

Zlateh the Goat

by Isaac Bashevis Singer

Classroom Favorites

Teacher's Guide by Ann Plevyak Raiford

A Perma-Bound Production

Synopsis

Zlateh the Goat is a collection of seven folktales which point out the humor and story-telling character of people from middle Europe. Ranging from laziness to naivete to silliness to love, each theme is distinct in flavor.

Biographical Sketch

Isaac Bashevis Singer was born in the small town of Radzymin, Poland on July 14, 1904. He came to the United States in 1935 and became a U.S. citizen in 1943. Married twice, he has a son, Israel, from his first marriage. Singer now lives in New York.

Singer is a well-known novelist, short story writer, children's author and translator. He has received many awards for his writing including the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1978 and the Newbery Honor Book Award for three of his children's books. He was 62 years old when he published his first children's book, *Zlateh the Goat*, and has written 16 more since then.

Most of his stories take place in the 19th and early 20th century Jewish *shtetls* (villages or ghettos) of Eastern Europe. In writing his stories, Singer draws on the tales of Jewish folklore he heard from his mother and grandmother and his own experiences in the Polish Yiddish-speaking Jewish ghetto he grew up in. Singer says, "I prefer to write about the world which I knew, which I know, best. . . I write about the things where I grew up, and where I feel completely at home."

Singer always writes in Yiddish because he states, "I always knew that a writer has to write in his own language or not at all." He usually translates his work into English himself and then has someone help him to refine the English version. His writing is also translated into French, German and Hebrew.

The Yiddish Language

In the 10th century, Jews from France emigrated to German towns along the Rhine River. These Jews spoke Hebrew and Old French and they then began to add the German dialects to their language. The Jews wrote this new language phonetically using Hebrew letters and wrote it like Hebrew from right to left.

As the Jews moved to other Eastern European countries, they borrowed, adopted and adapted words and phrases from other languages. This language is called Yiddish. The vocabulary of Yiddish is adapted from the German (70-75 percent), Hebrew

(10-20 percent), Polish, Russian, Romanian, and Ukrainian languages.

Among Jews, Hebrew was the sacred language used in religious settings while Yiddish was the language of the street and marketplace. Jewish women were not taught Hebrew, so they spoke to their children in Yiddish, who in turn spoke it to their children.

Today, the Yiddish language is not used as it once was and fewer and fewer people are learning to read, write and speak in Yiddish.

A Note About the Illustrator

Maurice Sendak has illustrated many children's books but is best known for the book he wrote and illustrated, *Where the Wild Things Are*. He received the 1963 Caldecott Award for this book. He received the 1966 New York Times Best Illustrated Award for his seventeen full page black and white illustrations in *Zlateh the Goat*.

Critic's Corner

"With the restraint and simplicity of a natural storyteller, Mr. Singer has made a gift of seven stories to all children--seven insights into the world of early 20th century middle European rural Jewish life. These tales will have wide appeal for the excellence of their interpretation; they have the poetic power of folktales - a quality of timelessness in the wisdom imparted and a feeling for the essence of human nature."

Helen B. Crawshaw, *The Horn Book Magazine*

"Based on middle-European Jewish folk material, the stories are told and illustrated with distinction. Mr. Singer achieves the ultimate in the genre--he never gets between the story and the audience."

Zena Sutherland, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

Information from: *Children's Literature Review*

Suggestions for Instruction

1. All of the stories except "Fool's Paradise" take place during the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah. To enable your students to have a better understanding of Hanukkah and the traditions referred to in the stories, have them read and discuss the parts of the handout entitled "The History of Hanukkah" and "Hanukkah Traditions" before reading the book. Making and playing dreidel using the pattern on the handout will also enhance the students' understanding of events described in the stories.

- Have students read and discuss the part of the handout on "Chelm" before reading "The Snow in Chelm", "The Mixed-Up Feet and the Silly Bridegroom" and "The First Shlemiel."
- To enable your students to more fully comprehend the events in "The Mixed-Up Feet and the Silly Bridegroom," have them read and discuss the part of the handout on "Jewish Marriages" before reading the story.
- "Grandmother's Tale" and "The Devil's Trick" can be read together to compare and contrast the devils in these stories.
- Why did Dr. Yoetz's cure work?
(*It made Atzel realize how much he missed his family and that he did not like being idle. Paradise was not what he thought it would be.*)

Student Involvement Activities

- The story ends "But, of course, what paradise is really like, no one can tell." If you could create your own paradise, what would it be like? Write a description and/or illustrate your idea of paradise.
- Based on the meaning of the word "kaddish", tell why **Kadish** was an appropriate name for Atzel's father.

Instructional Objectives

After reading and discussing the handout and the stories in *Zlateh the Goat*, and participating in the suggested activities, the student will:

- gain an understanding of Jewish beliefs, customs and traditions;
- recognize common elements in Jewish folktales;
- identify the main idea of each story;
- compare and contrast characters' traits, motives and feelings;
- draw conclusions about characters based on their actions in the story.

Pronunciation Key

Short Vowels	Long Vowels	Irregular Vowels
ă - at, had	ā - ate, play	ə - sofa, barrel
ĕ - elf, met	ē - even, meet	ô - horn
ĭ - it, him	ī - ice, bit	oo - ooze, crew
o - odd, hot		oō - look, pull
ū - up, nut		

kh - it is a guttural sound made by forming the K sound with your mouth but allowing the breath to escape in a stream as in pronouncing the H sound.

Fool's Paradise

Comprehension Study

- Why did Atzel want to die?
(*He wanted to live in paradise where he didn't have to work or study and could eat the meat of wild oxen and flesh of whales.*)

Note: This view of paradise would be very appealing to the hard working Jewish villagers who often got up at 4 a.m. and worked all day. They also did not have the luxury of eating beef as they needed the animals to help them make a living.

- How do you know Atzel's family loved him?
(*They tried to convince him that he was alive. They called in many doctors to examine him. They called Dr. Yoetz and agreed to go along with his strange cure.*)
- What activities were involved in Dr. Yoetz's cure?
(*a funeral for Atzel, a room prepared to look like paradise, servants dressed as angels, the same food was prepared each day*)

Vocabulary Study

- brooded** (pg. 6) - to keep thinking about something in a distressed or troubled way
- fasting** (pg. 7) - to eat very little or nothing
- disheveled** hair (pg. 7) - disarranged, tousled, untidy
- precious** rugs (pg. 7) - of great price or value; costly
- trays **laden** with (pg. 8) - loaded
- pomegranates** (pg. 8) - a round red fruit that contains many seeds covered with red, juicy, edible flesh
- persimmons** (pg. 8) - a yellow or orange red plum-like fruit
- goblet** (pg. 8) - a drinking glass with a base and a stem
- he ate **ravenously** (pg. 8) - with a strong desire for food and drink
- embroidered** (pg. 8) - a design on fabric done with needlework
- pondering** (pg. 11) - to think about deeply, consider carefully
(This word is used again in several of the other stories.)
- idleness** (pg. 12) - time spent doing nothing, being inactive

Pronunciation of Character Names

- Kadish** (kô' dish) Kaddish is a mourner's prayer that is said at the grave for 11 months after a death by the children of the deceased and every year on the anniversary of the death.
- Atzel** (ot' tsəl)
- Aksah** (ok' sō)
- Dr. Yoetz** (yetz)

Grandmother's Tale

Comprehension Study

- Before the stranger changed his appearance, what strange things happened to indicate he was a devil?
(*The clock struck 13 times at midnight and he did not cast a shadow.*)
- According to the rhyme in italics on page 23, what also disappeared with the devil?
(*The gold and silver coins the children won from the devil while playing dreidel, the horses and the sleigh.*)

- Why do you think the devil came to visit?
(Answers will vary.)

Vocabulary Study

- earlocks** (pg. 21) - a strip of hair in front of the ear that is not cut and is curled
- adorned** (pg. 22) - decorated
- mead** (pg. 22) - an alcoholic liquor made of fermented honey and water
- amber pipe** (pg. 22) - a yellow or brownish yellow fossil resin found along some seacoasts and used in jewelry, pipestems, etc.
- elflocks** (pg. 23) - a lock of tangled hair as if done by elves

The Snow is Chelm

Comprehension Study

- Why did the Elders want everyone to stay inside?
(So they wouldn't trample the treasure in the snow.)
- Why did their plan of carrying Gimpel fail?
(The feet of the four table carriers trampled the snow.)
- After the Elders realized they made a mistake, what did they decide to do if a treasure fell next Hanukkah? Will their new plan work?
(Four more people would carry the four table carriers.)
- What evidence can you find in the story that proves Chelm really is a village of fools?
(- When they saw the reflection of the moon in a barrel of water, they believed the moon had fallen in it.
- They thought they saw silver, pearls, and diamonds in the snow.
- It was suggested that the village buy a goose that lays golden eggs.
- It was suggested that eyeglasses that made things look bigger be purchased for everyone so the village would look bigger and would be a city.)

Student Involvement Activities

- Think of some creative ways the Elders could have used to get their message to the villagers without having to walk in the snow.
- Research non-verbal forms of communication from the past (i.e. beating messages out on drums, sending smoke signals). Share the information with classmates in a video presentation, puppet show, or cartoon.

Vocabulary Study

- consternation** (pg. 30) - alarm, panic, fear
- deliberations** (pg. 33) - careful consideration and discussion before reaching a decision

Pronunciation of Character Names

- Gronan (grŏ' nŏn)
- Tudras (tŏŏ' drə)
- Lekisch (lĕ' kish)

4. Shmerel (shmĕr' əl)

5. Gimpel (gĭm' pəl)

6. Treitle (trĭ' təl)

7. Berel (bĕr' əl) - same as Bernard or Benny

8. Yukel (yŏŏ' kəl) - a form of Jacob

9. Yontel (yŏn' təl)

The Mixed-Up Feet and the Silly Bridegroom

Comprehension Study

- Why didn't the girls get up to help their mother with the chores?
(They claimed their feet got mixed-up.)
- How did Shmelkicha help the girls solve their problem?
(She went to Chelm and asked the Elder to give her some advice. Following the Elder's advice, she whacked the bed with a stick and each girl found her own feet and jumped out of bed. Shmelkicha and her husband also started to marry their daughters off to avoid the problem of the mixed-up feet in the future.)
- What other problems did the Elder help Shmelka and his family to solve?
(- Yenta did not want to marry a stranger.
- Yenta and Lemel did not know how to sign their names.
- Lemel was ruining all of the gifts he was given.)
- Why is "silly bridegroom" a good description of Lemel?
(He broke, lost or ruined all of his gifts. He didn't know how to sign his name. He was amazed when the Elder "guessed" the sex of his child.)

Student Involvement Activities

- Based on the description of the Elders on pages 29 and 40, draw a picture of an Elder of Chelm.
- Create a chart like the one below and fill it in with the four problems the Elder solved for Shmelka and his family.

Problem	The Elder's Solution
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Vocabulary Study

- bridegroom** (pg. 39) - a man who is about to be married or has just been married
- hamlet** (pg. 39) - a very small village
- broad bed** (pg. 39) - a very wide bed
- commotion** (pg. 39) - noise and confusion
- remedy** (pg. 40) - something that corrects a problem
- pronouncement** (pg. 40) - a statement of fact, opinion or judgement
- coachman** (pg. 41) - the driver of a coach or carriage
- betroted** (pg. 42) - a person engaged to be married
- King Solomon** (pg. 42) - a king of Israel who built the first Temple and was known for his wisdom

10. **cheese blintzes** (pg. 42) - a thin pancake rolled with a filling of cottage cheese
11. **borscht** (pg. 42) - a Russian beet soup served either cold or hot
12. **mother of pearl** (pg. 42) - the hard pearly inner layer of certain shells like the pearl oyster
13. **gulden** (pg. 46) - a coin of the Netherlands, Germany or Austria
14. **fiance** (pg. 46) - the person to whom one is engaged to marry
15. how the duck was **farin** (pg. 49) - how the duck is doing or the condition of the duck
2. **nobles** (pg. 57) - people having hereditary rank or title, the upper class
3. **rave and rant** (pg. 57) - to talk or say in a loud, wild way
4. **berate** (pg. 58) - to scold severely
5. **revile** (pg. 58) - scold, berate
6. **wailing** (pg. 65) - long, loud cries
7. **sages** (pg. 65) - the Elders

Pronunciation of Character Names

1. Shlemiel (shlə mēl)

Pronunciation of Character Names

1. Shmelka (shmə'kə) - a form of Samuel
2. Shmelkicha (shmə'kə khə) - a feminine version of the name Samuel.
3. Yenta (yēn' tə)
4. Peshah (pēsh' ə)
5. Trina (trē nə)
6. Yachna (yōkh nə)
7. Lemel (lēm' əl)

The First Shlemiel

Comprehension Study

1. Who supported the Shlemiel family?
(Mrs. Shlemiel)
How did she provide for them?
(by selling vegetables at the market)
2. Why did Mrs. Shlemiel tell her husband that the jam was poison?
(She was afraid he would eat the whole pot if he knew it was jam. They needed to save the jam to eat with the holiday pancakes.)
3. How and why did Shlemiel try to kill himself?
(He ate the pot of jam thinking it was poison because he did not want to face his angry wife when she found out the baby was hurt and the rooster ran away.)
4. Are the people of Chelm friendly? What happened in the story that supports your answer?
(Yes, the people are friendly. When they heard the crying, they ran to see what happened. They gave the Shlemiels more jam and cider.)

Student Involvement Activities

1. Explain how Shlemiel lived up to the meaning of his name.
2. What character in another story also wanted to die? Discuss the differences in the reasons why they wanted to die. Also discuss the methods they used to "kill" themselves.
3. Illustrate Shlemiel's dream described on pages 61 and 62.

Vocabulary Study

1. **shlemiel** (pg. 55) - a Yiddish word that means a foolish person, a simpleton, a consistently unlucky or unfortunate person, a born loser

The Devil's Trick

Comprehension Study

1. Why did David go out of his house and leave the baby alone?
(His parents had not returned home. He was very worried and wanted to go out and find them.)
2. What helped David find his way back to his house?
(the light of the Hanukkah candle)
3. What bargain did David make with the devil?
(He would give the devil back his tail that was stuck in the door, if the devil would return his parents.)
4. What do you think David would have done if the devil refused to return his parents?
(Answers will vary.)
5. What is the major difference between the two devils in their interaction with the characters in each story?
(The devil in "Grandmother's Tale" did not try to harm anyone. The devil in "The Devil's Trick" kidnapped David's parents and was also trying to catch David.)
6. What supernatural creatures appeared with the devil in both stories?
(goblins)

Student Involvement Activities

1. Based on the descriptions given of the devils on pages 23, 71 and 73, draw a picture of each devil.
2. Write a list of adjectives that you think would best describe David and his actions. Write your reason for choosing each adjective.
3. Read the Bible story of David and Goliath (I Samuel, Chapter 17). Write about the similarities between David in the Bible story and David in "The Devil's Trick."

Vocabulary Study

1. **imps** (pg. 72) - a devil's offspring, a young demon
2. **singed** (pg. 73) - to burn slightly

Zlateh the Goat

Comprehension Study

1. What are the reasons Zlateh was going to be sold to the butcher?
(Due to the warm weather, no one needed the services of Reuven the furrier so they had no money. They needed the money for Hanukkah supplies. Zlateh was old and gave little milk.)
2. Did the family want to sell Zlateh? Support your answer.
(No, Reuven decided only after long hesitation and the mother and daughters cried when they learned of Reuven's decision.)
3. How did Zlateh and Aaron survive the storm?
(They stayed inside a snow covered haystack. Zlateh survived on hay. Zlateh provided milk and warmth for Aaron.)
4. After the storm, why didn't Aaron take Zlateh to the butcher?
(Aaron had always loved Zlateh, but she helped him survive the storm and now he loved her like a sister. Aaron decided never to part with her.)

Student Involvement Activities

1. Aaron dreamed about warm weather when he was in the snow covered haystack. Write what you might dream about if you were lost in a desert, a rainforest, or a dark cave.
2. Based on the meaning of the name "Zlateh," tell why this was a good name for the goat.
3. Find passages in "Zlateh the Goat" and "The Devil's Trick" that link the devil and the supernatural with storms.

Vocabulary Study

1. **furrier** (pg. 79) - a person who processes furs or makes and repairs fur garments
2. **astonished** (pg. 80) - surprised, amazed
3. **cleft hooves** (pg. 81) - a hoof divided into two parts
4. **bleated** (pg. 81) - the cry or sound made by a sheep or goat

Pronunciation of Character Names

1. Zlateh (zlō' tē) - It is a female name. It also is a coin.
2. Reuven (rōō' vən)
3. Feyvel (fī' vəl)

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Special thanks to Anna Altshuler and Millie Krukin for their assistance in providing background information, as well as the pronunciation and meaning of Yiddish and Hebrew words.

Bibliography of other children's books written by Isaac Bashevis Singer:

Mazel and Shlimazel; or, The Milk of a Lioness, 1967
The Fearsome Inn, 1967 (Newbery Honor Book)
When Shlemiel Went to Warsaw and Other Stories, 1968 (Newbery Honor Book)
Joseph and Koza; or, The Sacrifice to the Vistula, 1970
Alone in the Wild Forest, 1971
The Topsy-Turvy Emperor of China, 1971
The Fools of Chelm and Their History, 1973
A Tale of Three Wishes, 1976
Naftali the Storyteller and His Horse, Sus and Other Stories, 1976
The Power of Light: Eight Stories for Hanukkah, 1980
The Golem, 1982
A Day of Pleasure: Stories of a Boy Growing Up in Warsaw, 1969 (National Book Award for Children's Books)
This book contains 19 autobiographical stories about Singer's childhood in Poland from 1908 to 1918.
Elijah the Slave: A Hebrew Legend Retold, 1970
The Wicked City, 1972
Why Noah Chose the Dove, 1974
Stories for Children, 1984

Additional Student Involvement Activities

1. Read Jewish folktales by other authors.
Adler, David A., *The Children of Chelm*
Hirsch, Marilyn, *Could Anything Be Worse? A Yiddish Tale*
Kimmel, Eric A., *Hershel of Ostropol*
Simon, Solomon, *Adventures of Simple Shmerl*
The Wise Men of Helm
More Wise Men of Helm and Their Merry Tales
Zemach, Margot, *It Could Always Be Worse: A Yiddish Folk Tale*
2. List the occupations of the characters. Try to find 13. Do these occupations still exist today?

Occupations of Characters in Zlateh the Goat

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. doctor - pg. 6 | 9. tenant farmer - pg. 39 |
| 2. nurse - pg. 6 | 10. coachman - pg. 41 |
| 3. servant - pg. 7 | 11. sell vegetables in the marketplace - pg. 55 (vendor) |
| 4. musician - pg. 15 | 12. furrier - pg. 79 |
| 5. merchant - pgs. 15, 16 | 13. butcher - pg. 79 |
| 6. cook - pg. 33 | |
| 7. potato peeler - pg. 33 | |
| 8. salad mixer - pg. 33 | |

3. Make and sample potato pancakes, cheese blintzes and borscht.

Potato Pancakes

- 2 cups raw grated potato
- 2 small grated onion
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 pinch of pepper
- 1 tbsp. flour or matzo meal
- ½ tbsp. baking powder

1. Peel the potatoes & soak in cold water.
2. Grate them & pour off the liquid. Add the grated onion, salt and pepper.
3. Mix flour & baking powder and add potato mixture
4. One or two well-beaten eggs may be added if desired
5. Drop by spoonfuls onto a hot, well-greased frying pan. Spread thin with the back of spoon.
6. Turn when very brown. Drain fat.
7. Eat them with jam like the Shlemiels did.

Borscht

- 2 cups shredded fresh beets
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 10½ ounce can condensed beef broth plus 1 soup can of water
- 1 cup coarsely chopped cabbage
- 1 tbsp. butter
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- Dairy sour cream

1. Cook beets, carrots and chopped onion in 2⅔ cups boiling salted water for 20 minutes in a covered pot.
2. Add beef broth, cabbage and butter and cook uncovered 15 minutes.
3. Stir in lemon juice. Serve hot or chilled. Top with sour cream.

Cheese Blintzes

Ingredients for Dough

- 2 eggs
- 1½ cups milk
- 3 tbsp. sugar
- 1¾ cups flour
- dash of salt

Ingredients for Filling

- 16 ounce carton cottage cheese (Large curd works best.)
- 1 egg
- 3 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. butter
- dash of salt

1. Mix together all of the ingredients for the dough. Pour enough mixture on a hot greased frying pan to make a large thin pancake. You can stack the finished pancakes.
2. Next mix together all of the ingredients for the filling.
3. Lay out all of the pancakes and divide the filling evenly. Roll the pancake around the filling.
4. Put them in a greased baking dish and bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

THE HISTORY OF HANUKKAH

In 167 B.C. Israel, the land of the Jews, was under the rule of the Greek Syrian King Antiochus. King Antiochus tried to convert Jews to believe in and worship the many Greek gods. He did this by outlawing the practice of Jewish rituals. The Greeks took control of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and defiled it by sacrificing pigs on the altar and worshipping Greek gods, one of which was Zeus. Some Jews did convert while others retreated to the mountains where they banded together and began to fight the Greeks.

Under the leadership of Judah the Maccabee, the Jews defeated all of the armies sent by Antiochus and were able to liberate Jerusalem. After reclaiming their Temple, the Jews cleansed and rededicated it. In the Temple, they could only find one small container of oil that was only enough to last for one day. However, when they lit the Temple menorah with it, a miracle occurred and the menorah burned for 8 days. The celebration for rededicating the Temple and the altar lasted for eight days. This celebration is known as *Hanukkah* (khōn' ə kə). It can also be spelled *Chanukah* or *Channukah*.

The Jews celebrate Hanukkah to remember the Maccabees and their successful fight for independence and religious freedom from the Greeks and for the miracle of the oil. Hanukkah is known as "The Feast of the Dedication" or "The Feast of Lights." Hanukkah falls on different dates in December each year because it follows the Judaic lunar calendar.

HANUKKAH TRADITIONS

Hanukkah Lamp or Menorah (mə nōr' ə)

The major ritual associated with Hanukkah is the lighting of the Hanukkah lamp or menorah. The menorah has nine candles, one for each of the eight days of Hanukkah and one additional candle called the *shamash* (shō' məs). The shamash is used to light the other eight candles. To distinguish it from the other candles, the shamash is usually placed higher or to one side of the others. Menorahs come in all shapes, sizes and patterns. There is a menorah in the illustration on page 20 in *Zlateh the Goat*.

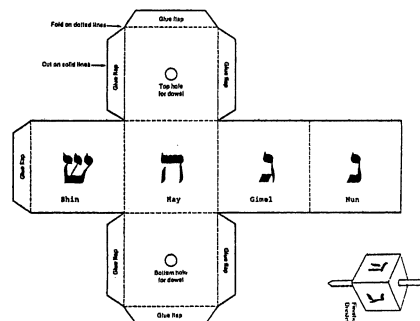
The menorah is lit each night of Hanukkah after sundown. One light is added each night until all eight are lit on the last night of Hanukkah. Prayers and blessings are usually recited before and after lighting the candles.

Holiday Pancakes

It is customary to eat foods fried in oil to remind them of the miracle of the oil. The Eastern European Jews ate potato pancakes, also called latkes (lōt' kəs).

Dreidel (drā' dəl)

It is an old custom to play games at Hanukkah, especially *dreidel*. A dreidel is a four sided top with a letter on each side. They are the Hebrew letters for: N, G, H, and S. These letters stand for an abbreviation of a sentence: "Nes Gadol Haya Sham" which means "A great miracle happened here." There is a dreidel in the illustration on page 20 in *Zlateh the Goat*.



Beside the dreidel, each player needs items such as nuts, candy, or coins (pennies). To start the game, each player puts one of their items in the "pot." Then they take turns spinning the dreidel and following the direction for the letter that is facing up.

Nun (nōn) - the player takes nothing from the "pot"

Gimel (gim' əl) - the player take everything

Hay, (hā) - the player takes half of the "pot"

Shin, (shin) - the player puts one item in the "pot"

Other dreidel games are to see how many you can keep spinning at one time or to try to knock down other spinning dreidels with your dreidel.

Hanukkah Money

Another custom is to give children Hanukkah money also called Hanukkah gelt. The children would sometimes use this money in playing dreidel. Recently, the giving of gifts has played an increasing role in Hanukkah as it has had to compete with Christmas.

CHELM

Chelm is pronounced (khělm).

Chelm is a city approximately 40 miles southeast of Lublin, Poland. It is thought to be one of the oldest communities in Poland possibly dating back to the 12th century. In the early 1900's, almost 50 percent of the town's population was Jewish.

Chelm is also used as the name of a mythical place in Jewish folklore and humor. The inhabitants of this Chelm are fools and simpletons. Many of the stories include a Council of Elders that tries to solve the problems brought before it by the "Chelmers." There are usually seven Elders and they often sit and ponder problems for seven days and seven nights. The problems and the suggested solutions are usually humorous and unrealistic.

It is not known how or when Chelm acquired this reputation. There are many Jewish tales written about Chelm. Mr. Singer has included three of these in *Zlateh the Goat*. They are:

"The Snow in Chelm"

"The Mixed-Up Feet and the Silly Bridegroom"

"The First Shlemiel"

JEWISH MARRIAGES

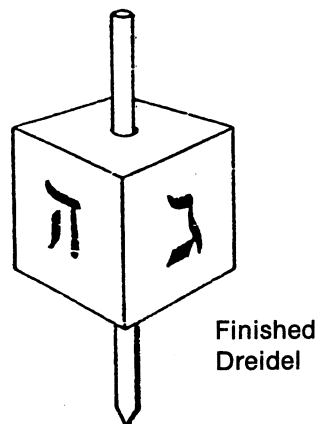
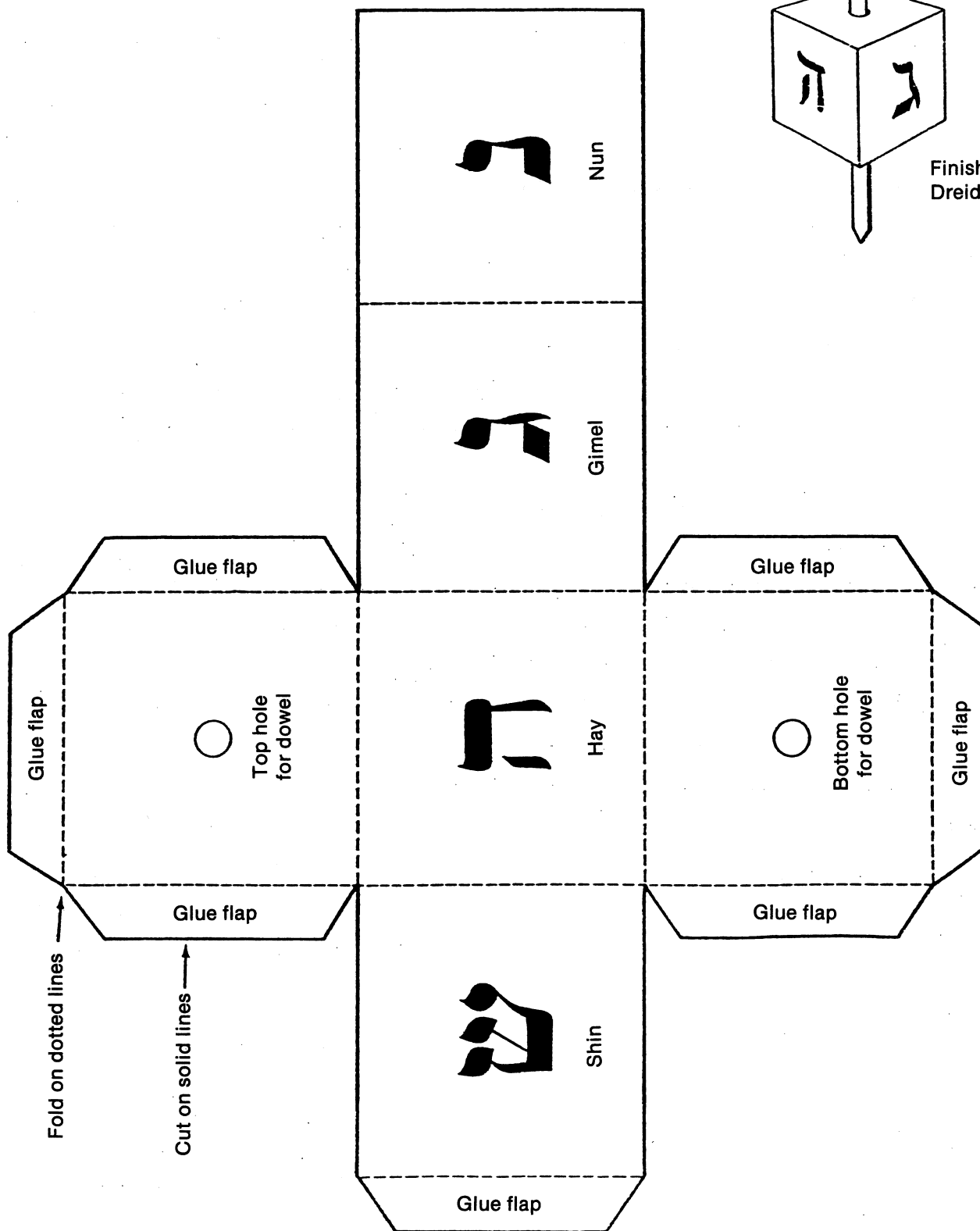
The marriages of the middle European Jews in the early 20th century were rarely marriages of love. The parents usually arranged the marriages often with the assistance of a *shadchen* (shōd khěn). A shadchen would gather information about eligible mates concerning family backgrounds, individual qualities and personality factors and would receive payment for these services.

All couples signed a marriage contract called a *ketubah* (kə tōō' bə). It listed all of the responsibilities of the husband to the wife and the wife to the husband. If either did not live up to their marriage contract, the marriage could be nullified. The property a woman brought to her husband when they married is called a *dowry* and was also included in the marriage contract.

Presents were usually exchanged between the bride and groom-to-be.

DREIDEL PATTERN

Duplicate the pattern on oaktag or construction paper.
A dowel with one pointed end or a pencil can be used.
Fold and glue where directed to do so.
Adjust the cube up or down on the dowel until it is balanced enough to spin.



TEST

Vocabulary

Match each underlined word with its definition on the next page. Write the letter of the correct definition in the space by the sentence.

1. _____ Zlateh the goat was astonished when Aaron brought her out to the road as she had never been there before.
2. _____ After long deliberations, The Elders of Chelm decided what to do next year if treasure falls from the sky.
3. _____ Atzel brooded about getting to paradise so much that he began to imagine he was dead.
4. _____ The wailing of Shlemiel and his wife woke the baby.
5. _____ Yenta asked Lemel how the duck she had given him was faring.
6. _____ When the servant brought in the food, Atzel ate ravenously.
7. _____ The floors were covered with precious rugs.
8. _____ Shmelkicha asked her four daughters what all the commotion was about.
9. _____ David took the Hanukkah candle and singed the devil's tail.
10. _____ The seven Elders were sitting and pondering, wrinkling their foreheads.
11. _____ Shlemiel knew that when his wife came home and saw what happened, she would berate him.
12. _____ Lemel was Yenta's fiancé.
13. _____ Atzel grew tired of the idleness in paradise.
14. _____ The stranger's sleigh was adorned with carved ivory.
15. _____ The Elder gave Shmelkicha a remedy to solve the problem of the mixed-up feet.
16. _____ The Elder proclaimed that the best solution was a quick marriage.
17. _____ Atzel wore a nightgown made of fine embroidered linen.
18. _____ Dopey called out in consternation that the messenger would trample the treasure.
19. _____ Lemel, the silly bridegroom, destroyed all of the gifts that he received.
20. _____ If you cover the duck with rags, it will suffocate.

Definitions

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. to keep thinking about something in a distressed or troubled way | k. to scold severely |
| b. of great price or value; costly | l. a design on fabric done with needlework |
| c. with a strong desire for food and drink | m. long, loud cries |
| d. to think about deeply, consider carefully | n. to burn slightly |
| e. decorated | o. surprised, amazed |
| f. alarm, panic, fear | p. time spent doing nothing, being inactive |
| g. careful consideration and discussion before making a decision | q. a man who is about to be married or has just been married |
| h. noise and confusion | r. the person to whom one is engaged to marry |
| i. something that corrects a problem | s. how someone or something is doing; the condition of someone or something |
| j. to die due to lack of oxygen | t. to announce officially |

TEST

Comprehension

Part I: True/False (20 points - 2 points each)

Write a T in front of the statement if it is true. Write an F if it is false.

1. _____ Dr. Yoetz was one of many doctors who could not cure Atzel.
2. _____ The young man in Grandmother Leah's tale was a devil.
3. _____ The Elders' plan to collect the silver, pearls and diamonds from the snow was successful.
4. _____ The four daughters could not get out of bed because they had gotten their feet mixed-up.
5. _____ The Elders told Shmelkicha to gradually marry off the girls to avoid having problems of mixed-up feet.
6. _____ Shlemiel ate what he thought was a "pot of poison" but did not die.
7. _____ Mrs. Shlemiel was upset when she found that Shlemiel ate all of the jam and drank all of the cider because now they would have nothing for the baby's birthday party.
8. _____ David cut off the Devil's tail with an ax.
9. _____ Reuven decided to sell Zlateh so he could buy supplies for Hanukkah.
10. _____ Zlateh and Aaron weathered out the storm in a small barn.

Part II: Sequencing (20 points - 2 points each)

A. Number the events from 1 to 5 to show the order of what happened in the story *Zlateh the Goat*.

- _____ Aaron and Zlateh are caught in a terrible blizzard.
- _____ Zlateh kept Aaron warm and gave him milk to drink.
- _____ After four days, Aaron and Zlateh return to their village.
- _____ Reuven decides to sell Zlateh.
- _____ Aaron made a nest for himself and Zlateh in a haystack.

B. Number the events from 1 to 5 to show the order of what happened in the story "The Mixed-Up Feet and the Silly Bridegroom."

- _____ The Elder tells Shmelkicha she should gradually marry off the girls.
- _____ The four daughters could not get out of bed because their feet were mixed up.
- _____ Lemel loses or destroys all the gifts that were given to him.
- _____ Yenta signs a marriage contract with Lemel.
- _____ The Elder tells Shmelkicha to take a large stick and whack the blanket where the girls' feet are.

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points - 2 points each)

Choose the best answer for the question. Write the letter of the answer in the space in front of the question.

- _____ 1. Where was Atzel's "paradise"?
- a. at a hospital
 - b. at Dr. Yoetz's office
 - c. a room in Atzel's house
 - d. in heaven
- _____ 2. What did the stranger in "Grandmother's Tale" do with the family?
- a. give them gifts
 - b. play dreidel
 - c. tell them stories
 - d. make some food for them
- _____ 3. What did the Elders of Chelm look like?
- a. fat and old
 - b. tall and thin
 - c. wore green robes
 - d. had white beards and high foreheads
- _____ 4. What did the Elders of Chelm give to people?
- a. money
 - b. advice
 - c. food
 - d. shelter
- _____ 5. What did the people of Chelm see in the snow?
- a. gold
 - b. emeralds
 - c. diamonds
 - d. rubies
- _____ 6. What was Shlemiel supposed to do when Mrs. Shlemiel went to the marketplace?
- a. wash the dishes
 - b. cook supper
 - c. take the rooster out
 - d. take care of the baby
- _____ 7. What did David do to the Devil's tail?
- a. bit it
 - b. burned it
 - c. cut it off
 - d. stepped on it
- _____ 8. Where was Aaron supposed to take Zlatch the goat?
- a. to a pasture
 - b. to the barn
 - c. to the town butcher
 - d. to the river
- _____ 9. How did Shmelkicha help her daughters to find their own feet?
- a. whacked the bed with a stick
 - b. helped them put their shoes on
 - c. told them to put on different colors of socks
 - d. got them separate beds
- _____ 10. Why did Lemel's duck die?
- a. He covered it with rags.
 - b. He ate it for dinner.
 - c. The wagon ran over the duck.
 - d. The duck was very old.

Part IV: Character Match (20 points - 2 points each)

Find the letter of the description that matches each character. Write the letter on the line in front of the name.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. _____ Dr. Yoetz | a. a silly young man who ruined gifts given to him |
| 2. _____ Atzel | b. made a bargain with the Devil |
| 3. _____ Lemel | c. a goat that helped a boy survive a snowstorm |
| 4. _____ Shmelkicha | d. wanted to die to be able to live in paradise |
| 5. _____ Shlemiel | e. helped the people of Chelm to solve their problems |
| 6. _____ David | f. the mother of four daughters |
| 7. _____ Aaron | g. cured Atzel of wanting to be dead |
| 8. _____ Zlateh | h. told a story about a devil's visit |
| 9. _____ The Elders | i. a lazy man who would rather die than listen to his wife berate him |
| 10. _____ Grandmother Leah | j. was kept alive during a blizzard by a goat |

Part V: Essay Questions (20 points - 4 points each)

1. Why didn't Aaron take Zlateh to the butcher after the blizzard?
2. Why did Atzel change his mind about wanting to be dead?
3. How did David get the Devil to give him back his mother and father?
4. Why did the plan of the Elders fail to protect the treasure in the snow from being trampled upon?
5. Why was Mrs. Shlemiel so upset when she came home from the marketplace?

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. o | 11. k |
| 2. g | 12. r |
| 3. a | 13. p |
| 4. m | 14. e |
| 5. s | 15. i |
| 6. c | 16. t |
| 7. b | 17. l |
| 8. h | 18. f |
| 9. n | 19. q |
| 10. d | 20. j |

Comprehension

Part I: True/False

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. F |
| 3. F | 8. F |
| 4. T | 9. T |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Part II: Sequencing

- | | |
|------|------|
| A. 2 | B. 3 |
| 4 | 1 |
| 5 | 5 |
| 1 | 4 |
| 3 | 2 |

Part III: Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. d |
| 2. b | 7. b |
| 3. d | 8. c |
| 4. b | 9. a |
| 5. c | 10. a |

Part IV: Character Match

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. g | 6. b |
| 2. d | 7. j |
| 3. a | 8. c |
| 4. f | 9. e |
| 5. i | 10. h |

Part V: Essay Questions

1. Zlateh helped Aaron to survive for three days in the haystack by keeping him warm and giving him milk. Aaron loved her more than ever now and thought of her as his sister.
2. After eight days in the false paradise, Atzel grew tired of eating the same food and doing nothing. He also missed his parents, Aksah and his friends.
3. When the Devil chased David back to the house, he tried to get in, but David had shut the door quickly and caught the Devil's tail in the door. David told the Devil he would cut off his tail. So the Devil agreed to trade his tail for David's parents.
4. The Elders failed to realize that the four people who carried the messenger would trample more snow than if the messenger went alone.
5. Mrs. Shlemiel was upset because the baby had a bump on his head and the rooster, the cider and the pot of jam were all gone.

TEACHER'S NOTES



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