“OI VAY!” AND “EXCELSIOR!”: JEWISH REPRESENTATION AND MORAL LESSONS IN GRAPHIC NOVELS AND COMIC BOOKS

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BEN GRIMM AKA “THE THING”

• First appearance in 1961
• Transformed into hardened rock creature after exposure to cosmic rays
• Underwent second bar mitzvah due having been The Thing for 13 years (in-universe)
• Member of the Fantastic Four

The Thing Vol.2 #8 (2006)
KATHERINE (KITTY) PRYDE
AKA SHADOWCAT

• First appeared in X-Men Issue 129 (1980)
• Wears Magen David necklace, celebrates Hanukah and other ceremonies in-universe
• Can phase through objects/disappear
• Member of X-Men
MAGNETO

- First appearance X-Men #1 (1963)
- Experiences during WW2 made official in Uncanny X-Men #150 (1981)-Only member of his family to survive Auschwitz
- These experiences made him despise humanity and made his goal to protect all mutants
- Can control all metals and magnetism, telekinetic powers related to this control

SHALOMAN

- Created by Al Wiesner in 1985, first appearance in Shaloman #1, 1988
- Goal was to create a Jewish version of Superman to serve as role-model
- Created by three wizards using lightning to bring the “shin-rock” to life—Awaits cry of “Oi Vay!” to come to life to assist those in trouble
- Many adventures revolve around protecting Jewish interests such as the Exodus and matzah factories during Passover

Shaloman V.3:6
HAGIBOR

• Tzvi Lebetkin is the author/illustrator
• Each issue is bilingual English/Hebrew
• 8th grader Aryeh Rosen transforms into HaGibor to fight against the enemies of Torah and Am Yisrael
• Carries “Comic K Kashrut” seal of approval as proof of its acceptability
HEREVILLE:

- Story and illustrations by Barry Deutsch, coloring by Jake Richmond
- Chronicles how Mirka, an Orthodox girl received her troll-fighting sword and training while preserving her observance of Judaism
- Won the AJL Sydney Taylor Jewish Book Award (OLDER) in 2011
THE DESERT DIARY

• Authored and illustrated by Gadi Pollack
• Chronicles the Israelites’ journey through the Desert through the eyes of a young boy
• Contains approbations from the Board of Supervision for Jewish Literature attesting to the positive value of its content
THE FEARFUL HEROES (2015)

• By Noach Rubin, illustrated by Aharon Zev Bernstein
• Story in which the Jews in Lublin band together to defeat the Nazis persecuting them
• Like Gadi Pollack's Desert Diary it contains approbations attesting to its acceptability
REFERENCES AND CONTACT INFO

• Marvel Database:
  https://marvel.fandom.com/wiki/Marvel_Database

• The Comic Books on the Ultra-Orthodox Bookshelf by Melody Barron:

• My email for further questions/queries is elieberman@huc.edu