



# SCARLETT AND SAM: SEARCH FOR THE SHAMIR

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*Grandma Mina's magic carpet keeps whisking Scarlett and Sam back in time! This time the adventurous twins find themselves in ancient Jerusalem, where King Solomon wants to build a Temple, but without using any tools of war. That's where the shamir, a funny little insect, comes in!*

## JEWISH CONCEPTS

Twins Scarlett and Sam know a thing or two about Jewish history – and it's a good thing, because they keep getting transported back into it. In this adventure, Grandma Mina's magic carpet takes them to about 950 BCE – the days of the biblical King Solomon, who was famous for his great wisdom. Solomon brought the fractious tribes of Israel together and strengthened political ties with nearby lands. Solomon ruled with a strong hand, but under his reign, Israel was mostly at peace.

According to the Bible, Solomon's father, King David, had wanted to build the *Beit HaMikdash*, the Holy Temple, but God wouldn't allow it because David had shed blood in battle. War leaves indelible marks on everyone – winners and losers alike. It was left to Solomon to carry out David's dream. According to legend, when the time came to build, Solomon didn't want any tools used that could also be used for violence. As Sam and Scarlett learn, that's where the *shamir*, a tiny worm that could cut through stone, came in!

King Solomon is known for his wisdom, but as Sam and Scarlett discover, he wasn't perfect. The Bible describes him as a good king who made plenty of mistakes. Even the wisest of human beings is still, after all, only human.

## USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

If even King Solomon, the legendary wise ruler, could make mistakes, what does that mean for the rest of us? Think about it with your children. What is wisdom? Does it make decisions easy? Is that how it was for Solomon, in this story?

There are countless myths and legends about King Solomon – the story of the *shamir* is just one. In some tales, King Solomon has magic powers, can talk to animals, and can even fly! The practice of writing stories about biblical figures is called *midrash*. Traditionally *midrash* has been used to interpret a story in the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), fill in narrative gaps, or help fill in a backstory. Encourage your children to take a crack at writing *midrash* – think about a character in a story they love, and then write a new story about that character.

Your children may not be able to travel back in time like Sam and Scarlett do, but they can still harness the power of the internet. Hop online to learn more about Solomon's reign and how he transformed the Jewish world, and explore sites like Google Earth to visit the Western Wall, the ruins of the second Temple in Jerusalem. It's *almost* as cool as riding a magic carpet.