



## NO MATZOH FOR ME!

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*This book is a kid-friendly telling of the Passover story via Sammy's disappointment at not being chosen to portray one of the ten plagues in his school Passover play. Who wants to play the part of a matzoh?*

To some, *matzoh* may be a bland, flour-and-water bread substitute eaten only during Passover; for others, it is a crisp and delicious reminder of years of holiday memories. Whatever your thoughts on this simplest of Passover staples, *matzoh* plays a number of critical roles in the Passover celebration, among them:

### THE AFIKOMEN

From the Greek word meaning dessert, the *afikomen* is the middle of three *matzot* (plural of *matzoh*) on the *seder* table; it is hidden during the meal by adults, to be searched for and generally “ransomed” by the children present for a small gift or a few coins. The *seder* cannot officially end without the *afikomen* being eaten by the meal's participants. It is said that one reason for the *afikomen* ritual is to encourage the children to remain awake and attentive until the *seder* is completed.

### SEARCH FOR CHUMETZ

How do a candle, a feather, a wooden spoon and a paper bag enter into Passover preparations? In many Jewish homes, these items are used to conduct a last minute search for *chumetz*—leavened foods not permitted during Passover. As Sammy's line in the school play stated: “The night before Passover we go around our houses with a feather and a candle.” For this search, *bedikat chumetz*, to take place, bread crumbs are strategically positioned around the house; then, by the light of a candle, they are found and swept into a paper bag to be discarded, symbolically removing any last traces of non-

permitted foods. Most Judaica stores carry very inexpensive “kits” for this purpose. *Bedikat chumetz* is yet another way of engaging children—and one many find fascinating.

### USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Sammy is a boy with whom most children can readily identify. Which of us hasn't counted on something wonderful to happen, only to find it just beyond our grasp; who among us hasn't experienced envy when the object of our desire ends up in someone else's possession? Sammy is lucky to have a mother who helps him see his glass as half full rather than half empty! Whether or not *Matzoh* is as desirable a part in the Hebrew school play as Pharaoh, Sammy learns that good things often come to those who wait, life can change quickly, and no one is immune from disappointment, even the stars of the play.

By considering the following questions, you can examine with your children some of the lessons Sammy learned.

- Why does Sammy want to play one of the plagues?
- How did he feel to be the last person to receive a part in the play?
- What made Sammy decide to quit the play?
- What made him change his mind about playing the part of *Matzoh*?
- Were you surprised that Jack, who usually seemed ready for anything, got stage fright just before the performance?
- Might this experience help Sammy grow to be a better friend? To be more patient? Pj