

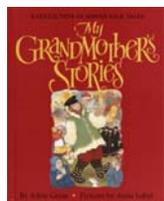
A TREASURY OF JEWISH LORE AND LEGEND

For Children of All Ages

Collections of Tales

Gold, Sharlya and Mishael Maswari Caspi. **THE ANSWERED PRAYER AND OTHER YEMENITE FOLKTALES.** Illus. by Marjory Wunsch. Jewish Publication Society, 2004. Elementary, Middle-School

Twelve folktales, both sad and humorous, give a glimpse of the lives of Yemenite Jews. The reader is struck by how often danger from their non-Jewish neighbors motivates these tales. Best for telling to children in third grade and up. This book is a paperback reissue of a collection first published in 1990.



Geras, Adele . **MY GRANDMOTHER'S STORIES: A COLLECTION OF JEWISH FOLKTALES, REV. ED.** Illus. by Anita Lobel. Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. Primary, Elementary

A new edition of the 1990 Sydney Taylor Book Award winner, with fresh, colorful illustrations by a renowned illustrator. Excellent for reading aloud, these traditional Jewish tales are framed by a narrative involving a little girl and her grandmother in Grandmother's apartment in Israel several decades ago.

Gershator, Phillis . **WISE...AND NOT SO WISE: TEN TALES FROM THE RABBIS.** Illus. by Alexa Ginsburg. Jewish Publication Society, 2004. Elementary

A delightful collection of stories adapted from the Talmud and Midrash. Each one is followed by the author's comments, giving sources, mentioning alternative versions, saying how she changed or embellished the tale, and asking questions that explore both the meaning of the story and how it reflects rabbinical thinking. Attractive illustrations in shades of black and grey are a pleasant addition to stories that beg to be read aloud or told.

Goldin, Barbara Diamond. **JOURNEYS WITH ELIJAH: EIGHT TALES OF THE PROPHET.** Illus. by Jerry Pinkney,. Harcourt/Gulliver Books, 1999. Primary, Elementary

Stunning color illustrations decorate these stories that are set in different parts of the world where Jews have lived, including China, Argentina, and Persia. The focus is on Elijah's message of kindness and compassion. A Sydney Taylor Honor Book for Older Readers.

Jaffe, Nina **THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR: STORIES OF THE PROPHET ELIJAH.** Illus. by Elivia Savadier. Scholastic, 1997. Primary, Elementary, Middle-School

Spirited writing and sparkling illustrations portray Elijah in different guises, settings, and historical periods as he delivers his universal blessings of comfort and peace. This is the second collaboration between the author and illustrator to win a Sydney Taylor Book Award. The source notes are excellent.

Jaffe, Nina . **TALES FOR THE SEVENTH DAY.** Illus. by Kelly Stribling Sutherland,. Scholastic, 2000. Elementary, Middle-School

Seven tales follow a gracefully written Introduction describing traditional observances that have maintained Jewish identity and continuity. The tales are adapted from Talmud, folk literature, and Jewish legend.

Jaffe, Nina . **THE UNINVITED GUEST AND OTHER JEWISH HOLIDAY TALES.** Illus. by Elivia Savadier. Scholastic, 1993. Primary, Elementary

An outstanding collection of Jewish folktales for the holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Hanukkah, Purim, Passover, and Shabbat. The Yom Kippur tale, "Miracles on the Sea", is adapted from an I. L. Peretz story; sources for all the tales are given and Jaffe's retellings and Savadier's illustrations sparkle. The notes, as usual with books by this author, are exemplary. Winner of a Sydney Taylor Book Award.



Oberman, Sheldon . **SOLOMON AND THE ANT AND OTHER JEWISH FOLKTALES.** Boyds Mills Press, 2006. Primary, Elementary, Middle-School, Adult

An outstanding collection of forty three Jewish tales from the Bible, rabbinic sources, and all over the world where Jews have lived. Talking animals, tricksters, fools, wise men and women, rabbis and kings all have their say, given voice by the late Sheldon Oberman in an appropriate folkloric style: pithy dialogue, concrete images, informal language, and simple sentences. Peninnah Schram's introduction and commentary are invaluable additions to the collection, which includes notes, sources and variants, and motif numbers from the Israel Folk Archives (IFA) for each story. Unillustrated, it is an excellent resource for teachers, librarians, and other storytellers.

Philip, Neil . **THE PIRATE PRINCESS AND OTHER FAIRY TALES.** Illus. by Mark Weber., Arthur A. Levine/Scholastic, 2005. Primary, Elementary

Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, one of the great Hasidic masters, told stories in Yiddish and Hebrew in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. His followers have preserved and interpreted them up to the present day. In this outstanding collection, seven of the more child-friendly stories are retold and illustrated. In an eloquent introduction, Philip presents background on the tales and explains his own approach to changing them for a general readership. Highly recommended.

Prose, Francine. **THE ANGEL'S MISTAKE: STORIES OF CHELM.** Illus. by Mark Podwal. HarperCollins/Greenwillow, 1997. Primary

In a charming marriage of words and pictures, this version of some of the Chelm stories, adapted successfully for a younger-than-usual audience, tells of how a botched mission by two angels created the legendary town of fools.

Rogasky, Barbara . **THE GOLEM.** Illus. by Trina Schart Hyman. Holiday House, 1996. Elementary, Middle-School

Told in twelve chapters, Rogasky's tales of the Golem emphasize the recurrent threat of anti-Semitism, linking the Blood Libel that endangered the Jews of sixteenth century Prague with the Holocaust. From his creation to his death, the Golem is a compelling figure but the hero of the stories is Rabbi Loew, who created and then destroyed him. The outstanding illustrations, several per chapter, capture both the outward and inward qualities of the characters and the distinctive look of Prague. An excellent version of the classic tale for older children.

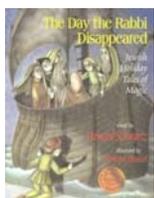
Roth, Rita. **THE POWER OF SONG AND OTHER SEPHARDIC TALES.** Illus. by Alexa Ginsburg. Jewish Publication Society, 2007. Elementary, Middle School.

When Jews were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492, they took their tales with them. This collection of thirteen tales show the influence of the lands where they settled. In addition to the stories – some happy, some sad – the author has included comments about each one, notes about Jewish folklore, and the sources that she used. Illustrated softly in grey, black, and white, it is a timeless collection that will enthrall adults as well as children.

Schwartz, Howard and Barbara Rush. **THE DIAMOND TREE: JEWISH TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD.** Illus. by Uri Shulevitz,. HarperCollins, 1991. Primary, Elementary

A sparkling collection of Jewish tales from Eastern Europe and the Middle East, told with folkloric clarity and charm. Readers will find stories from the Talmud, tales set in Chelm, and others about a foolish but lovable little boy named Chusham, a child no bigger than a walnut,

and a giant, among others. Some of the motifs will be familiar: a bear who eats children; a witch who captures children; and a thumb-sized person. They exemplify values of the Jewish people and introduce children to some classic tales. The illustrations, the book design, and the authors' source notes are all excellent.



Schwartz, Howard . **THE DAY THE RABBI DISAPPEARED: JEWISH HOLIDAY TALES OF MAGIC.** Illus. by Monique Passicot. Viking, 2000. Elementary, Middle-School

The magic in these tales - of dreams, heavenly journeys, and secret names - is used to protect and save the Jewish people. Several of the stories feature learned women and all twelve of them are associated with the major festivals, Rosh Hodesh, and Shabbat.

Schwartz, Howard . **INVISIBLE KINGDOMS: JEWISH TALES OF ANGELS, SPIRITS, AND DEMONS.** Illus. by Stephen Fieser. HarperCollins, 2002. Elementary, Middle-School, High-School, Adult

In this fascinating collection of folklore, angels serve as G-d's messengers, spirits of the dead haunt this world as ghosts, and evil forces known as demons try to leave humans astray. Stories are from a variety of places where Jews have lived. Source notes identify each tale. Schwartz's retellings preserve the fluid, concrete style of oral storytelling and each story is fresh and engaging. They vary in length and will appeal to a wide age range, including adults.

Schwartz, Howard and Barbara Rush. **A COAT FOR THE MOON AND OTHER JEWISH TALES.** Illus. by Michael Iofin. Jewish Publication Society, 1999. Primary, Elementary

A top-notch collection of folklore told by Jews in many geographical areas and ages. The values of charity, justice, loyalty, wisdom, cooperation, kindness, and love are illuminated in stories of demons, witches, giants, and other magical beings.

Serwer, Blanche Luria. **LET'S STEAL THE MOON: JEWISH TALES, ANCIENT AND RECENT.** Illus. by Trina Schart Hyman. Little Brown, 1970. Primary, Elementary

This engaging collection of eleven folktales from the Middle East and Eastern Europe contains stories about King Solomon, the Golem, the Fools of Chelm, and Rabbi Hillel among others. Hyman's dark, dramatic illustrations portray characters, setting, and action as effectively as the text. A classic collection.

Simon, Solomon . **MORE WISE MEN OF HELM AND THEIR MERRY TALES.** Illus. by Stephen Kraft. Behrman House, 1965. Elementary, Middle-School

Another classic collection of stories from the legendary town of Helm, where all the world's fools were mistakenly dropped by an angel. Yossel-Zissel the teacher, Shloime the mathematician, and the Council of Sages all appear, presenting readers with a humorously ironic view of human foolishness and a birdseye view of shtetl life and spirit.

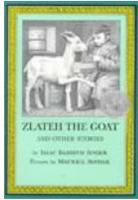
Simon, Solomon . **THE WISE MEN OF HELM AND THEIR MERRY TALES.** Behrman House, 1961. ISBN: 0874411254. Elementary, Middle-School

Originally published in 1942, **The Wise Men of Helm** was one of the first modern treatments of Jewish folklore for children. The narration is dead-pan and completely serious, as though nothing could be more sensible than Helm logic. The life-affirming spirit of the shtetl is revealed in the stories, as well as a distinguishing human characteristic - the ability to laugh at ourselves. A classic, followed by **More Tales of the Wise Men of Chelm.**

Singer, Isaac Bashevis. **NAFTALI THE STORYTELLER AND HIS HORSE, SUS.** Illus. by Margot Zemach. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976. Primary, Elementary

A collection of eight stories including several set in Chelm and several based on events from Singer's childhood. Naftali, the title character, is very much like Singer himself: a storyteller

who keeps the past alive. His story is a celebration of books, learning, and imagination - one that every storyteller should know. In the other tales, imps and fools appear along with Singer's family, his experiences at cheder, and the inquiring mind of a child who became a great writer. Margot Zemach's scratchy black and white illustrations capture the essence of each story. A classic.



Singer, Isaac Bashevis. **ZLATEH THE GOAT AND OTHER STORIES.** Illus. by Maurice Sendak. HarperCollins, 1994. Primary, Elementary

First published in 1976, this now classic collection of folktales translated from the Yiddish is illustrated with some of Sendak's finest work. There are tales from Chelm and stories of the supernatural among the seven included. As Singer's first book for children, it can also be considered one of his finest and a landmark in Jewish children's literature. No Judaic library should be without it; all Jewish children should know these stories. Translated by the author and Elizabeth Shub, who translated most of Singer's books for children.

Taback, Simms . **KIBITZERS AND FOOLS: TALES MY ZAYDA TOLD ME.** Viking, 2005. Primary, Elementary

Boundlessly exuberant, this collection of Yiddish stories, maxims, and jokes is illustrated in Taback's signature and award-winning style. Visual details abound, even to the endpapers and table of contents. In a short introduction, Taback introduces Yiddish and urges readers to have some chutzpah and try it. As in much of the lore from Eastern Europe, irony is the prevailing tone so children need to have some sense of the disjunction between what is and what should be before they enjoy it. A gem!

Wiesel, Elie . **KING SOLOMON AND HIS MAGIC RING.** Illus. by Mark Podwal. HarperCollins/Greenwillow, 1999. Elementary

Twenty wonder tales based on Talmud and Midrash are presented in a somewhat formal style. Demons, angels, flying carpets, and talking animals are featured and the tales show King Solomon's legacy to be a mixed one.

Illustrated Tales

Chapman, Carol . **THE TALE OF MESHKA THE KVETCH.** Illus. by Arnold Lobel. Dutton, 1980. Preschool, Primary

Meshka complained from morning to night: about her sore back, her tiny house, her neglectful daughter, her lazy son. After her tongue gets a "weird, tingly kind of itch" - a kvetch's itch, the rabbi tells her - all of her complaints begin to come true, leading her to realize that her life wasn't so bad after all. And because the kvetch's itch can't be cured, Meshka must always praise the good in her life. Told with kindly humor, this wise look at human nature has illustrations that show Meshka's plight to perfection: her feet as melons, a large pickle on her son's bed in place of her son, etc. Young children are mesmerized by this story, taking it seriously and finding it funny. It can rightfully be called a classic.

Davis, Aubrey. **BAGELS FROM BENNY.** Illus. by Dusan Petricic. Kids Can Press, 2003. Primary, Elementary

Based on a Jewish folktale, this is a whimsical yet serious story of a little boy's attempts to connect with G-d. To thank G-d for His gift of the wheat that makes his Grandpa's delicious bagels, Benny takes bagels to the synagogue and hides them in the Holy Ark. When the bagels disappear, week after week, Benny is delighted that his gift has been accepted. Then, he is disappointed to learn that the bagels have been eaten, all along, by a hungry, tattered man.

Grandpa explains that by feeding a hungry person, Benny has shown his thanks to G-d by helping to make the world a better place. Winner of a Sydney Taylor Book Award.

Davis, Aubrey . **BONE BUTTON BORSCHT**. Illus. by Dusan Petricic. Kids Can Press, 1995. Primary, Elementary

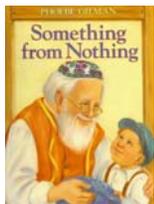
A hungry beggar teaches a town full of selfish people how to share by showing them the secret of making delicious borscht. This splendidly illustrated story is excellent for reading aloud. Many children will recognize that it is a version of the tale of "Stone Soup." Set in a shtetl with most of the action taking place in a synagogue, it is a good example of how a tale can be Judaicized.

Fowles, Shelley . **THE BACHELOR AND THE BEAN**. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. Primary, Elementary

Jewish tradition has never shied away from shining the spotlight on unlovable behavior. In this version of a Moroccan-Jewish folktale, a grumpy old bachelor, an irritable imp, and a nasty-tempered thief are the focus of interest. It is written with sly humor and an understated sense of the ridiculous, telling the story of a magic pot that is given to the bachelor by the imp and then stolen, not once but several times. When the bachelor recognizes in the thief a woman after his own heart, "they were married under the chuppah." The full-page, deeply colored illustrations reflect the Moroccan setting and the characters' personalities, adding fanciful details and Jewish motifs.

Gershator, Phillis . **HONI'S CIRCLE OF TREES**. Illus. by Mim Green. Jewish Publication Society, 1995. Primary, Elementary

Honi is a character from the Talmud, known for his magical circle-making powers and his love of trees. In this version, Honi plants carob trees, falls asleep, and wakes many years later to find that although all of the people he knew are long gone, he is privileged to see his trees bear fruit. Soft, expressive black and white illustrations enhance this classic story.



Gilman, Phoebe . **SOMETHING FROM NOTHING**. Scholastic, 1993. Preschool, Primary

A lovable story based on a Yiddish song, this shows a little boy named Joseph growing older and his beloved blanket diminishing into successively smaller articles as the fabric wears out. The remarkable illustrations tell several stories at once and show a mouse family living underneath the floor boards of Joseph's house, recycling all the discarded fabric. Other versions of the story are Sims Taback's **Joseph Had a Little Overcoat**, Steve Sanfield's **Bit By Bit**, and Jodi Icenogge's **'Til the Cows Come Home**.

Hirsh, Marilyn . **COULD ANYTHING BE WORSE?**. Holiday House, 1974. Preschool, Primary

In one of the best loved of Jewish tales, a man with a very crowded house consults his rabbi for advice. Following the rabbi's strange advice, he learns that misfortune is relative and that being content with what one has is best. There are many versions of this story, not all with Jewish content.

Hirsh, Marilyn . **JOSEPH WHO LOVED THE SABBATH**. Illus. by Devis Grebu. Viking, 1986. Primary

One of many outstanding books of Jewish content by an author-illustrator whose untimely death robbed Jewish children's literature of a stellar talent. In this story, retold but not illustrated by Hirsh, Joseph works hard all week for a greedy taskmaster so that he can savor his one day of Sabbath rest. When Sorab, his employer, dreams that Joseph will inherit all of his wealth, he spends it all on one splendid ruby and then sails away with the ruby to keep it from Joseph. In true folklore fashion, the boat he is on sinks, the ruby is swallowed by a fish, and Joseph buys the fish, with ruby, to cook for a Sabbath meal. When he discovers the ruby and

his newfound wealth, Joseph invites everyone to celebrate Shabbat with him. A Talmudic tale, told and illustrated with verve.

Hirsh, Marilyn **THE RABBI AND THE TWENTY NINE WITCHES.** Holiday House, 1976. Primary

In this Talmudic legend, witches dance and witches melt when a rabbi uses his wits and courage to drive them out of town. Smoky blue, grey, and black illustrations add to the air of magic. Excellent for telling or reading aloud.

Jaffe, Nina . **THE WAY MEAT LOVES SALT.** Illus. by Louise August. Henry Holt, 1998. Primary

A Jewish version of the Cinderella story with a touch of King Lear, this relates the initially sad but ultimately happy tale of a young woman named Mireleh. The fairy godmother is transformed into Elijah and the setting is Eastern Europe. August's illustrations are superb and Jaffe's source notes are, as usual, impeccable.

Kimmel, Eric A. **GERSHON'S MONSTER: A STORY FOR THE JEWISH NEW YEAR.** Illus. by Jon J. Muth. Scholastic, 2000. Primary, Elementary

The teachings of the Baal Shem Tov are woven into this satisfying folktale about tashlikh and teshuvah. Not until his precious children are threatened by a fearsome sea monster composed of all the sins he has carelessly tossed away, does Gershon truly repent. The moody watercolors are the perfect companions to a story that personifies abstract concepts in a way that makes them meaningful to children.

Kimmel, Eric A. **HERSHEL AND THE HANUKKAH GOBLINS.** Illus. by Trina Scharf Hyman. Holiday House, 1989. Primary

Hershel of Ostropol, one of the central characters in Eastern European Jewish folklore, is the hero of this suspenseful tale. Vowing to help some villagers whose synagogue is haunted and whose Hanukkah celebrations are ruined by goblins, he stations himself in the spooky synagogue and, night after night, outwits an ever-more ferocious goblin, including their king on the eighth night. The illustrations and text are in perfect harmony, making this one of children's most beloved Hanukkah stories. A must for reading aloud.

Kimmel, Eric A. **THE JAR OF FOOLS: EIGHT HANUKKAH STORIES FROM CHELM.** Illus. by Mordicai Gerstein. Holiday House, 2000. Elementary

Too delicious to be enjoyed only at Hanukkah, these effervescent tales show how the wisdom of fools might be the wisest kind of all. The illustrations are outstanding.



Kimmel, Eric A. **ONIONS AND GARLIC.** Illus. by Katya Arnold. Holiday House, 1996. Primary, Elementary

Based on a poem by Hayyim Nahman Bialik, this is a tale of the foolish son whose father despairs of him, whose brothers scoff at him, but who eventually makes good. The motif is a common one in folk literature and there is nothing here but the characters' name to mark it as Jewish. Nevertheless, Kimmel's fluid, fast-paced style and the vibrant illustrations distinguish it. Arnold's art is all line and movement, with heavily outlined shapes enfolding the bold black type.

Lieberman, Syd . **THE WISE SHOEMAKER OF STUDENA.** Illus. by Martin Lemelman. Jewish Publication Society, 1994. Preschool, Primary

Yossi the shoemaker is renowned for his good advice so a rich man from Budapest invites him to his daughter's wedding. When Yossi appears in shabby clothes, the man thinks he is a beggar and turns him away. Deciding to teach the man a lesson, Yossi borrows some finery, returns to the wedding, and is welcomed now as the honored guest. When he pours wine into his pants, soup into his boots, and peas into his hat, the guests are appalled and finally his

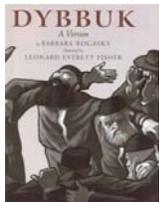
host demands an explanation. Yossi explains that he is feeding his clothes, because they are the reason he was invited, not for himself or his wisdom. Back home in Studena, Yossi tells his wife, "Fools see people's clothes; the wise see their souls." Bright, lively illustrations capture the absurdity of Yossi's actions, which fascinate children and teach a lesson without preaching. A classic picture book.

Ludwig, Warren . **OLD NOAH'S ELEPHANTS**. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1991.. Preschool, Primary

A thoroughly charming version of an Israeli folktale, set on Noah's Ark in a time of crisis: the elephants are eating up all of the food and getting so fat that the ark is sinking. Poor Noah appeals to God, who tells him, "Tickle the hyena." It's one of those cryptic heavenly orders that works out in its own way, as animal after animal is affected by it. Finally, a tiny mouse hides from the cat, who is being chased by the dog, in a barrel of cabbages. And, when the elephants lift out a cabbage and see a mouse, what do they do? Run to opposite ends of the ark because - *elephants are afraid of mice!* Warren Ludwig's illustrations delight children because of their humor, good nature, and expressiveness - each animal is distinctive and all of the figures invite closer looks; the two elephants' large, wise eyes are especially compelling. A classic folktale that is ideal for reading to young children.

Prose, Francine . **YOU NEVER KNOW: A LEGEND OF THE LAMED-VAVNIKS**. Illus. by Mark Podwal. HarperCollins/Greenwillow, 1998. Primary

With a light touch and glowing, impressionistic pictures, the story is told of poor Shmuel, the shoemaker whose prayers save the town of Plotchnik from drought and flood. Inspired by legends of the thirty six righteous people whose identity must be kept secret, this portrays abstract themes of goodness, justice and humility with simplicity and great child-appeal. A Sydney Taylor Honor Book for Younger Readers.



Rogasky, Barbara . **DYBBUK: A VERSION**. Illus. by Leonard Everett Fisher. Holiday House, 2005. Middle-School, High-School

A passionately written and dramatically illustrated version of the classic Jewish tale of broken vows and supernatural possession, based on S. Y. Ansky's famous play. Konin and Leah are lovers who are forbidden to marry, thus violating the forgotten vow that their fathers made years ago. Driven to seek a solution in Kabbalah and then the darker powers, Konin dies and inhabits the mortal body of his beloved. A ghostly trial and an exorcism take place but the love between Konin and Leah will not be denied and they are united in death. Far more serious than the version of the story for younger children by Francine Prose and Mark Podwal, this conjures up elemental emotions in a mesmerizing blend of writing and art.

Rothenberg, Joan . **YETTELE'S FEATHERS**. Hyperion, 1995. Primary

A classic picture book about lashon hora - gossip. Yettele loves to gossip, not realizing that her words hurt others. When the townspeople who have been stung by her words stop talking to her, Yettele seeks the rabbi's help. He tells her to cut open her largest pillow and bring it to him. A gust of wind blows the pillow from her arms and feathers fly everywhere; Yettele tries to pick them all up and stuff them back into the pillow but to no avail. "And so it is with those stories of yours," says the Rabbi. "Once the words leave your lips, they are as impossible to back as those feathers!" Having learned a lesson, Yettele changes her ways. Full-page illustrations in gouache reflect the action and portray shtetl life. Written and illustrated with a droll, winsome touch, this is a beloved story.

Schwartz, Howard. **BEFORE YOU WERE BORN**. Illus. by Kristina Swarner. Roaring Brook Press, 2005. Preschool, Primary

This beautifully written and illustrated little story is adapted from Midrash Tanhuma, telling of the angel who gives an unborn baby a soul, teaches it all of the

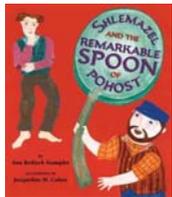
world's wisdom, including the entire Torah, and then removes all that knowledge at birth by touching the baby above the lip, causing it to forget everything and leaving the mark above the lip that all humans bear. Told with the intimacy and simplicity of a bedtime story, it is outstanding!

Schweiger-D'mil, Itzhak . **HANNAH'S SABBATH DRESS**. Illus. by Ora Eitan. Simon and Schuster, 1996. Preschool, Primary

This flawless picture book based on a familiar story extolls the joys of Sabbath while teaching the mitzvah of helping others. The illustrations almost dance off the page.

Singer, Isaac Bashevis. **ELIJAH THE SLAVE**. Illus. by Anthony Frasconi. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970. Primary, Elementary

Appearing in many versions, this retelling of an Elijah story is distinguished by the economy and dignity of its language and the power of its color woodcuts. A poor and virtuous scribe is helped by Elijah, who commands him to sell him as a slave. As a slave, Elijah builds a palace overnight and wins his freedom. Elijah here is a commanding figure, bringing solace to the deserving by working miracles. A classic of Jewish children's literature.



Stampler, Ann Redisch. **SHLEMAZEL AND THE REMARKABLE SPOON OF POHOST**. Illus. by Jacqueline M. Cohen, Clarion, 2006. Primary, Elementary

An idler becomes a mensch in this delightful story by the author and illustrator of **Something for Nothing**. Shlemazel blames his idleness on bad luck; he's so unlucky that even if he tried to work, something terrible would happen. Moshe the tinker devises a scheme involving a spoon that he tells Shlemazel will help a man find all the treasure he'll ever need. And so it does, because by the story's end, Shlemazel has earned himself a wife, respect, and a trade. Sparkling dialogue and folkloric illustrations convey the setting, characters, action, and theme to perfection.



Stampler, Ann Redisch. **SOMETHING FOR NOTHING**. Illus. by Jacqueline M. Cohen, Clarion Books, 2003. Primary, Elementary

Don't confuse the title with all of the versions of the "something from nothing" story - this is quite different although of similar subtlety. It is a trickster tale, in which a clever and peace-loving dog foils three rowdy cats who terrorize the neighborhood by playing upon their greed. All of the characters are animals but the story is steeped in Eastern European Jewish tradition - reflecting, as the author notes in an afterword, the triumph of the underdog over powerful uncertainties. The stunning illustrations complement and enhance the story. Excellent for reading aloud.

Taback, Simms . **JOSEPH HAD A LITTLE OVERCOAT**. Viking, 1999. Preschool, Primary

This illustrated version of a Yiddish song won the Caldecott Award. It is a version of the Sydney Taylor Book Award winner entitled **Something From Nothing** by Phoebe Gilman. The clever artwork includes die-cut shapes and the theme suggests that an imaginative creation - a story - is more lasting, useful, and nourishing than something material. A Sydney Taylor Honor Book for Younger Readers.

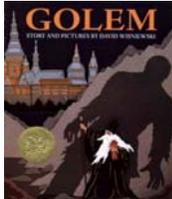
Waldman, Debby . **A SACK FULL OF FEATHERS**. Illus. by Cindy Revell. Orca, 2006.. Preschool, Primary

A traditional Jewish tale about gossip and lashon hora is given a fresh, new treatment in this vibrant picture book. Graced with bright, dancing acrylic illustrations, it is about a little boy who overhears bits of stories in his father's store and then spreads them among his friends without regard for their truth or for the people in the shtetl whom they might hurt. Observing Yankel, the rabbi decides to teach him a lesson. He gives him a bag of feathers, instructs him to leave one in front of each house, and then to go back and pick them all up. This isn't possible,

of course; the feathers have all blown away. While trying to fulfill his mission, Yankel becomes dirty, wet, bruised, and discouraged. "They're gone," he tells the rabbi. "I can't get them back." Over a bowl of hot soup and some tasty rugelach, the rabbi gently explains to Yankel how it is the same with the stories he spreads: "Once you tell a story, you cannot take it back...make sure the next story you tell is your own."

Waldman, Neil . **TWO BROTHERS, THE: A LEGEND OF JERUSALEM.** Simon and Schuster/Atheneum, 1985. Preschool, Primary

This version of a well-known legend shows how King Solomon came to build the Temple on the very spot where the two brothers discover that each has been looking after the needs of the other. The illustrations resemble ancient, sun-drenched frescoes.



Wisniewski, David . **GOLEM.** Clarion Books, 1996. Primary, Elementary
A superbly illustrated and powerfully told version of the classic Golem tale, emphasizing his role in protecting the Jews of Prague. The violence in the story alarms some adults, who do not find it appropriate for primary grade children. Winner of a Caldecott Award.

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