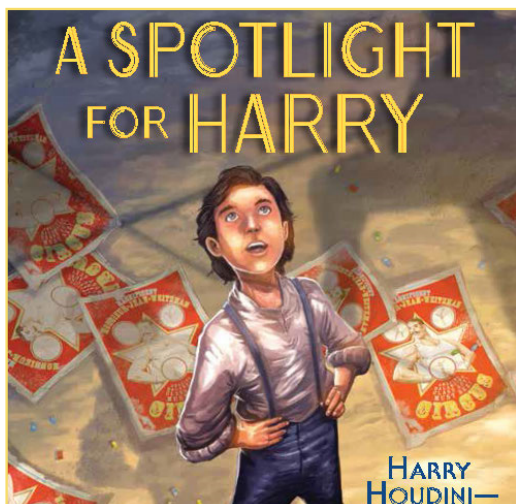


## A Spotlight for Harry

written by  
**Eric A. Kimmel**

illustrated by  
**Jim Madsen**



### HANDS ON!

#### Put on a Magic Show!

The internet abounds with easy-to-learn magic tricks. Pick out some you like, then rehearse them over and over. When you feel ready, invite relatives and friends to attend your show!

#### Jewish Concepts

Have you ever heard of Harry Houdini? He's one of the most famous magicians ever, known for his amazing escape acts. Even at the peak of his fame, however, few people were aware of Houdini's backstory, which was similar to many other immigrants of the late 1800s. Harry was born in Hungary but raised in Wisconsin, where his father was rabbi for a Reform congregation. Like many European Jews of that era, Harry's parents immigrated to America to make a better life for themselves and their children.

Even if you've heard of Harry Houdini, you probably never heard of Erik Weiss, the name Harry's childhood friends knew him by – let alone Ehrich Weisz, the name he came to America with. Name changes were common among new immigrants to the United States, and other countries. Some people chose new names in order to fit in; in other cases, customs officials altered names because they had trouble properly spelling the original, "foreign" versions. Harry's first name changed, too: At school, he was given the American name Harry, and it stuck. He used it for the rest of his life.

Houdini's legacy continues. No one may have heard of the rabbi's son, Erik, but Harry Houdini still sets the standard for daring escapes. To learn more, visit [pjlibrary.org/spotlightforharry](http://pjlibrary.org/spotlightforharry).

### TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

**WHAT** do you think it would be like to leave your home country to live in a different one? Would you feel excited, nervous, curious, sad, or adventurous (or maybe a mixture)? What would you miss about your old home and what would you look forward to about your new one?

**IN** this book, Harry is told that if he works hard and believes in himself, he can do whatever he sets his mind to. What are some of your dreams for yourself? What will you need to do to make them happen? What things might hold us back from following our dreams in life, and how can we overcome them?