ESTE (CONT'D)
Uh...how do I look?

The dragging of awkward exchange of glances between the family escalates ARI to panic.

ARI
You look very handsome, love.

RUTH shuts her eyes as JOSH's eyes widen with a sense of dramatic excitement. It doesn't take long before ESTE breaks down in tears and whips herself away from the living room. RUTH shoots ARI a look as she follows after ESTE, leaving him frazzled and JOSH red from laughing.

JOSH
Handsome?? Out of everything you could've said, you told her she was handsome?!

9. INT. BOTTOM OF STAIRWAY, HOME, AFTERNOON

RUTH chases after ESTE.

RUTH
Este, wait!

ESTE, surprisingly, stops, listens and faces her mother.

RUTH (CONT'D)	ESTE
What's going on?! What have you done?!	I don't like it...

RUTH (CONT'D)	ESTE (CONT'D)
You don't like it-Este, you chose it!	I don't like it anymore, I changed my mind. I look like I'm on <i>Toddlers and Tiaras</i> .

RUTH (CONT'D)
Oh, love. You're just anxious.

In an attempt to embrace ESTE, her daughter rejects her efforts, pushing her away.

ESTE	RUTH (CONT'D)
I thought every dress would look dumb but this is the worst one I could've chosen! What was I thinking?!	Love, you're panicking. Take a deep breath-

ESTE (CONT'D)
I'm not supposed to look like a
little girl, I'm supposed to be a
woman!

RUTH's mouth is agape. Suddenly, the doorbell rings. RUTH brightens up.

RUTH
It's Mandy!

RUTH turns around to let MANDY in.

ESTE
Mum, no! Oh my god- not Mandy!

RUTH
No, it's not Dad's sister Mandy as
in your Aunt Mandy, it's my BFF,
Auntie Mandy!

ESTE's horrified expression exasperates. RUTH swings the door open to reveal an eccentric MANDY in the doorway.

MANDY
Yoo-hoo! Bati girl! I'm hereeeee-

Escalated by seeing one of the most annoying people she knows, ESTE, runs for her life up the stairs, dramatically sobbing.

RUTH
Este, what's wrong?! I don't
understand what's going on with
you...

ESTE comes to a halt.

ESTE
What's wrong?! What's wrong?!
Everything's wrong! I hate my
dress. I hate my face. I hate my
life-

As ESTE'S dramatic tirade proceeds, JOSH and ARI enter, surprised by what they're hearing, and join RUTH at the bottom of the stairs.

ESTE (CONT'D)	ARI
No, I don't hate my life but	-Love, I'm sorry-
I hate it RIGHT NOW and I'm	
not supposed to be HANDSOME,	
Dad-	

ESTE (CONT'D)
I'm supposed to be a woman now-and
a punk!

JOSH	ESTE (CONT'D)
(chuckling)	-oh shut up, Josh. All of
Did you just say punk? Are	you...
you joking-?	

The room goes eerily silent as those below ESTE preparing for potential carnage.

ESTE (CONT'D)
You're ALL driving me insane! ALL
of you! I'm supposed to become a
woman tonight but I look in the
mirror and I still look like a
little girl! Where are my tits? Why
do I look like this?! What if my
boobs don't get bigger than this??
What am I going to do besides drop
dead and die? AND WHY have all my
friend have got their periods
before me??? What if I'm INFERTILE-

JOSH
Sounds like something that would
happen to you-

ARI elbows JOSH as he begins to moan dramatically.

ESTE
Rabbi Goldstein keeps saying that
when you have a bat mitzvah you are
now A WOMAN no matter what but what
does that even mean?! Because to
me, this is not being a woman this
is still being a child who does
what they're told and is good-what
about what I want?! What about what
I believe in?! What about what
becoming a WOMAN ACTUALLY MEANS TO
ME?!

ESTE escapes in tears. Her bedroom door slams behind; concluding her performance.

MANDY

Wow, what a gorgeous dress.

The ROTH's looks at MANDY like she's admitted to eating pork.

10. INT. ESTE'S BEDROOM, HOME, AFTERNOON

ESTE enters her pod of safety in teenage hysterics. She collapses face-flat onto her bed and sobs. She soon takes a moment to catch her breath and looks up at her walls, where her posters of her idols remain static, yet appear mightier than ever. As ESTE rises from her not-so-defeated stated, her watery-eyes sparkle and a grin forms on her face as, suddenly, an idea blooms to fix everything.

ARI (O.S.)

Este?!

11. INT. OUTSIDE ESTE'S ROOM, AFTERNOON

ARI stands at ESTE'S door, knocking anxiously as he can't help but dread a response from his out-of-control teen.

ARI

Este, you need to stop this now. I understand that you've had a change of heart but you're probably just nervous, love, that's-

ARI yells as JOSH'S camera flash suddenly blind him.

12. INT. KITCHEN, AFTERNOON

RUTH rushes into the kitchen suddenly crying. MANDY follows after her.

MANDY

What are you crying about? She looks gorgeous! She looks just like how you did-how sweet is that-?!

RUTH

Are you blind, Mandy?! Everything has turned from babka into **shit**.

RUTH collapses into the seat at the counter to stop herself from completely melting.

MANDY

Oh my god, did Barbara die?

RUTH looks up, even more mortified before.

RUTH

No, Mandy, Barbara Streisand did
not die-don't say things like that!

Now fully aware of her friend's state, MANDY opens the fridge and easily finds a lager for RUTH and hands the antidote to her dear friend. RUTH takes a large gulp.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Everything's falling apart.

MANDY

No it isn't, just Este's dress.

RUTH can't help but be annoyed at MANDY for this.

MANDY (CONT'D)

Why did you buy a broken dress?

RUTH

If you think I bought the dress
looking like that, Mandz, then
you're just as senile as Rivka
Liet's mother.

RUTH puts her lager can down and takes a glimpse at ESTE'S invitation on top of a stack of papers on the counter. RUTH can't help but delicately place her finger on it. As she does, the invitation slightly slips to reveal noticeable pixels of an image underneath. RUTH moves the invitation to reveal ESTE'S punk themed notebook; covered from head to toe in stickers ranging from riottt grll artist singing their hearts out to skulls and raging feminist quotes.

The notebook is so ESTE. So personal. A little voice in RUTH'S head is mocking her. How could she be so stupid? That's what her child is talking about. This is what she fears is forbidden.

MANDY

You know, I'm sure it's just that
expression she always has on her
face that's making this all seem
worse than it. She does have very
wide eyes. Like she's traumatized
by the world.

RUTH looks back at her friend, attempting to process what she's actually talking about.

MANDY (CONT'D)
Do you ever worry she's not
blinking enough-or too much? Or
that she's actually experiencing
great generational trauma?

God, RUTH hopes not.

Babe? ARI (O.S.)

RUTH
Is our child alive, love?

ARI (O.S.)
Maybe but I can't confirm that
right now.

RUTH	ARI (CONT'D)
Ari, that's not funny-	Is my book on the counter?

RUTH and MANDY's eyes dart to ARI'S ancient book lying near them:

TITLE: Understanding the Female Adolescent: Why Forcing Her to Fish May Be the Cure For Those Raging Hormones.

ARI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I think I'm going to be here a
while.

13. INT. MIRROR, ESTE'S BEDROOM, AFTERNOON

Instead of fishing, ESTE's got other plans. She wearily drags black eyeliner over eyelid. Next comes red eye shadow and lipliner.

Out go the studs and in the large hoops go.

ESTE'S hair slides through a hair band as it sways from it's high-pony position.

Plastic rings silk through onto her fingers.

14. INT. CUPBOARD, ESTE'S ROOM, AFTERNOON

ESTE closes her cupboard door to reveal her new, self-designed, punk outfit in the mirror.

Red stripes strike across her eyelids-riot grlll supreme.
Add on a checkered red skirt, plain red t-shirt and combat
boots a tad too big.

It's perfect.

Suddenly there's a knock at the door.

ARI (O.S.)

Este?

ESTE jumps. Time to face the music.

ESTE

Dad?

ARI (O.S.)

Can I come in?

ESTE thinks about this for a moment. It's time for her reveal. Her *proper* reveal. ESTE's door swings open to reveal her frozen father. There must be a fire burning behind ESTE because ARI's eyes are wide enough for there to be.

ESTE

I'm sorry, Dad. Are you cross?

ARI's mouth hangs open.

ESTE (CONT'D)

Will Mum be mad?

ARI stares at his daughter, suddenly glowing immensely in her new outfit.

ARI

Why would she be-?

ESTE

Do I look more grown up?

ARI, for once, can respond to this question.

ARI

Why would you want to be grown up?
Being grown up is bloody awful.

As it would for any 13-year-old, this passes over ESTE'S head.

ESTE

But do I look good?

ARI can't help but form a small smile.

ARI

You look lovely, sweetheart.

ESTE smiles. She sways towards ARI and the two melt into one another. In the background, the remains of ESTE'S creative process are exposed. It's a mess, but it's what ESTE wanted.

15. INT. LIVING ROOM, DOORWAY, AFTERNOON

RUTH, JOSH and MANDY view ESTE'S reveal as she stands upon them. MANDY's mouth hangs open, JOSH shows off how impressed he is whilst an intoxicated RUTH appears baffled as she tries to understand what she's seeing.

RUTH
Is this what you've wanted, love?
The whole time?

The question is more complex than it sounds.

16. INT. CHANGING ROOM, SHOP, DAY, FLASHBACK

RUTH zips ESTE up in her dress as the two view the result. As RUTH'S face glimmers, ESTE's worried eyes fear regret.

RUTH
Este...look at you.

ESTE's focus suddenly isn't on the dress, but a girly-squealee commotion occurring in the next door changing room. What sounds like another mother and daughter pair appears to contrast RUTH and ESTE's experience completely. Instead, melodramatic relief and barbaric excitement plague the entire shop. Meanwhile, all ESTE can see are these two monsters tappy-feet underneath the neighbouring curtain.

RUTH (CONT'D)
What do you think?

Below her utter confusion, RUTH's excitement is too much to resist-and her neighbours are driving her crazy.

This is hell on earth.

17. INT. LIVING ROOM, AFTERNOON

ESTE
I guess.

RUTH
Why...did you think you couldn't
tell us that?

ESTE

I... I don't know. I didn't want everyone to think I'm weird.

JOSH

You are weird.

ESTE elbows JOSH. His default dramatic reaction reoccurs.

RUTH

Est, did someone say something to you?

ESTE

Say what?

RUTH (CONT'D)

At the shul, did someone say something to you about...

ESTE's eyes gaze at the floor as a memory we're not allowed to see floods in. A sense of realization sinks in amongst the room that the answer to RUTH'S question: Yes. Someone said something. Something now haunting ESTE.

ESTE

You know, I thought I could just be normal and fit in for one night but I can't do it. I...I'd rather be weird and flat-chested and an oddball-it's better than being in that stupid thing.

MANDY

And possibly kill the rabbi?

ESTE rolls her eyes at MANDY'S response. RUTH unsteadily, yet furiously, gets up and stumbles over to hug ESTE.

RUTH

Who was it? Who would-

ESTE absorbs herself into RUTH'S embrace. Right now, that doesn't matter.

ARI

So what if you're a bit of a weirdo, love? You probably get it from me, eh?

ESTE

You're both weird.

RUTH

And who cares what other girls want to look like? Why grow up so quickly?

ESTE
I don't want to be lame.

RUTH
You're not lame. You are so cool,
you don't even understand how cool
you are.

ESTE's smile glimmers.

MANDY
Ruth, love, I don't know. You know
what the rabbis are like-

RUTH spins around to look at MANDY and walks up to her.

RUTH
Mandz, love, I love you. I love you
dearly.

She takes MANDY'S hands into her own.

RUTH (CONT'D)
But please, please just shut up for
one bloody second.

ESTE'S mouth drops as she hears her mother swear.

JOSH
Are we late or is the clock broken?

EVERYONE looks up at the clock to reveal it's quarter to six.

RUTH
Oh dear-

RUTH begins to panic as everyone begins to pick up their
things.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Come on everyone, we'll make it!
We'll have to- get a move on!

18.EXT. OUTSIDE SHUL, EARLY EVENING

The ROTH family pull up to their final destination: their
shul. ARI, behind the wheel, parks unevenly as the family
begin unpacking themselves from the car. In their anxious
rush, ESTE steps outside the car, her oversized combat boot
tromps the ground.

19. INT. HALL, SHUL, EARLY EVENING

Inside the busy shul, RUTH, JOSH, ARI and MANDY are seen greeting and mixing with other family members and friends. Chatter and noises of celebration emit within the hall. RUTH and MANDY mingle whilst ARI involuntarily joins. JOSH is harassed by older family that decide they need to smother him to death (kissing his cheek). JOSH attempts to blink multiple times as his parents fail to take notice of his cry for help.

20. INT. BACKSTAGE, SHUL, EARLY EVENING

ESTE stands in the near dark as the bustle and chatter begins to die down. The quieter the shul becomes, the more anxiety flutters in her stomach.

She looks down at herself one last time, frozen by anticipation of being called up. Then, her eyes are cast to her family. ESTE'S polished make-up glows like a rock star's would. Just as she is about to look away, RUTH catches her eye. Suddenly, the RABBI stops and appears to introduce ESTE, signaling for her to take the stage. ESTE'S eyes remain locked with her mother, who forms a confident smile. ESTE nervously smiles and break her gaze.

ESTE walks straight ahead with her head high as she takes centre stage of the shul. With the whole shul's eyes on her, their reactions ranging from neutral, surprised, impressed and so on; ESTE worries the world is about to swallow her whole.

RABBI
(whispers)
Hey.

ESTE looks over her shoulder at the *female* rabbi standing at the side.

RABBI (CONT'D)
You look good.

Upon hearing this surprising, yet delightful comment, a volt of confidence rushes through ESTE'S veins. ESTE looks at her audience...and takes a deep breath...and forms a beaming smile.

THE END