The Chosen, by Chaim Potok

In A Nutshell
The Chosen, Chaim Potok's first novel, was published in 1967. It's the story of two Jewish teenage boys coming of age in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York between 1944 and 1949. The novel is loaded with Jewish history, and contains a variety of perspectives on Judaism. Author Chaim Potok, like the two teens in his novel, grew up in Brooklyn, New York. Both his mother and father were strictly observant Orthodox Jews and his family didn't support his interest in writing – they didn’t want any of their sons involved in secular activities. This conflict definitely shows up in interesting ways in The Chosen. In his own life, Potok began practicing Conservative Judaism, which had fewer restrictions and allowed him to be both an artist and a Jew.

Visit Shmoop for much more analysis:

- The Chosen Themes
- The Chosen Quotes
- The Chosen Summary
- Also: literary devices, characters, trivia, audio, photos, links, and more

Big Picture Study Questions

1. How might this novel have been different if the female characters were fleshed out and fully realized?

2. Is there any humor in this novel? If so, what are some funny moments? If not, why do you think this is? Would the novel benefit from more humor or less humor, or is it just right?
Is Reuven a reliable narrator? That is, do you trust that he’s telling us the truth, as he remembers it? If you do, why do you think that is? If not, what doesn’t ring true about Reuven?

Visit Shmoop for many more The Chosen Study Questions