



TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE!

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In this contemporary take on a beloved Jewish folktale, a rabbi helps Abigail discover the wonderful aspects of her newly-blended family.

For centuries Jewish folktales have played an essential role in transmitting not only appealing stories but important values and lessons from one generation to the next. The family, in all its complexity and variation, has always been both the basic building block and a source of strength for the Jewish people. This contemporary story comes from an Eastern European tale in which a family has issues similar to those in Abigail's home. Of course in the original tale, life takes place in the *shtetl* (from the Yiddish, for a small Jewish village) where there were no bicycles to be stored, no televisions to be shared, and no female rabbis to be consulted – still, houses can feel cramped, whether the result of a blending of families, a new baby or elderly relative in the home, or a move to downsized quarters.

SHALOM BAYIT

Shalom bayit is the Hebrew term meaning “peace in the home” and refers to a state in which family members act in ways that make the home a pleasant one in which to live. *Shalom bayit* is attainable through acts of compromise and consideration, and children can learn to be catalysts of this family peace.

Just as Abigail's efforts made her home a happier place, your children can think of original ways to bring about greater harmony in your home. Compromising with siblings, taking greater responsibility for a pet-- any number of things that make life easier for the entire family enhances *shalom bayit*. Supporting this creative thinking and action can be a lifelong lesson in building and sustaining good relationships, both in and beyond your family.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Encourage your children to consider what it would be like if your family faced a similar challenge by asking:

- Have you ever felt like Abigail?
- Would you follow the rabbi's advice?
- If so, what items/people would you take into our home?
- Can you come up with different ideas that would make the rabbi's point?