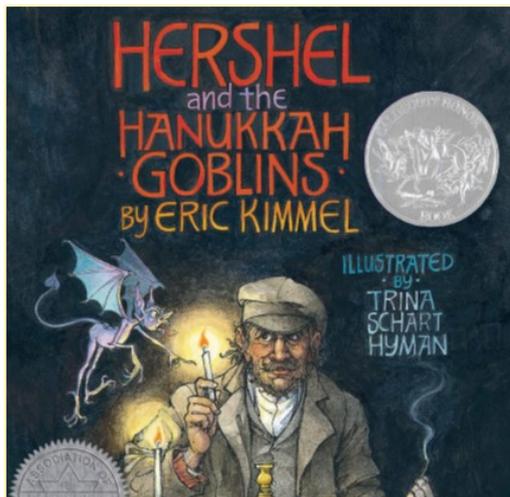


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{ Where does your courage come from? }

A Resilient Light

In the story, Hershel has to summon all of his confidence to confront nasty goblins. The first goblin tells him, “We don’t allow Hanukkah. Not around here.” At many points in history, Jews in different places around the world were not allowed to practice their religion freely. Today, lighting Hanukkah candles and displaying the menorah in the window are signs of the Jewish people’s resilience. When the villagers proudly light their menorahs at the end of the story, it is a victory for “the spirit of Hanukkah”—and proof that try as they might, no goblins can dim the light of the Jewish people. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/hershel.

HANDS ON!

Make Goblin Finger Puppets

Bring the drama of the Hanukkah goblins to life. Create finger puppets to act out this story, or make up your own story.

Supplies:

Cardstock or thick paper
Pencils or markers
Scissors
Hole puncher (optional)

Draw the top half of a goblin, with two circles underneath. (Make sure the circles are large enough to stick your fingers through them.)

Color the drawing in, then cut it out.

Use the hole puncher (or scissors) to cut out the finger holes.

Insert your fingers in the holes, and your goblin will be ready to haunt a village!

More, More!

When you read this story, you may notice that the goblins increase in size over the holiday. This echoes an age-old debate: should the Hanukkah candles increase or decrease in number each night? Two great sages took opposite positions. Rabbi Shammai declared that we should start with eight candles and take one away each night, ending with one, while Rabbi Hillel proposed starting with one and adding a flame each night, ending with eight. Rabbi Hillel’s approach won: holiness, he said, should increase as Hanukkah goes on. That’s why today we finish the holiday with a fully lit menorah.

Spinning the Ultimate Trick

Hershel of Ostropol is a kind of character we see in folk stories across many cultures: a trickster. His most powerful weapon is his ability to outwit his enemies. One of Hershel’s best tricks comes on the third night of Hanukkah, when he reverses the rules of the dreidel game. The four letters on the dreidel are nun, gimel, hay, and shin, which stand for the Hebrew words Nes Gadol Haya Sham (“a great miracle happened there”). Spinning a gimel usually means that the spinner takes everything, but Hershel tells the goblin it means giving it all away. Hershel’s victory is actually twice as sweet: Not only does our hero get all of the goblin’s gold, but he has tricked the Hanukkah-hating goblin into celebrating the holiday by playing its most famous game.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

WHAT is the scariest thing about the goblins? Why?

WHY do you think Hershel decides to take a risk and save Hanukkah for the village, even though it’s not where he lives?

WHICH of Hershel’s tricks do you like best?