



# Kavah

*Written by Alex Brunson*

The current day is May 12th, 2048, and the country of Israel is at the peak stage of totality. The nation is known for its state-of-the-art architecture and sustainable defense with a taste of the past, and like a flower, it bloomed under the power of the glorious second-time prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the refurbished Idkun Likud Party. The coalition that followed in his footsteps decades ago all were his puppets, united to light the torch of Ultra-Zionism. The torch was then fueled by gas and prospered and burned all who were in its path, and those to put it out lost faith and let it burn away.

The fire proceeded to travel over the metal-titanium and laser-infused defense wall and into the occupation of the Palestinian West Bank and set society into an even worse blaze. The small feeble community was denied the chance to develop properly by its occupiers and was sent running amok after the Palestinian Authority forcefully disbanded in 2045. The militia terrorist groups there make situations worse by convincing people to attack and commit crimes. In other words, it was just another unfinished collage that somebody had procrastinated on and was overdue. Its streets were dangerous, dim, and dark, with a dash of neon lights and unanticipated effort. Drones and Israeli watch bots patrol the streets to keep everyone "in order". The civilians are alert in the day while attempting to live casually as the reckless authority would let them, and hide and disperse in the night, ready to fear what awaits them. Two orphaned Palestinian twins, who lost their Jihadi father due to an IDF raid, were forced into this miserable living, and one managed to escape the torment and dread. For now.

From the storm, there is a rainbow, and that rainbow is Sarah Adira Haviv, 11th grade Student President of the fresh new Bibi Netanyahu Tech Academia. Her admirable, wildly extroverted, and bubbly yet nerdy character has gained fans all over school, and like, tons on Tiktok. She is dazzling as a charm and sweet as honey, her short wavy hair and thick round

glasses the star of the show— but this is her only when she’s in a good mood. Once someone pisses her off, she will rip through like a tornado. Her punch combos are a raining barrage of firing arrows from the sky above, and the bigoted Zionist boys that swarm the back of the cafeteria have gotten a taste of the burn. Her best friend and dorm roommate Zafrat Hamdan, a very shy and modest 11th grader, is an Arab immigrant who arrived in Israel about 2 years ago. But no one knows exactly where she is from. She is also the most picked on in school, just because she is different from them. Sarah is always glued to her to make sure she isn’t harassed and threatens to pound somebody’s spleen in if they dare to lay a nail. It even just ends up making everyone else jealous and talk smack about Zafrat even more.

Sarah and Zafrat were the best of friends, doing projects together, having each other’s back, and eating together at lunch, but this might change today. At lunch, Zafrat is sitting by herself fixing her pink headscarf, and here comes Sarah, who is 4 minutes late. She has a gift box in her hands and has sweat running frantically from her forehead. She sits beside her and they have the longest small talk conversation ever as if the minutes were talking faster than them. Sarah then stops Zafrat mid-sentence, throwing her completely off.

“Hey, uhm, I have something to tell you.” she shudders, looking around the room.

Zafrat, who has never seen this kind of behavior in Sarah before, raises her eyebrow and questions her. “What’s wrong? You’re acting a bit out of the norm.”

Sarah felt her stomach twist and churn but tried to ignore it. Instead, she gives Zafrat the box. “Here, I want you to have this. It’s made just for you.”

She takes the small red parcel out of her hands slowly and gives Sarah another look before opening it. After unraveling the ribbon and opening the box, she takes out a rainbow teddy bear and a fancy rose-tinted note attached that happened to be a love letter, written in both Arabic and Hebrew. As she consumes every delicate pen-written line, Zafrat flushes red at the unexpected gesture. “Is this for...me?”

Sarah, trying to laugh off the expanding warm sensation in her body, jokes, “Yes it is, silly!”

Zafrat’s crooked smile stretched across her face like a child on Christmas morning.

"Awwh, thank you Sarah!" she cooed, cuddling her shoulder.

The two sit there together, holding hands now at this point, and here comes the most notable Zionist boys, Amos and his gang as they storm into the metal courtyard doors. They tower over the two who were peacefully sitting by themselves and began to invade their space.

“Hey gay girls, are you two gonna kiss?” he snickered.

“They have a virus, watch out before they turn you homo too!” one of his goons called out to him.

Sarah got up from her seat, Zafrat looking back up at her and heat flaring up to her ears in a fear of them starting a fight. She begins to nervously fiddle with a loose thread on her dress sleeve.

"Oooh, I pick on queer couples because I'm so edgy," she mimicked, pushing him back forcefully and crossing her arms, watching as he fell embarrassingly onto a standing chair. His friends stand around him, laughing and pointing like maniacs. To make it seem even more uncomfortable for him, Sarah took Zafrat's hand and they unhesitatingly kissed.

"You all have five seconds to take your little rats and leave," she added, Zafrat still holding on to her while picking up an old crusty pretzel that had suffered for 5 days straight on the frigid, hard floors and chucking it at Amos. "Or I will turn your leader into a human pretzel."

As the four boys scurried away, Sarah and Zafrat began to make out, not having a care in the world who was watching.

It is midnight, and Sarah's eyes flew open from the worst nightmare she has ever had. Her heart started to feel as if it was pounding out of her chest, and goosebumps began to spread all over her arms. She hurriedly reaches for her phone light and her dream journal from under her pillow and recalls the scene:

*I was in the garden of a mansion of some sort, hearing the birds sing and their music danced to my ears as I picked the red roses and poppies. The wind hugged my soul and blew the sweet scent of rose petals wherever I stepped. I whistled a warm and crisp tune as I picked the last flower I could carry. Suddenly, the sky grew gloomy and the deafening sounds of explosions grew around me. Screams began to pierce the air as a heavy wall of fire closed into the garden and projectiles began to sting the Earth near my feet. I stood there, unharmed but stabbed in the heart. It felt like everything I knew was destroyed.*

As Sarah puts away her journal, she notices that her roommate is no longer in her bed across the room. *She possibly can't take that long in the bathroom*, she wondered to herself. When she walked closer to the bed, she found a note that caused her heart to stop in its tracks.

*“Sarah, if I don't come back, I want you to know I love you.”*

Today is the 13th, and a few hours away from the centennial anniversary of the establishment of Israel. Schools are closed and non-essential businesses are shuttered down for the huge celebration at the square, which is expected to start at midnight. Everyone is dressed in their best as the prime minister is expected to arrive before midnight to announce the start of the celebration. Now with all this good news, there is bad news to follow. Further escalations between Israel and the West Bank are in place as they push to annex almost half of the occupation by the end of the week and there has been a bloody war going on near the border. Fears of a third intifada are the highest it's been in 25 years.

After Sarah watched the afternoon news of the day, she decides to take a break from everything that was spiraling out of control in her life and goes on a walk around the city instead. The brisk sunshine and cool afternoon air seemed to give her more life than the people who were claiming to be helping her people thrive. Why were they hurting those people? What could have they done in the past to have made it this bad for themselves? Questions begin to form a hurricane in her mind, and suddenly she is startled by a propaganda poster that made its way onto her face.

*“Don't be a fool, be like Netanyahu!”*

And two more.

*“Keeping the streets clean of terrorism 24/7.”*

*“Punch an Arab, join the IDF.”*

Sarah has had enough. She threw down the flyers that had smacked her in the face and spat. No wonder why those Zionist boys at lunch harassed Zafrat so much. It was those flyers, hell, it can be more than those flyers. *At this point, it was all Netanyahu's fault*, Sarah finally decided. *Maybe that's why she ran away. I hate his guts. I wish he could see how it feels.*

But she still didn't understand. *What did they possibly do?*

It is now nightfall and Sarah, who has been wandering outside all day, letting herself go wherever her feet take her next, feels she has nothing else to do besides go to the 100-year celebration of a country she is beginning to feel uneasy about. She isn't wearing any fancy clothes, nor is she in the mood to attend, but she does anyways. As she walked up to the center of the city, it felt like the entire universe was there—the streets were flooded with people, spilling out on corners, filling up vendors, and dancing in the middle of the street to the sound of rave music that amplified throughout the night. The smell of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern food filled the air and added to the cauldron, the stars glittered, the lights flashed blue and white, and it was an overstimulating and blinding hell for Sarah. It felt like the world was spinning at 100 miles per hour. She found a clear, chill spot near a sober bar vendor that wasn't packed, and just rested. She let everything fade before her...the noise...the confusion...away.

It is now quarter to 12, and the square is silent as Prime Minister Netanyahu gives his speech on a big screen over the plaza, loudspeakers throughout the streets. There are thunders and applause after the lines he spoke, and the words he said, and the crowd goes wild during every pause in his thoughts. Dark thoughts. There were chants, praises, “Baruch Hashems” and more, and it all woke Sarah up. As she looks to see what time it was, she sees that she had a missed message from her aunt 30 minutes ago, as well as 9 missed calls. After thoroughly analyzing the text, she begins to have a mini panic attack.

*“Sarah, Aunt Geula loves you. If you are outside, get in a shelter immediately.”*

At the last word of the text, Netanyahu is making the last lines of his speech, and a timer for 10 seconds is displayed on the big screen as the people count down.

*“Remember, citizens of Israel, God is always with you.”*

As the clock reached 12, all you could hear was the uproar of applause and cheering, and Sarah felt like the noise was going to break her eardrums. Then all of a sudden, as if the cheering summoned it, a loud, deafening explosion is heard to the east of the city and air raid sirens began to wail around her. Those jubilant cheers turned into blood-curdling screams as gashes of radiant light broke through the cauldron-black sky, and it seemed like the whole world was getting ready to trample over Sarah. At this point, the only thing that was protecting her was the cheap foldable metal table she was sitting at. She could feel the pain wrapping around her like a glove, and she

was struggling to get out. As everything swarmed her, she began to curl into a weak ball and silently weep as the world turned into bloodshed. But by each ticking second it lasted, the more she wanted to revolt. She tried to hold the sword of destiny and fight off the hell which was now her living. She didn't care about anyone else's feelings anymore; the glove made her immune to its squeeze. She sprang up and frantically darted from under the table, which was now dismembered from a chunk of fiery debris, and began to fight the current of fleeing people with her bare, bloody hands, like the hurricane everyone at school knew.

She made a beeline for the border wall, which to her surprise was strategically blown up, and no use of protection anymore against the outside world. The ongoing, amplifying booms and cracks fueled her adrenaline as she fought off more waves of people. After unremorsefully uppercutting what looked to be a Palestinian Jihadist in its masked nose, she began to loot his unconscious corpse and managed to scavenge a crappy pistol and a knife. *I expected better from a terrorist*, she thought to herself. She managed to get a quarter near the wall, and to her horror, she found more where that came from. A rushing mob of shadowy figures in balaclavas began to hurl explosives and fire RPGs into the stampede, doubling the atrocities. Leaving her with no choice, Sarah grabbed a dead person's body that was helplessly laying on the bloody ground. A savage mountain holler bolted from her mouth as she used the corpse as a battering ram and a meatshield from the gunshots and explosives, becoming the Tarzan of hell. As more and more blood and gore gushed from the corpse, she began to feel the adrenaline increasing through her veins.

Sarah had realized she had made it to the opening in the wall when the body was entirely dismembered and red covered her hands and overalls, reaching to her tattered shoes. She began to feel insane and even more unhinged than she ever felt, and she looked like she had come straight out of a horror movie. Scars engulfed her face and arms, the lens of her glasses was cracked, her elegant wavy hair had become a storm of having no end, and she had become too sour to ever be sweet again. Her heart had turned to stone. She gripped her stolen knife with all of her dear life, as the unrest continued behind her back and she walked through the blasted metal wall into the remains of what was the West Bank.

Dashes of fires and fumes were on every house, and every street and masked rebels began to loot and roam the streets. Slaughtered and dismembered bodies littered the corners of streets and remains of houses and the air smelled of black death. Stings and strikes of missiles can be

heard all around and lit the sky a smoky orange. Sarah stopped in the middle of it all, and couldn't believe one second of what her eyes were telling her. She picked up a massive torn piece of cloth that had caught her attention away from the ruckus and when she spread it out on the charred ground, its dusty red, green, white, and black tones revealed what was left of a fallen world she had never known of. She tuned out the violence and crisis as she stood there and marveled at the discovery of the flag, letting her curiosity carry her away from reality. But as she wondered more, she felt a sudden flare of anger form an aura over her.

"Who are these people?" she demanded, as she began to stomp her foot onto the ground and pace like a wasp. "What the hell just happened? Why do I feel like I have been gaslit? Why is the world treating me like I have no brain!"

Then as if something took her rant personally, she felt a sharp piercing blow to her left leg and fell to the ground, knocking her glasses off. She grunted and groaned as the wound began to throb and spread to every nerve in her leg, causing her the most unbearable pain she endured since the start of the night. Her eyes began to water as she swore under her breath, and a figure who she would have suspected to be the grim reaper at first stood at her head, holding a laser pistol.

"Who are these people you ask?" the figure responded. "I am those people."

Sarah, who thought she was tripping for a second, managed to make out the appearance and the voice of the slender and modest-looking figure, most notably the pink headscarf. As she squinted harder and harder, into the pixels of what was now her vision, she felt goosebumps form all over her body and her eyes began to widen in shock as a single tear managed to flow down her left cheek. And her mind went blank of all except for one last faint candlelight of a past she thrived before the dark, one last hopeful spark of life.

"Zafrat, is that you?"