



{ What do you appreciate about your best friend? }

No Weepers!

Finders keepers, losers weepers? Not according to Jewish law. The principle of hashavat aveidah (Hebrew for “returning lost items”) means that when we stumble upon something that’s been lost, it’s a mitzvah (“commandment” or good deed) to identify the original owner and return it to them. It was easy for Roland the Bunny to find Milton’s (or Popkin’s?) owner. It was quite a bit harder for Roland to return Milton, but as he soon finds out, doing the right thing is its own reward. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/bestfriend.

I Feel You

Why did Roland return Milton, even though it was hard? Maybe he could guess how much Milton’s original owner was missing him. Roland feels empathy (rachmanut in Hebrew), and out of this feeling emerges a new friendship. When you think about it, empathy is at the heart of morality; when we think about how our actions affect others, we try to do right by them. Giving Milton back isn’t easy for lonely Roland, but when he thinks about how the cat feels, Roland soon expands his sense of connection and togetherness.

Better Together

Roland has a nice life by himself in the woods, drawing, listening to music, and drinking tea, but sometimes he gets lonely. As it says in Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Ancestors, an ancient collection of rabbinic wisdom), “Do not separate yourself from the community.” Jewish life includes lots of opportunities to gather with friends and family, whether it’s for prayer, celebration, or solace. Humans (and bunnies) are social creatures, and lots of things are just more fun and meaningful when we do them with others.

HANDS ON!

MAKE A FRIEND...OR TWO

Milton is “brown, pointy, and quiet.” He’s also a great friend – he likes everything Roland likes, and he never interrupts. Why not make a Milton of your own?

Supplies:

- Pine cones (or rocks, if you don’t have pine trees nearby)
- Googly eyes
- Glue
- Two twigs (optional)

Find a couple of good-sized pine cones or rocks. Glue googly eyes on them to create a face, and glue the twigs to create arms. One of these friends is for you. If you give the other to someone else, you might find you’ll make another new friend, too!

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

LOOK closely at Roland’s face in the illustrations throughout the book. How do you think Roland feels at the beginning of the story? How do you think he feels after he finds Milton? Why?

WHEN Roland realizes that Milton belongs to someone else, everything feels “worse than ever.” Why do you think Roland felt that way? Have you ever felt like that?

HAVE you ever had to give something back that belonged to someone else? What happened? How did you feel about it, before and after?