

the beginning of

**STEVIE GOLDSTEIN FACES THE
DAY OF ATONEMENT UNPREPARED** (from **OY!**)

a short comedy by Rich Orloff

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Place: A middle-class, suburban living room.
Time: Just before the sunset commencing Yom Kippur.
Characters: RONALD GOLDSTEIN, late thirties
NINA GOLDSTEIN, his wife, same age
STEVIE GOLDSTEIN, their son, age 10 (to be played by an adult)

As the scene begins, we hear the music of the “Kol Nidre” prayer in the background, as Nina lights a memorial candle. She is nicely but conservatively dressed. The music fades. Nina looks at her watch and becomes a bit anxious.

NINA

Will you two hurry up? Services start
in forty minutes.

RONALD (o.s.)

Then we’ve got plenty of time.

NINA

We do not. It’s the most holy Jewish holiday of
the year. You know how that screws up traffic.

STEVIE enters. He’s a precocious but timid, bright but not worldly,
“good” child with a Beaver Cleaver innocence. He wears a brand new suit.

STEVIE

I’m ready, Mom.

NINA

Don’t you look dashing. Come here.
You look so handsome in that suit.

Nina begins picking infinitesimal items off Stevie’s suit. She also
licks her fingers and pats down a couple of Stevie’s hairs.

STEVIE

Thank you. Is that a compliment to me or the suit?

RONALD enters. He's completely dressed, except that his shoes are in his hands. He is crossing to another room.

RONALD

Ah, picking and licking. It's the High Holidays, all right.

Ronald exits.

STEVIE

Mom...

NINA

Yes, Stevie?

STEVIE

I think there's something we should discuss.

NINA

All right.

STEVIE

I'm not sure I should go tonight.

Nina feels Stevie's forehead.

NINA

You can go.

STEVIE

That's not it.

NINA

Is there something superspecial you want to watch on television?

STEVIE

No. It's something else.

NINA

What?

STEVIE

Well, the purpose of the Day of Atonement is to go and pray, and to ask for God's forgiveness for all your sins, right?

NINA

Right. So?

STEVIE

I didn't sin this year.

NINA

Are you being "smart"?

STEVIE

No, that's a sin.

NINA

(yelling)

Ronald!

Ronald enters, buffing his shoes.

RONALD

I'm ready.

NINA

We have a family problem.

RONALD

What?

NINA

(to Stevie:)

Tell your father.

STEVIE

I don't think I should go to Yom Kippur services because I didn't sin all year, and thus I think it would be both hypocritical of me to go as well as inconsiderate of God's time.

RONALD

That's reasonable.

Ronald puts on his shoes.

NINA

It is not.

RONALD

If you're absolutely sure you didn't sin.

STEVIE

I wouldn't say I'm absolutely sure...

NINA

Well, then.

STEVIE

But to the best of my knowledge,
I haven't committed a single sin all year.

NINA

All year, you never once talked back
to your teacher?

STEVIE

No.

NINA

Watched TV when you should have
been doing your homework?

STEVIE

No.

RONALD

Cheated on a test?

STEVIE

No.

NINA

Snuck cookies before dinner?

STEVIE

No.

RONALD

Stayed up past your bedtime?

STEVIE

No.

NINA

Lied to either of us?

STEVIE

What would I have to lie about?

RONALD

Good point.

NINA

Well, come to services anyway,
and just sit there.

STEVIE

I'd feel dishonest.

NINA

Good. Then you'll have something to atone for.

STEVIE

Mom...

NINA

What am I going to tell the Hirsches?
"No, I'm afraid our Stevie didn't come
with us. He hasn't sinned all year."

STEVIE

I kind of hoped you'd be proud.

RONALD

We are, son.

NINA

Stevie, I'm your mother. Trust me.
You've sinned.