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## **A Tale of Two Brothers : A Retelling of a Jewish Folktale For Young Children**

Meredith A. Glass

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# A Tale of Two Brothers:

A retelling of a Jewish folktale  
for young children

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Science in Education  
Bank Street College of Education  
May, 1998

## **Abstract**

This is an original retelling of a Russian Jewish Folktale for K-1 readers. Curriculum applications, children's responses, and discussions of uses of folklore are included.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	RETELLING AND WRITING	8
	Choosing the story	
	The writing process	
III.	THE ORIGINAL STORY	14
	Retold and illustrated by	
	Meredith A. Glass	
	(Story unpagged)	
IV.	CURRICULUM IDEAS	15
	Relevant literature	
VI.	EXPERIENCE OF READING THE STORY WITH CHILDREN	18
	Sharing of children's reactions	
VI.	THE ENORMOUS FROG	32
	Additional folklore applications	
VII.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	38
VIII.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	40

### APPENDIXES

A Original version of the story

B A Tale of Two Brothers  
By Meredith A. Glass

## I. INTRODUCTION

Writing this thesis has brought together a variety of elements in my life, both professional and personal. As a student at Bank Street College a few semesters away from graduation I took a class titled, Folklore in the classroom, taught by Nina Jaffe. Not only was this my first experience with folklore as a topic it was a bringing together of my own childhood memories and my current conversion to Judaism. Jewish folklore introduced me to the religion in a way that has offered me new understandings about the people and their history through their stories. There is something more immediate and real about reading Jewish folktales. I find that these stories share the heart of the Jewish people in a way that history books can not.

The various levels of meaning within every story allow its reader to meet the story with his or her experiences and relate to it in a variety of ways. In the telling of stories so much more than the passing of words is exchanged. A sharing of history, a sharing of experience and of a people as a group and also as individuals, is opened up to the reader or listener. This sharing is open to interpretation by its reader. This kind of interaction

between stories and people allowed me to look at my sharing of literature with the students I teach in a new light.

My choice of stories and books within the classroom becomes much more significant in that each of the stories allow each child to bring their own experience to the book and find what is real and important in its telling. It is important to present a variety of books for the children to explore. Including stories that represent not only the children within your class, but ones that expose them to new and different experiences, opening up new places for exploration.

The research I have done has led me to new understandings of folklore. It was my initial instinct during my experience in the folklore class at Bank Street to recognize the use of folklore for a variety of different learning styles. Much of what I have learned at Bank Street involves the importance of meeting children at their current level of learning and creating bridges between school, family, and community. I envisioned folklore could be a valuable way of meeting many of these teaching requirements.

I have over the last few years come to recognize the importance of understanding the value in addressing diversity and multicultural issues within the classroom.

However it was difficult for me to feel I had accomplished this by making sure there was a doll that represented each of the various races or asking one child to explain the importance of a menorah. One child's experience as a Jew may not be the same as another Jewish child's. I felt these experiences were token attempts on my part to accommodate "cultural requirements." I was hoping I could find better ways to explore this in my teaching.

I felt folklore was capable of this formidable task, and the more I learned about folklore, storytelling, and it's possibilities in the classroom the more I was sure I had found a teaching tool that was capable of becoming part of a real curriculum for the children.

It was my thinking that folklore was a way to address all areas of the curriculum for a variety of children, with a variety of different learning needs and skills. I felt children could explore learning in meaningful ways using folklore. As my research began leaning towards the use of folklore in the classroom I found I was not alone in my thinking. In fact I found that for many years now educators, teachers, storytellers, and folklorists have been collaborating to do just that.

It was a bit disappointing to find my ideas were not so original, but it was also exciting to see that the ideas I was working on were all over the internet and in books such as *Once Upon a Folktale-Capturing the Folklore Process with Children*, by Gloria Blatt (editor). I had found a whole new world of ideas that both validated what I had done, and had already taken similar ideas to national levels of collaboration.

Reading, story telling, and creating books with children is by no means only a passing of information from adults on to children. It is not my intent in this thesis to explore every possible use literature and folklore offer children. My intent is to share how valuable folklore can be in classrooms today using a few folktales and curriculum Ideas to use along with these tales.

During my research on folklore I found it near impossible to pick up a book about this topic and not find within it a bit of history entrenched among the stories, a history written "between the lines" about the kinds of lives lived among a people. What communities found fascinating within the stories is in part recognition of self, an ability to identify with some aspect of the story and a willingness to allow the story to take you beyond the daily drudgeries of human life and experience.



The quiet calm that comes over a classroom of energetic noisy children when a story begins is a magical thread reaching beyond time and place and across boundaries to an essence of people and humanness, in a search for truth. In a book on Russian Folklore I found the following description, it brings to life in an immediate way the magical thread I have mentioned;

"By day there is the heavy work, but when it begins to grow dark, there is the well deserved repose by the blazing hearth. In the woods they construct a 'camp,' that is, a spacious mud hut with a hearth in the middle. The people are packed in here in a crowd. And here, when they have warmed their chilled limbs, and satisfied their hunger and thirst, the workers begin to while away the long winter evening. What a wished-for person, then, does the storyteller prove to be! Among the dense forests, the trees which are crackling from the frost, to the accompaniment of the howling of wolves, beside the blazing fire-what an appropriate setting, what a favorable soil for the magical narrative, filled with all possible kinds of terrors!"

(Sokolov, 1966, p 400-401)

The richness and power of story has been witnessed throughout the ages. It is my hope, with my new understanding of the importance of folklore and its ability to teach both children and adults alike, that I can use folklore in my classrooms with an equal amount of relevance. We are not so different from our past.

Issues which adults and children have faced long ago are still around today; such topics include good vs. evil,

reward vs. punishment, and real vs. fantasy. These everlasting concepts remain essential in the lives of the children of yesterday, today, and in all likelihood for the children of tomorrow.

In this thesis I have included a review of similar/relevant children's literature. There is also a section presenting a few experiences of reading this story in classroom settings. A really nice element in this experience was the introduction of children's book reviews. Helping children learn to think about books in a critical way is a skill they will carry with them always. Allowing children to say they didn't like a book is a start, but it can be more meaningful if the child can relay why they feel a certain way about a book. Especially for older children, this can lead to explorations of characters, plots, content, illustrations, authors and the like. Such skills can help children learn more about their own preferences and interests and improve their awareness about how to make their own choices of books.

I have also included another kind of folktale in this thesis. "The Enormous Frog" is what's known as a cumulative tale, similar to a better-known tale, "The House that Jack Built." I presented this cumulative story in a paper for the folklore class I took at Bank Street College. I

thought it was useful here in that it provides another example of how folklore can be presented, in this case perhaps with younger children, in the classroom with examples of specific curriculum ideas.

## II. RETELLING AND WRITING

### **Choosing the story**

The story of The Dancing Demons is a Russian folktale found in a book titled Rachel the Clever and Other Jewish Folktales, by Josepha Sherman. In her introduction Sherman writes:

"Nearly all of the stories in this book are those told by immigrants to America, although most of the tales are much older than the United States ... When people travel for a longtime, whether they're traveling because they want to travel, or because they're fleeing for their lives, they take their folktales, their familiar, magical stories, with them. But those tales tend to rub up against the tales of the people among whom they travel, losing a bit of story here, picking up a bit of story there ... Those stories also keep that certain something that makes them especially Jewish. In Jewish folktales, this special element is usually an emphasis on doing the right thing, on surviving by cleverness and kindness--and on the need for keeping a good sense of humor." (Sherman, p.7-8)

I have chosen the tale The Dancing Demons to share not only the story itself, but also some of the possible ways its use in the classroom can bring it to life and make it meaningful for the children.

My choice of this story was in part due to my feeling that all people could find value in it, both Jewish and non-Jewish. One does not need to be knowledgeable about the Jewish religion to understand and follow the story. At the same time the themes of reward vs. punishment, doing

the right thing, and surviving by cleverness, are key characteristics of the story that make it decidedly Jewish.

In her book, *Rachel the Clever and other Jewish Folktales*, Josepha Sherman did not provide information about the sources of her stories, this made the research on my part a bit more difficult. Her notes on this story listed it under the topic, or motif, of magical tales. Although she notes that there are other versions of this story in other cultures, it was difficult to locate them. To start I could not find the story under the motif of magical tales. In short it was difficult to find the stories because the actual sources were not provided.

Using the *Index to Fairy Tales (1987-1992)* by Joseph Sprug, I found several versions of this story under the motif of hunchback (145-152). Kevin Crossley-Holland wrote the book *British Folktales*. In his book one finds a British tale titled *Monday, Tuesday*. A Chinese version can be found in the book *The Spring of Butterflies and Other Chinese Folktales*; by He Ligi, the story title is *The Two Brothers*.

I have summarized these stories for this paper. I feel these stories can provide a broader and deeper curriculum when presented in combination. I do suggest pre-reading the stories before reading them to children to

make your own judgements about their content. As an example, in the story *The Two Brothers*, mentioned above, the eldest brother kills his younger brother's dog with a knife.

**Monday, Tuesday.** *As retold by Kevin Crossley-Holland, from the book British Folktales.*

This is a tale about a hunchback in Ireland known as Lusmore. He was out along a road on a moonlit night when he was found by singing fairies. They enjoyed Lusmore's singing and carried him off to the fairy pavilion. Lusmore awoke without his hump. One day a woman greeted the humpless Lusmore and told him the story of Jack Madden. He was a hunchback from a nearby town. Jack Madden was taken to the fairy pavilion and his awful nature and horrible singing resulted in his receiving of Lusmore's hump in addition to his own.

**The Two Brothers.** *As translated by He Ligi, from the book The Spring of Butterflies.*

This is the story of two brothers. Their mother favored the handsome eldest brother. The youngest brother learned to live and make due with his lot in life. The eldest brother's jealousy of the youngest success results in a variety of situations that eventually lead to a terrible end for the mean natured brother.

### **The writing process**

The original story, The Dancing Demons can be found in its original form in the appendix of this paper. I felt was a bit long and wordy for children around the age of Kindergarten to sit through. So my first decision involved drawing the pictures so that I could get a feel for what was important in the story. After drawing the pictures, I used them to help me retell the story. Most of the things I kept from the original version had to do with the beginning and ending of the story. I felt that a story beginning and ending provide familiarity and form to the story. For example, most adults and children are familiar with the beginning, "Once upon a time..."

In a book titled, Jewish Folktales, by Pinhas Sadeh, there is an interesting discussion about the "universal" elements that stories maintained sometimes based on who the authors are and the influence of the history and travel of a people. Sadeh states that:

"The 'Once upon a time' variety...have no historical frame of reference; often, in fact, they have no identifiable Jewish context at all and could just as well be about non-Jews...thus, though generally more 'primitive' and less crafted...they are also more immediately universal, for their narrators were not rabbinically educated writers engaged in propagating a faith but ordinary men and women telling folklorists the same stories they had told to, or heard from, neighbors, friends, and family in their native lands before mass immigration brought them to Israel and put

an end to their traditional culture, though not to many of its basic traits." (Sadeh, 1989, p. xvi)

Once I had retold the story with what I felt was a more appropriate length I began to work on the text with the advise of Claudia Lewis, who wrote the book, *Writing for Young Children*, in mind. Lewis states that "rhythms in language are of course sounds...they are a source of delight to children..." (Lewis, 1981, p.57) I found that using rhyme in parts of the text helped to keep the children interested and also made it more fun to tell. For example, when the small demon smells Moishe is near, he said, "I think I smell, a thing aloomin', I think I smell a little human."

In *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature*, by Rebecca J Lukens, I found a chart that represents genre in children's literature. In this chart under the genre of folktale I found and some new ideas about how to think about the story I was working on. This chart discusses character as flat, having bad and good characters, which are easily identified. It also states that the setting is usually backdrop and the style incorporates a few recurring images. These are all elements that can be found in *The Dancing Demons*, and my original version, *A Tale of Two Brothers*. I chose to focus on elements such as the flatness of character and simple style and backdrop, by

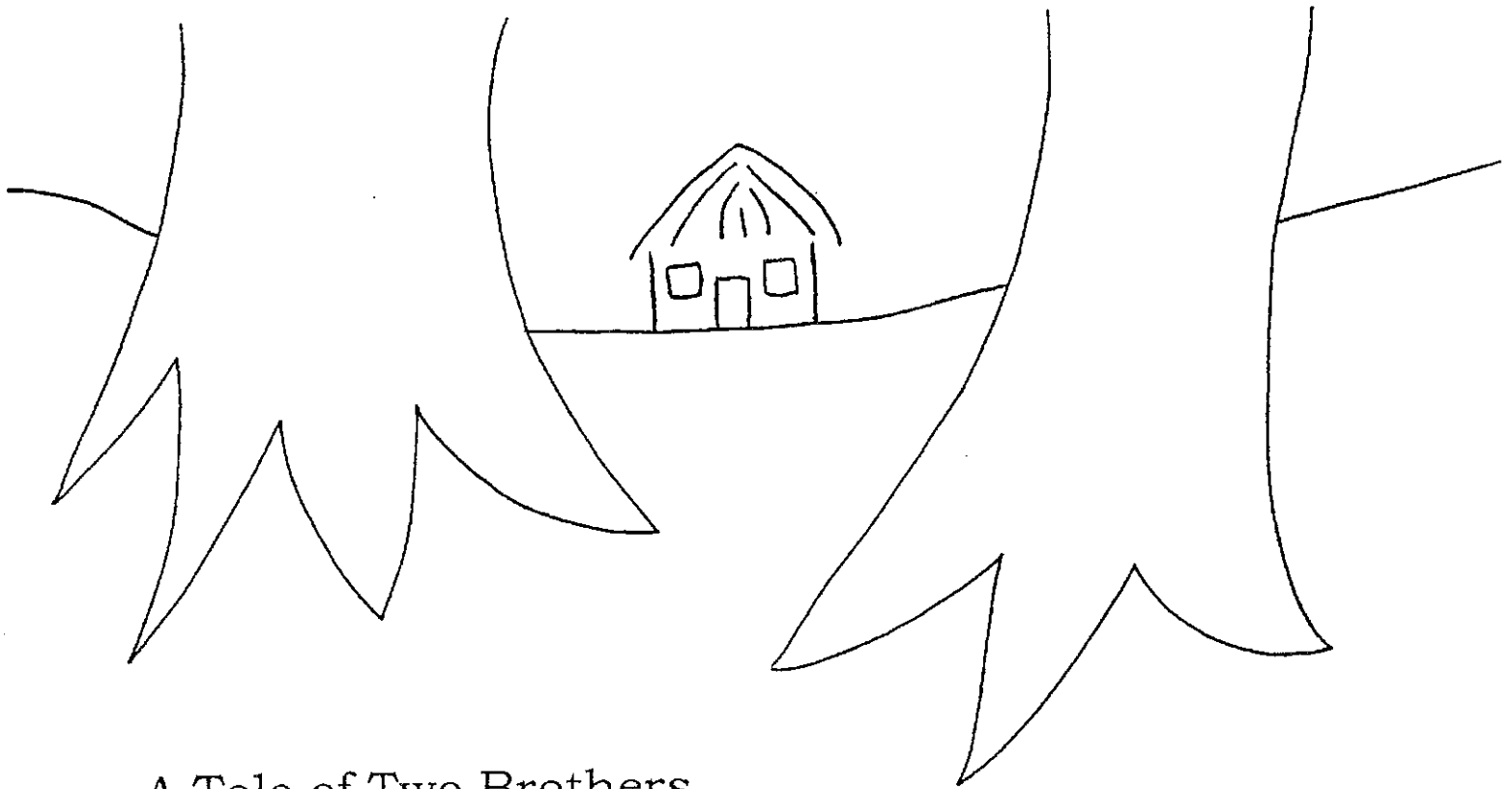


using simple black and white drawings. I found that the end result provided a blend of text and illustration that did not detract from the story, but did assist in keeping the children's focus and attention.

A final note about the names of the characters. I found information on both of these names and based on my findings I chose to keep them as they are very appropriately named for this story. The name of Moishe has some fine qualities including a desire to understand and help others, and a pleasant easy-going nature. The name of Pinkas has qualities of a shrewd and aggressive nature, intent on personal gain.

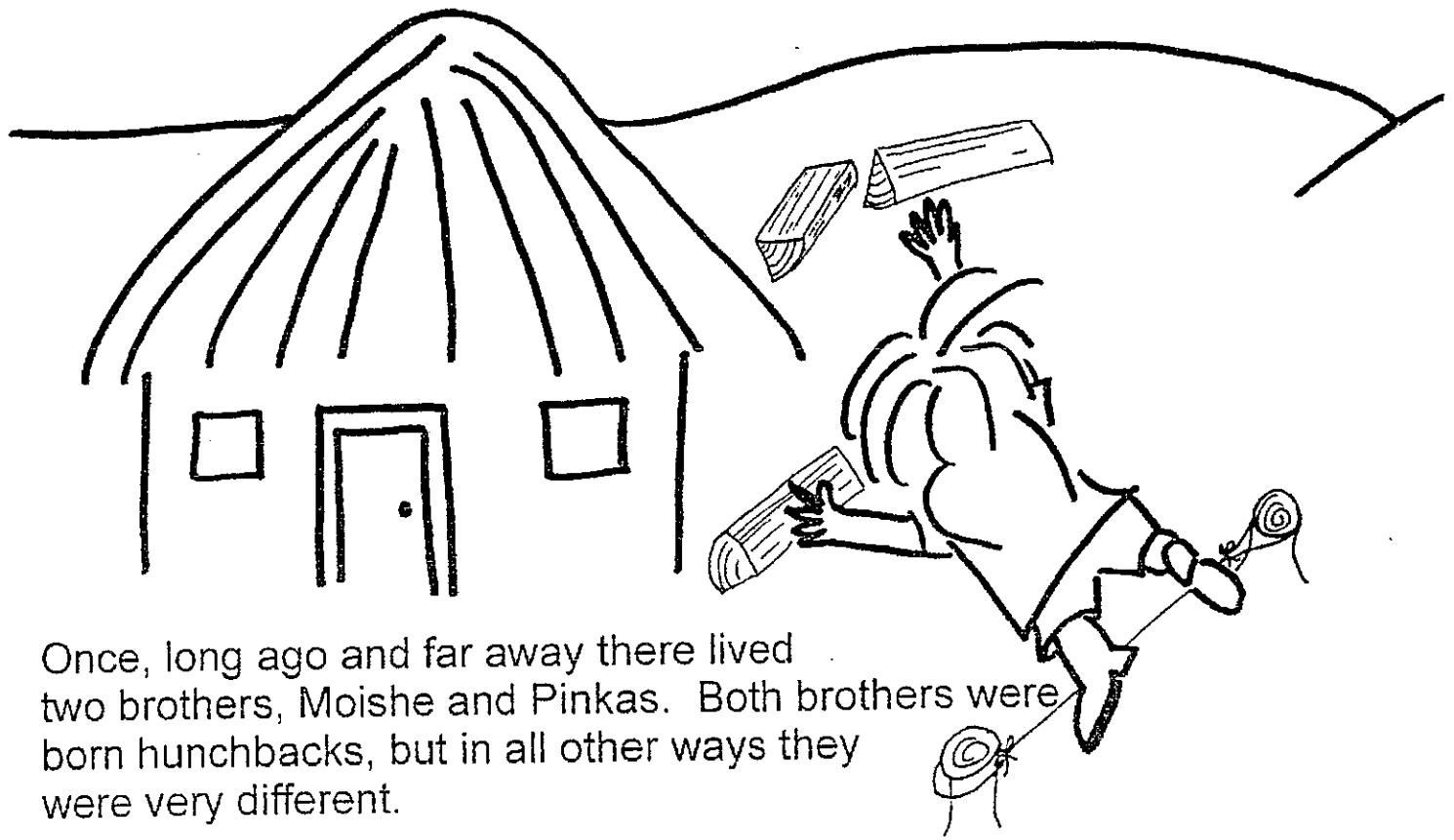
III. THE ORIGINAL STORY

Retold and illustrated  
by Meredith A. Glass

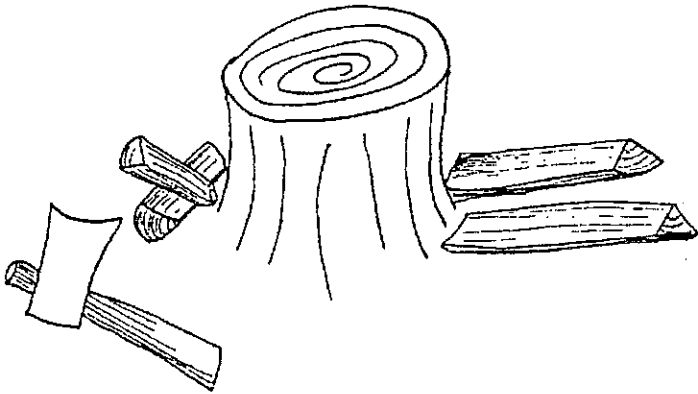


A Tale of Two Brothers

Retold and Illustrated by Meredith A. Glass

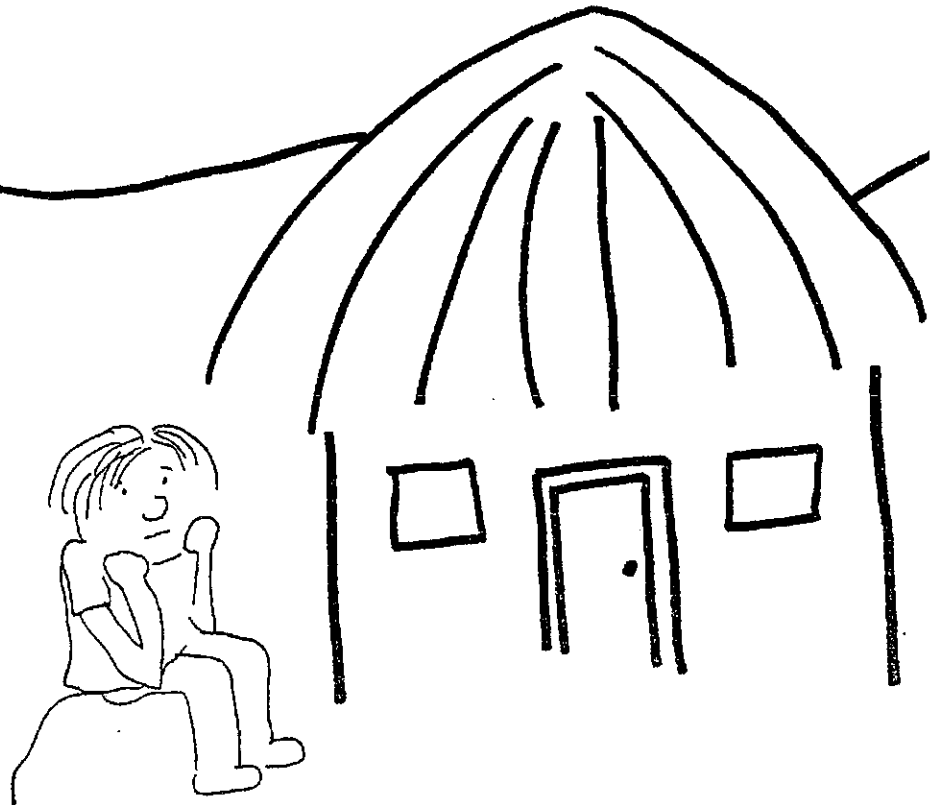


Once, long ago and far away there lived two brothers, Moishe and Pinkas. Both brothers were born hunchbacks, but in all other ways they were very different.

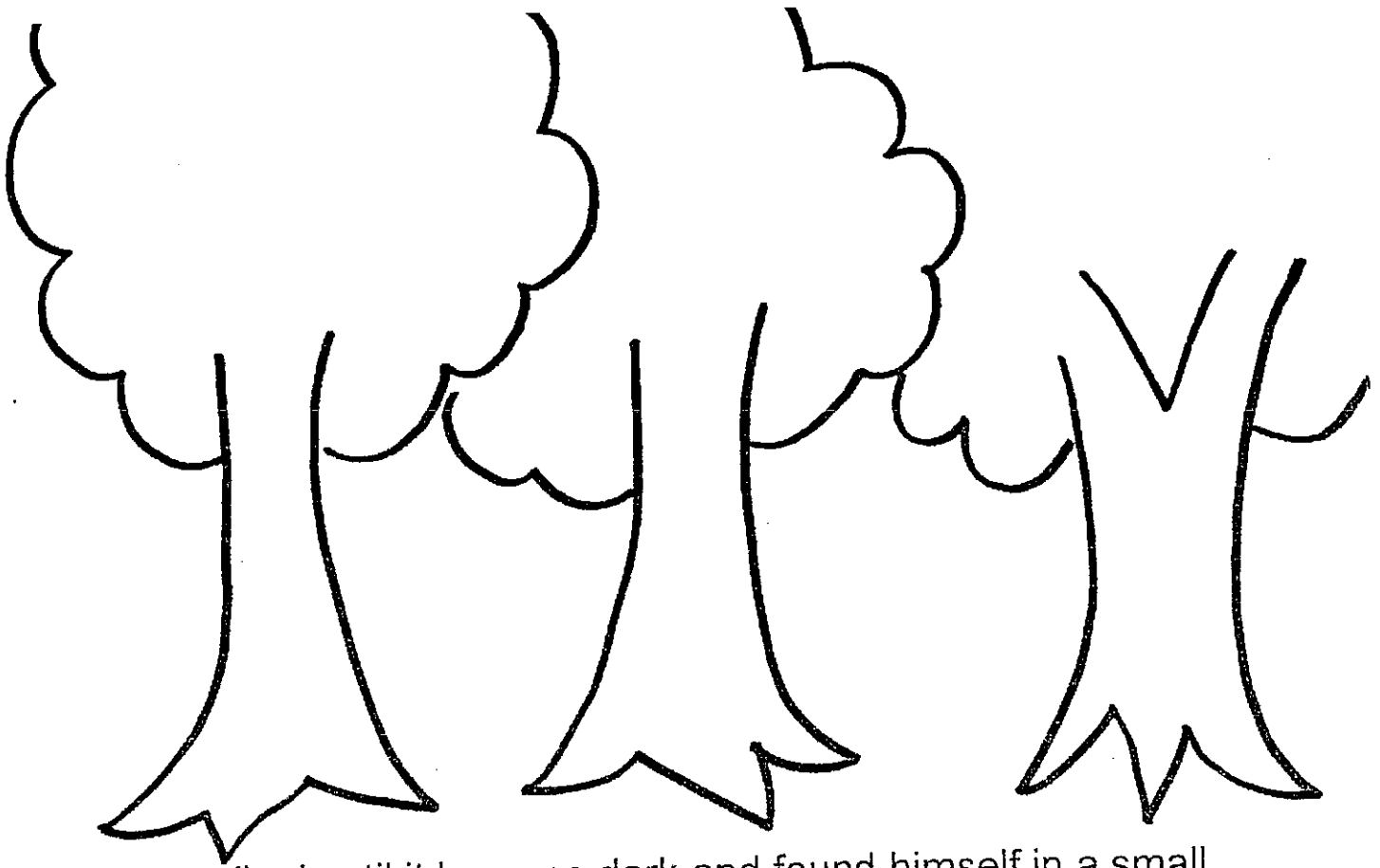


Moishe was kind and friendly. Pinkas was greedy and nasty, never pleased with anything. He was always playing tricks on Moishe, trying to pick fights with him.

One day Pinkas went too far. Moishe was so angry he told Pinkas, "You are always being mean and I don't like it!" With that, Moishe went off into the forrest.

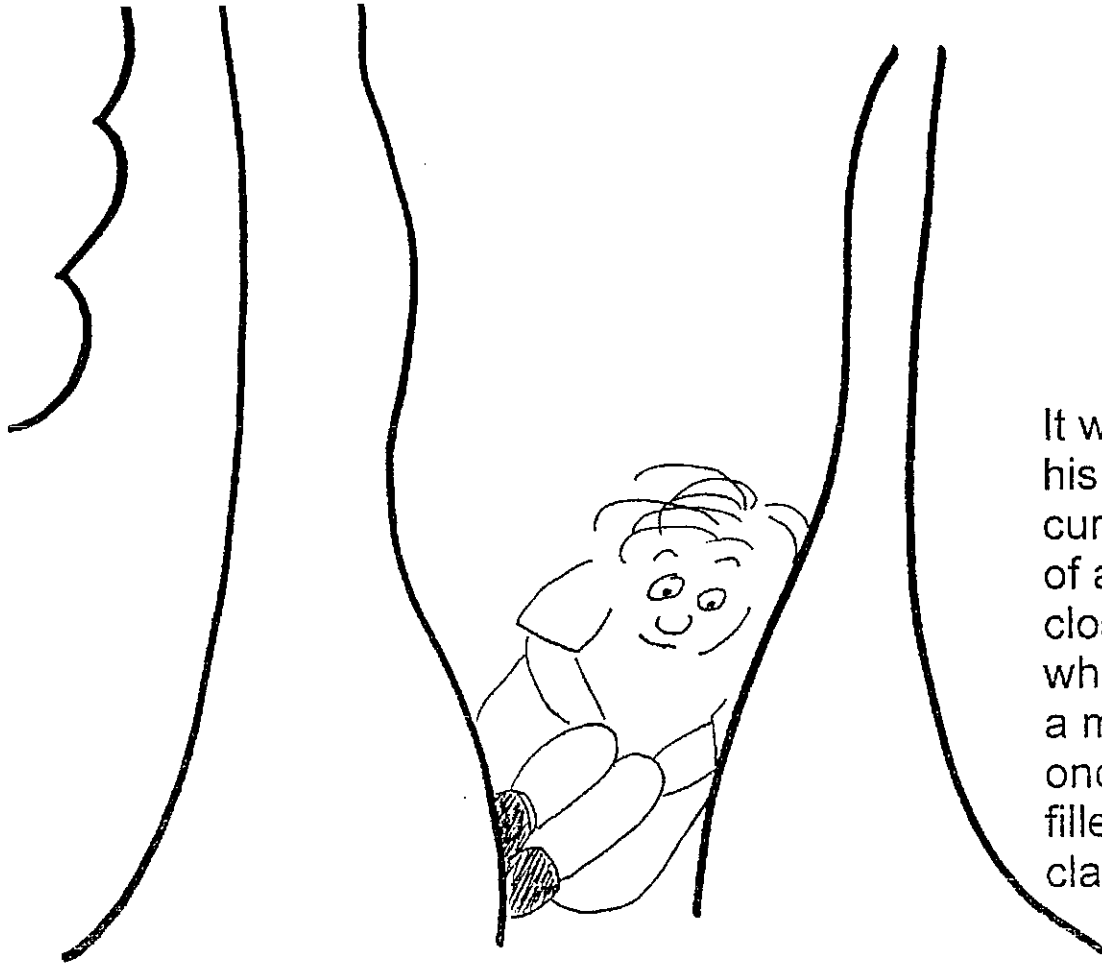




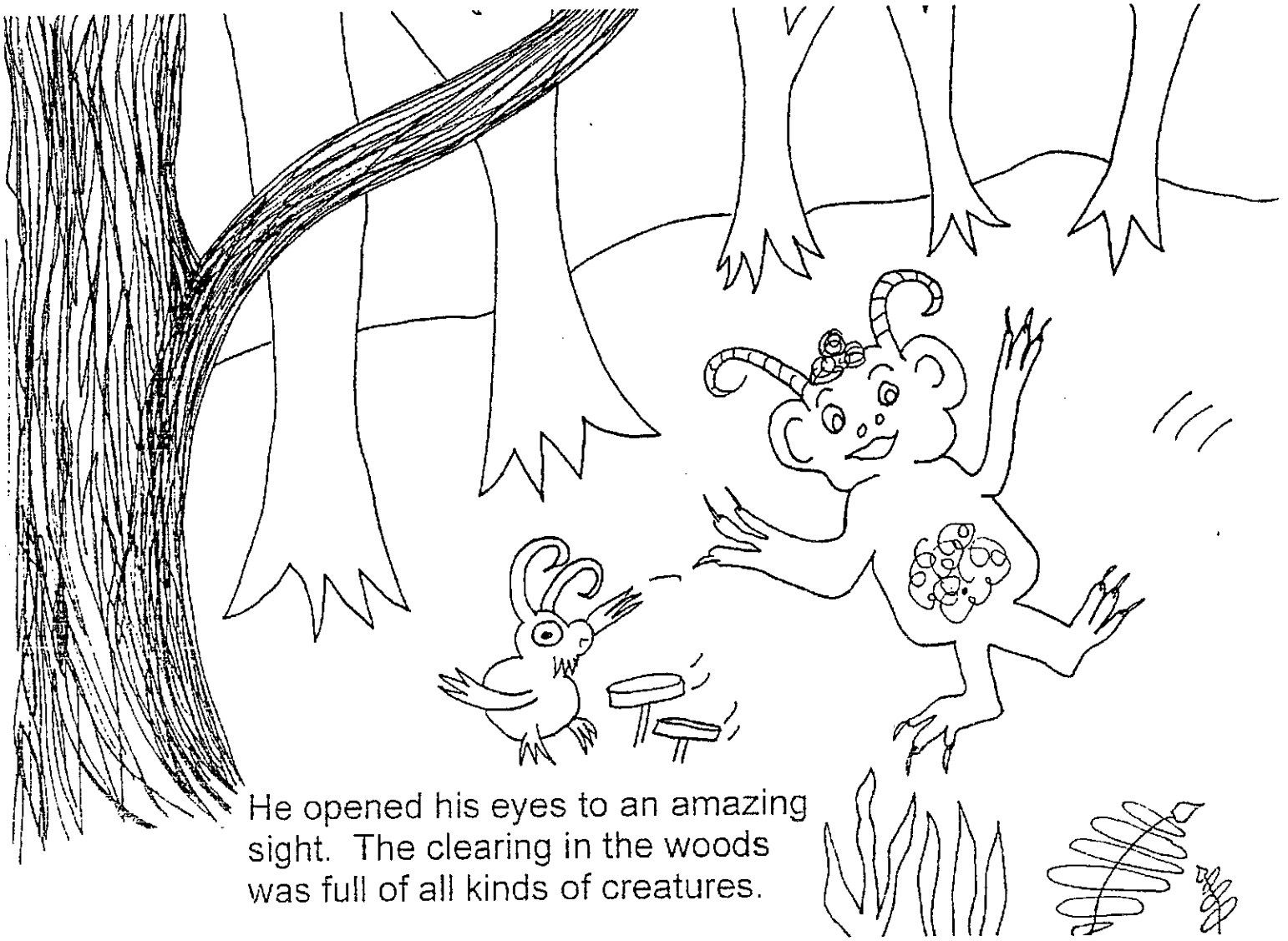


He walked until it became dark and found himself in a small clearing in the woods. He was hungry and missed his warm house and comfortable bed.

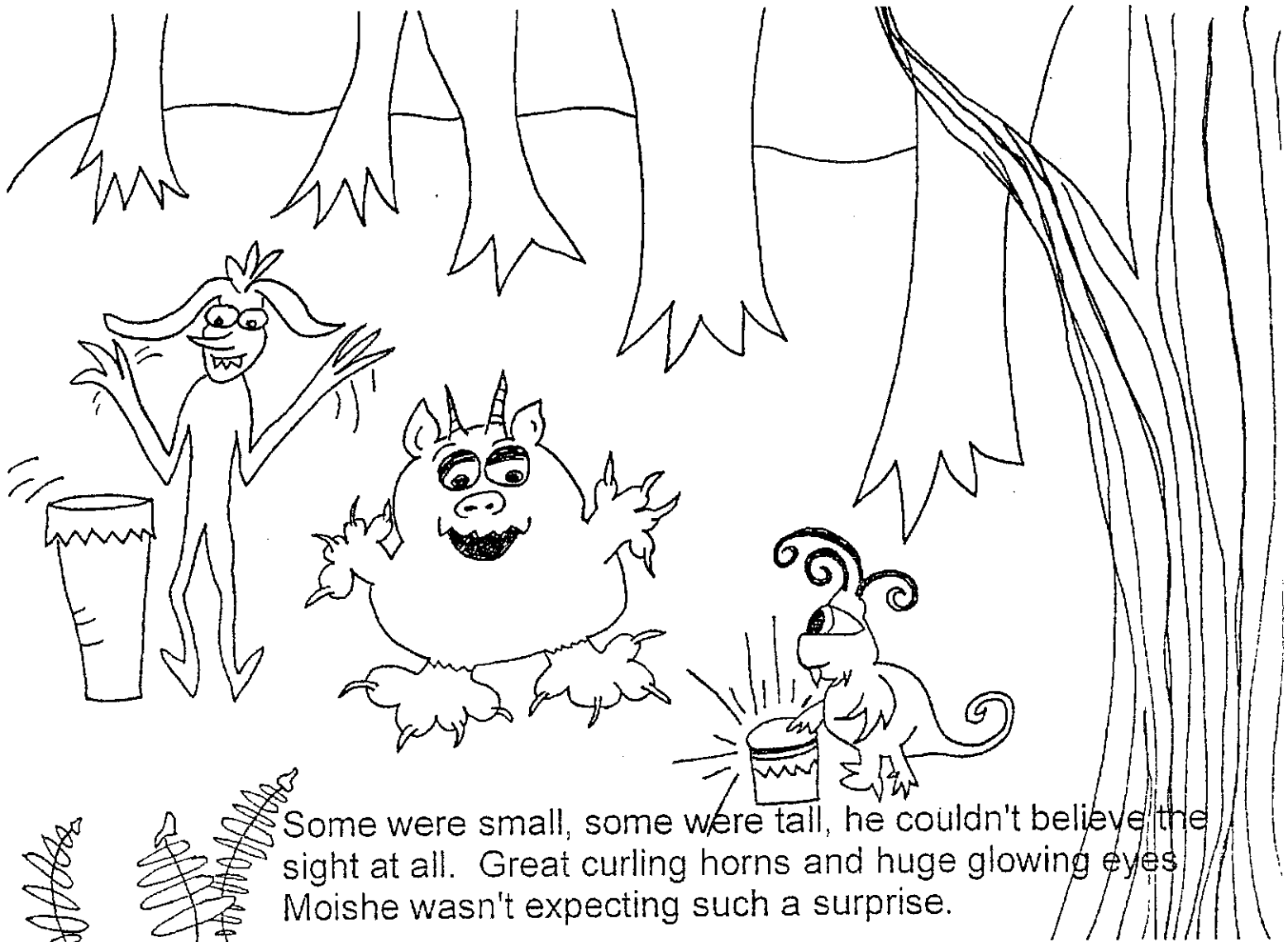


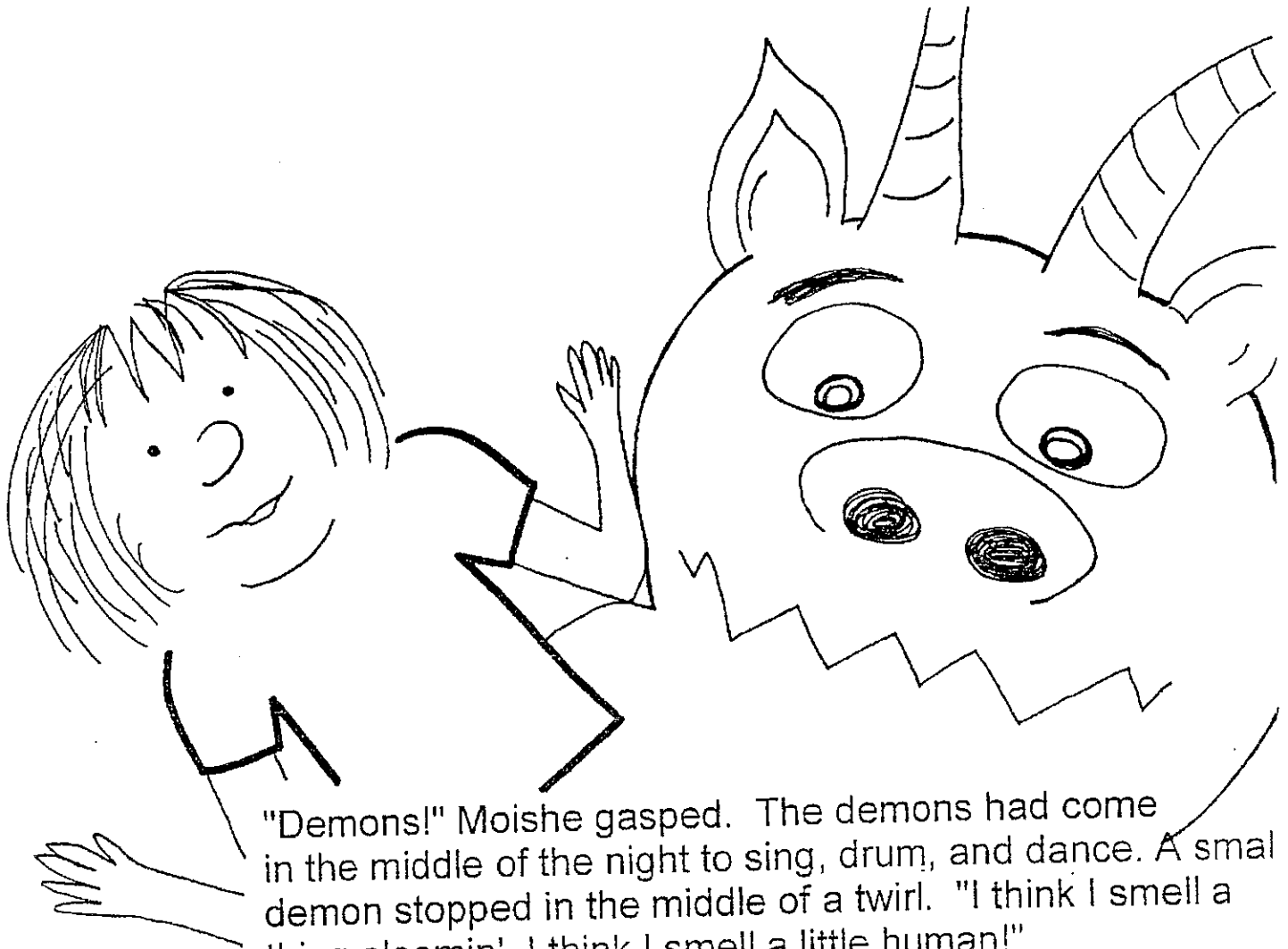


It was too dark to find his way home so he curled up in the hollow of a tree. Moishe had closed his eyes for what seemed was only a moment, and all at once the quiet night was filled with a terrific clang, clang, clang, and bang, bang, bang!

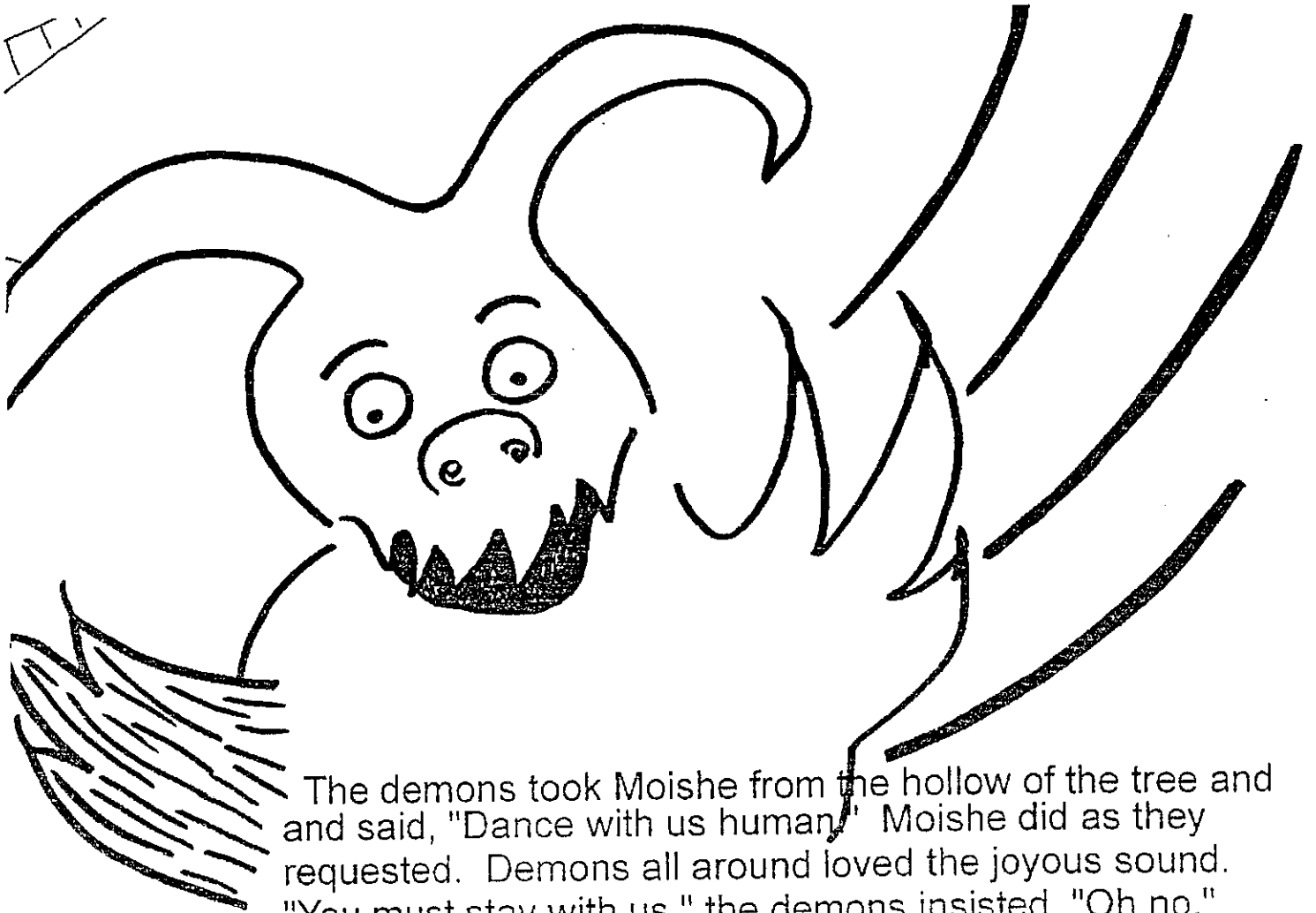


He opened his eyes to an amazing sight. The clearing in the woods was full of all kinds of creatures.

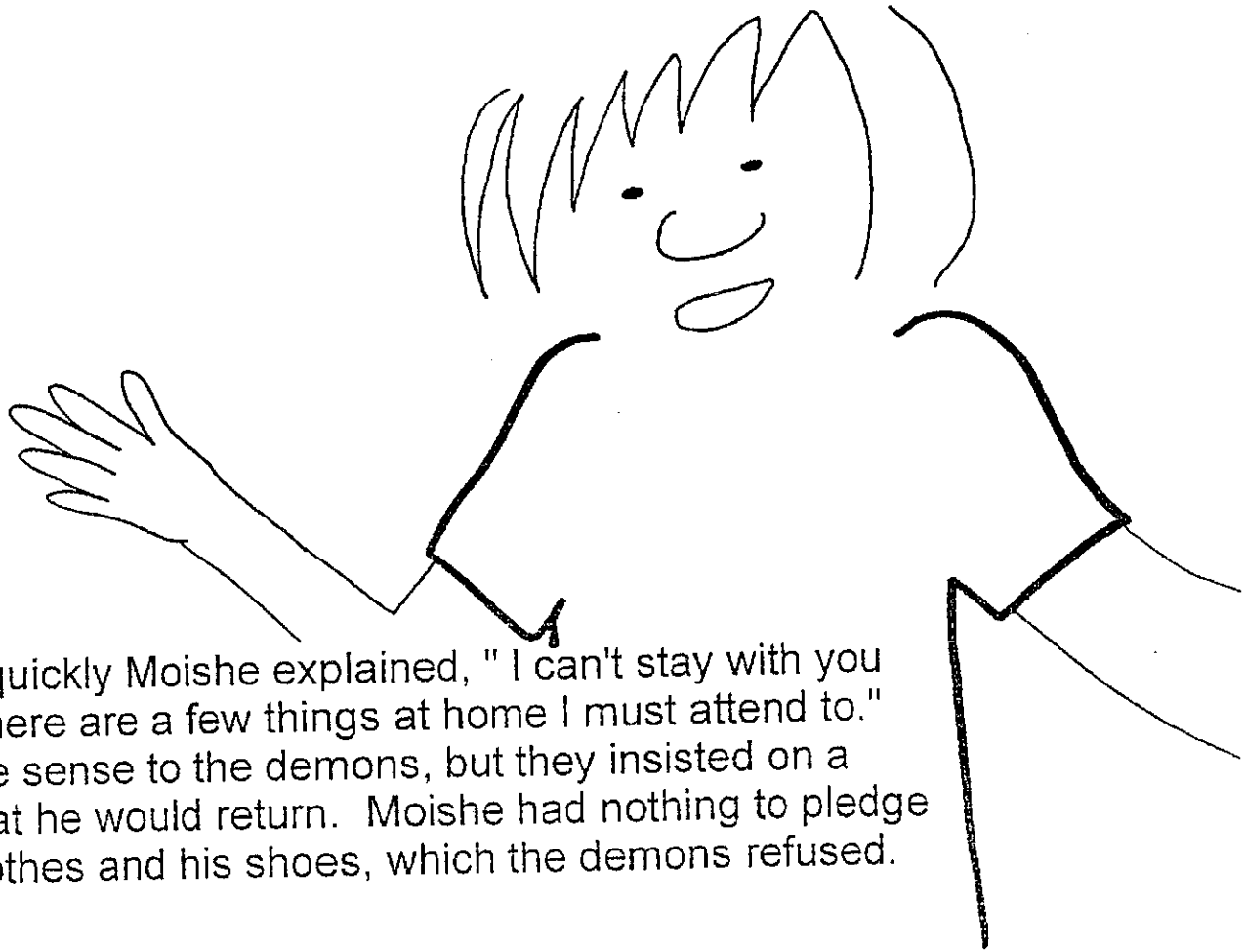




"Demons!" Moishe gasped. The demons had come in the middle of the night to sing, drum, and dance. A small demon stopped in the middle of a twirl. "I think I smell a thing aloomin', I think I smell a little human!"

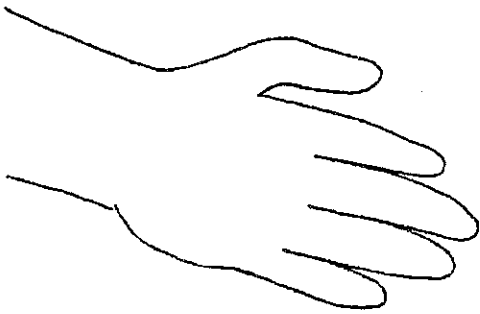


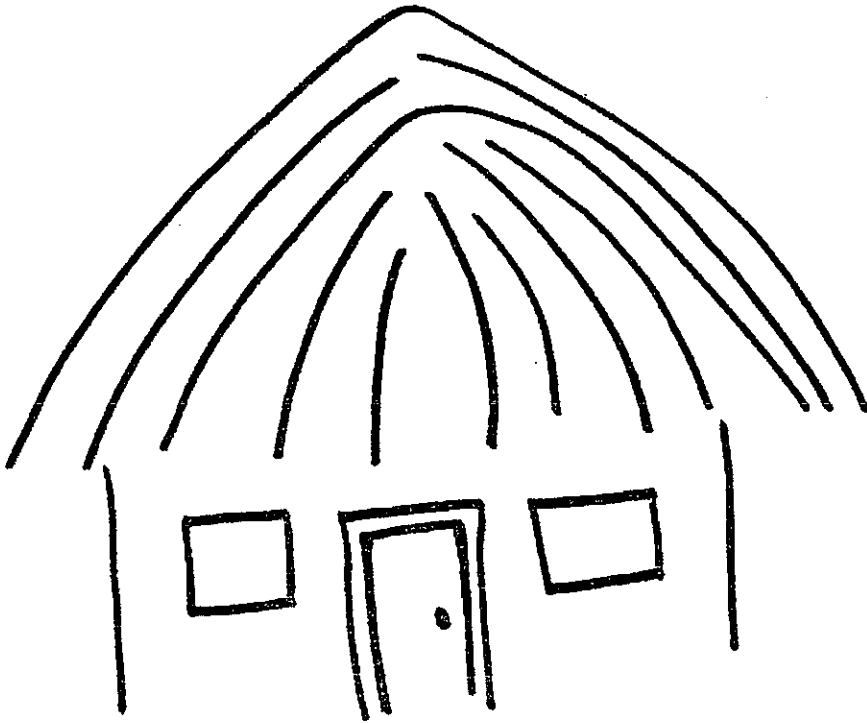
The demons took Moishe from the hollow of the tree and said, "Dance with us human!" Moishe did as they requested. Demons all around loved the joyous sound. "You must stay with us," the demons insisted. "Oh no," thought Moishe.



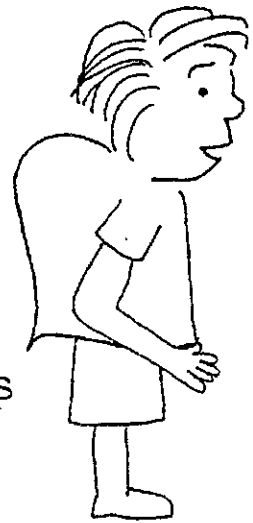
Thinking quickly Moishe explained, " I can't stay with you just yet, there are a few things at home I must attend to." This made sense to the demons, but they insisted on a pledge that he would return. Moishe had nothing to pledge but his clothes and his shoes, which the demons refused.

"Well, all I have left is my hump," said Moishe.  
"Just perfect," cried the demons, "a fine pledge indeed." With that, the demons gently removed Moishe's hump. Moishe hurried home, he began walking, and then he started running.

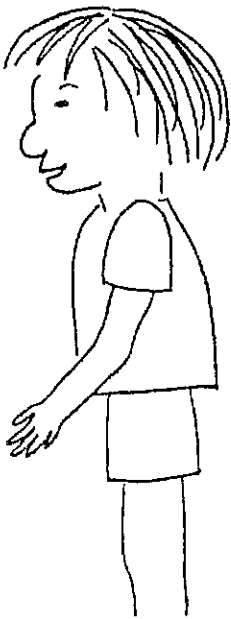




He reached his home and stood straight backed and amazed in front of his brother. Pinkas stared at his brother. "Where's your hump?" Pinkas asked. "What happened to your hump?" Moishe told Pinkas all that had happened.



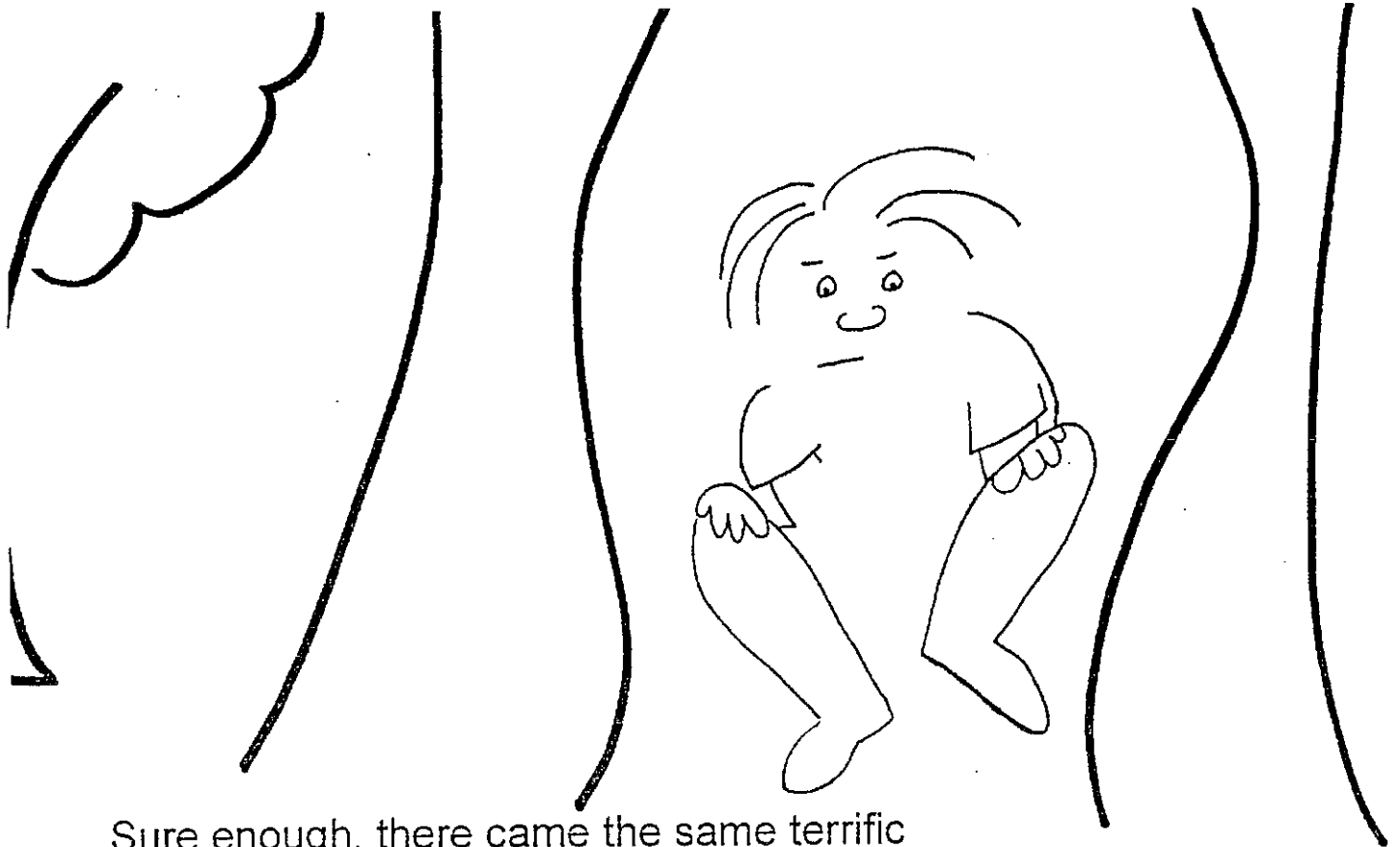




Pinkas replied, "If you had been more clever you would have remembered that demons have lots of gold. You could have taken their gold with you." Moische smiled and said, "I'm very happy with things just as they are." Pinkas began thinking about all that gold. He was sure he could win it for himself, and he headed off into the forest.



He found the very same clearing in the woods and curled up  
in the hollow of the very same tree.

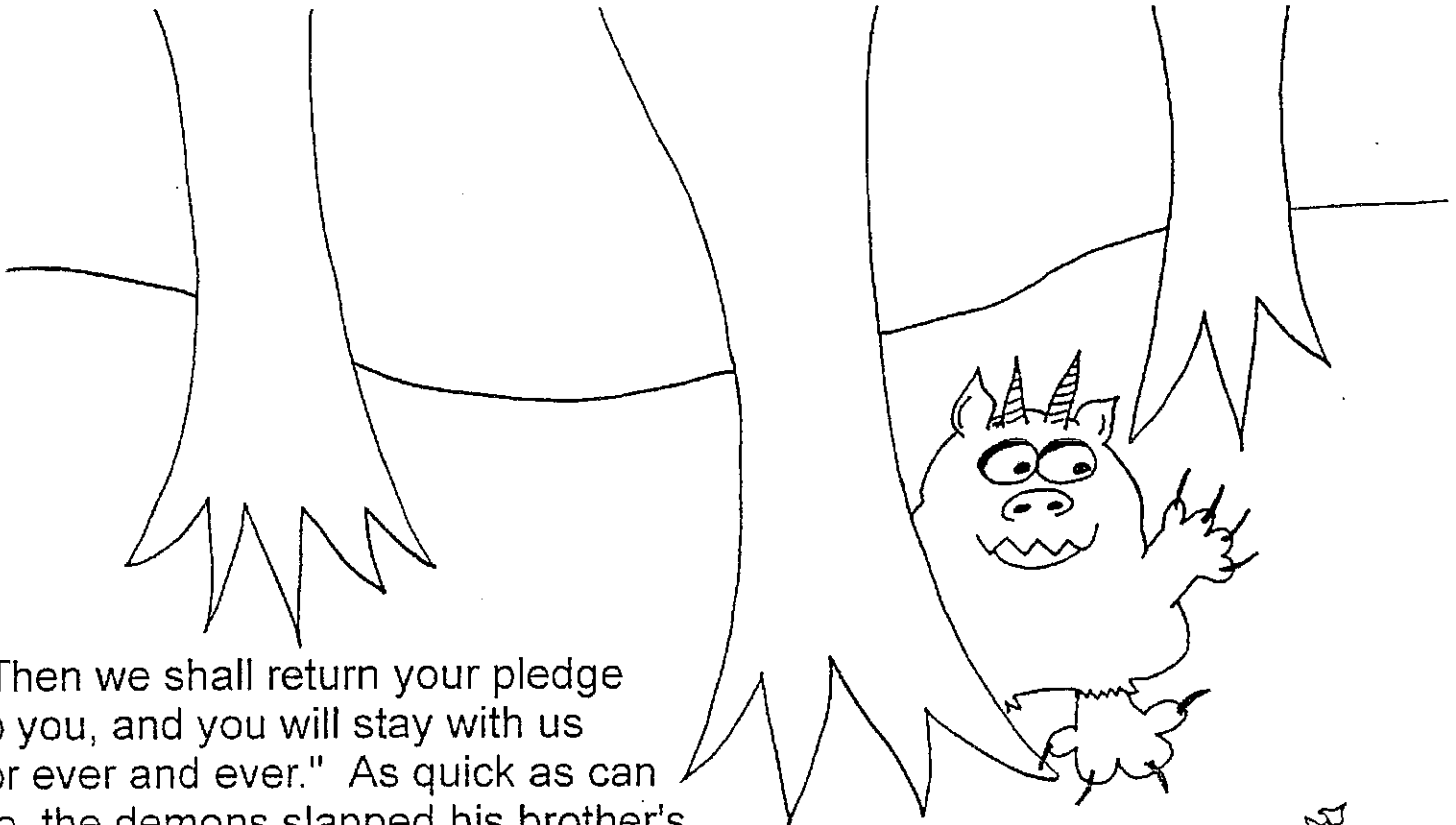


Sure enough, there came the same terrific clang, clang, clang, and bang, bang, bang! The little demon smelled the human and the demons pulled Pinkas out into the clearing. Pinkas joined their party.

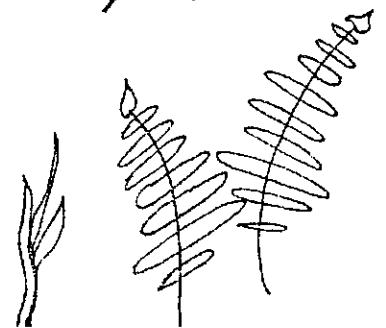
He was an awful dancer and a worse singer. But the demons just loved his dancing and singing. Since demons can't tell one human from another they celebrated the honest humans return. "Hooray, you have returned," they cheered. "Um, yes, of course I have," said Pinkas looking around for the demons gold.



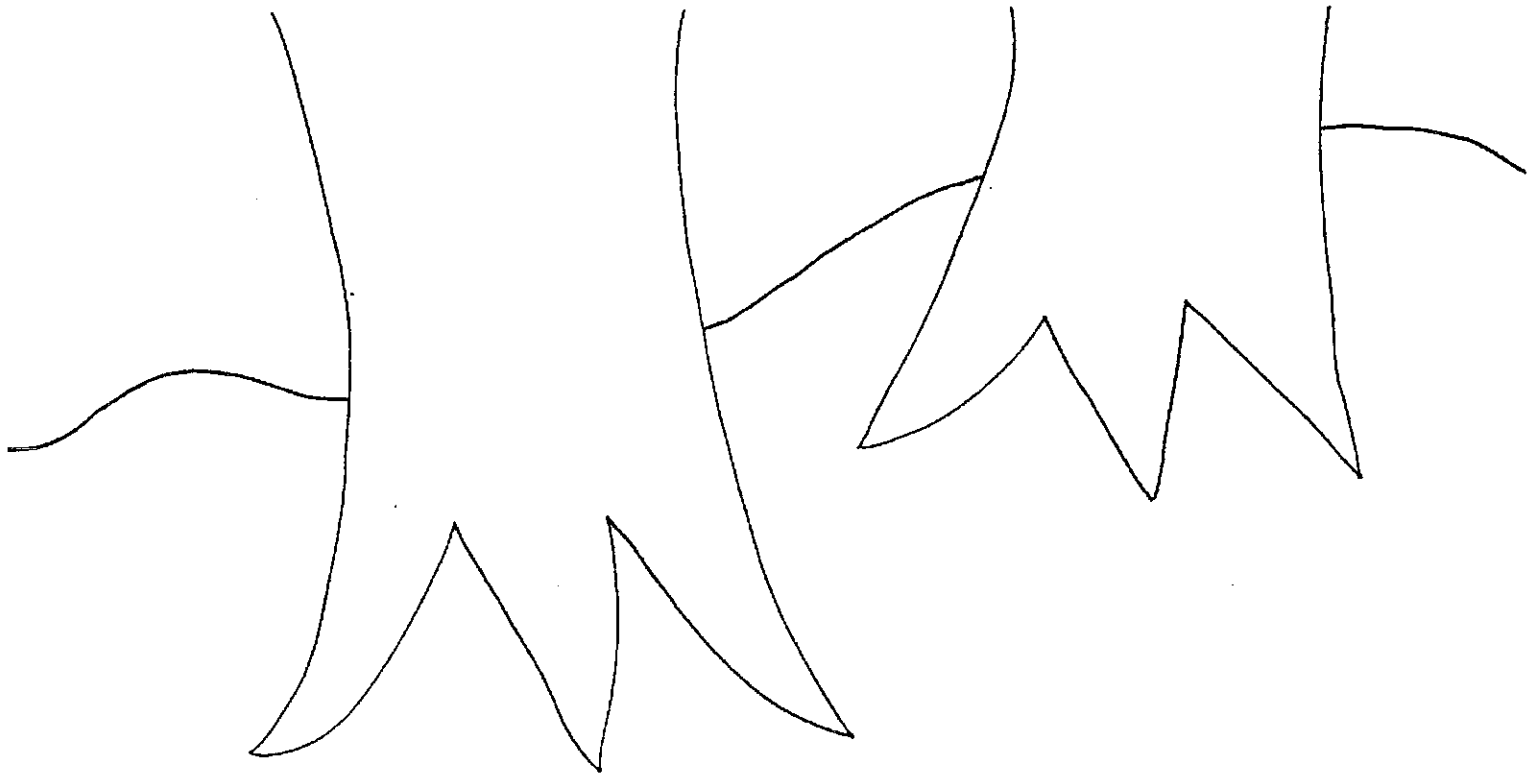




"Then we shall return your pledge to you, and you will stay with us for ever and ever." As quick as can be, the demons slapped his brother's hump on top of his own hump!!











And what happened after that? Did he go on dancing for all time? No one can say. But Moishe never saw his greedy, trickster brother again.

#### IV. CURRICULUM IDEAS

The Dancing Demons has a lot to offer on a variety of curriculum levels. It presents two hunchback brothers, with very different personalities. Topics that can be examined in discussions with the children can begin with a question; Tell me about Pinkas and Moishe, depending on their age, the children can explore the kinds of personalities the characters present. They can discuss if they think good things only happen to good people. Did Moishe get what he deserved? How is their relationship as brothers similar or different to the children's relationships with their own siblings? The children can write their own book about an experience with a sibling or relative.

Issues of disability can be explored and compared with other literature. (The ugly duckling? Hunchback of Notre Dame?) How is it that Demons do not recognize one human from another, one disability from another? What can we learn from this Demon way of thinking? Is personality more important in the end? Why?

## Relevant literature

### Jewish Stories

#### It's Too Noisy! By Joanna Cole

This retelling of a folktale shares a farmer's experience with a very noisy household. The farmer seeks the advice of a Wise Man who tells him to bring his farm animals inside the house. The more animals he adds the noisier it becomes. In the end the Wise Man tells him to put the animals out and then the farmer finds his house "seemed as quiet as quiet can be." (p.28)

#### Gittel's Hands. By Erica Silverman

This is a story about a man who brags about his daughter's abilities and tries to use her to get him out of a debt that he owes the hay merchant. Gittel, his daughter, is required to perform tasks with out the necessary items to do so. She instead provides assistance to a bird, a cat, and a beggar. When she is required to make a silver Elijah's cup she is visited by all those that she assisted and the beggar-who is Elijah-teaches her to make gifts of silver. In the end the miracle gets her

father out of trouble and her beautiful work is admired by people both near and far.

### African Stories

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale. By John Steptoe

Mufaro is the father of two daughters, Nyasha and Manyara. Each of the daughters is brought before the King who is looking for a wife. Nyasha was kind and caring and Manyara was bad tempered. The King chooses Nyasha for his wife and the ironic fate of Manyara is revealed in the end.

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears. By Verna Aardema

This retelling of a West African tale is a wonderful example of a cumulative tale. What happens when a mosquito tells a lie? Finding out is the exciting result of many happenings, including the sad death of owlet, which causes an upset in the waking of the sun.

## V. EXPERIENCE OF READING THE STORY WITH CHILDREN

I first had children, ages four and five, in a Vermont school, listen to the original version of the story as told by Joseph Sherman. There were no pictures, the story was read as it appears in the appendix. I noted how the children responded and where they seemed to lose interest. I used the information I gained in this experience to make changes in my own retelling of the story. I found this was really useful in helping me to create effective changes in order to bring the story to the children in a way that is appropriate to their age and level of interest and understanding.

The reading of my original version, A Tale of Two Brothers, to a group of five and six year olds was a really wonderful experience. The classroom I read in was a Kindergarten class located in Somerset, New Jersey. I felt that the ages of five and up are most appropriate for this story.

I will share a few of the children's comments and will include their book reviews as well. As I was reading one of the children asked, "Are you going to color it?" At the end of the story we discussed the illustrations of some of the books on their classroom shelf, including the book, The

Giving Tree, by Shel Silverstein, which also has black and white pictures.

The following is a discussion between two girls that took place as they were drawing their book reviews:

S: "Where's their Mom?"

J: "There isn't any Mom."

S: "What happened to the Mom?"

J: "The Mom died."

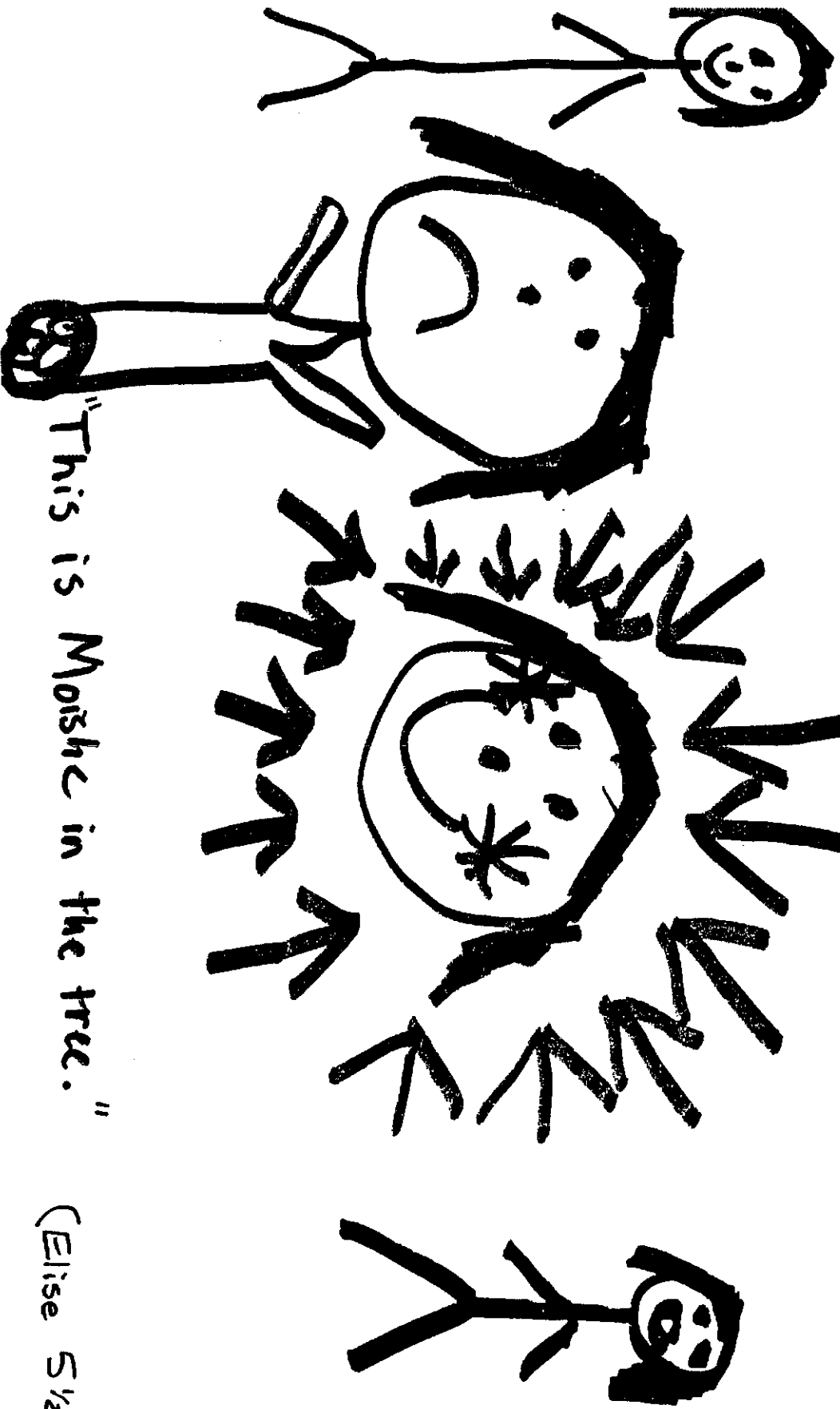
S: "How old are they?"

It was great to see two children really thinking about the story they just heard. They had obviously related to the story in a meaningful way and had questions about the story that seemed to be based on issues relevant to their own lives.

Sharing of children's reactions:

# Book Review of The PAWCI's Dream

21



"This is Morshc in the tree."

(Elise 5 1/2 yrs. old.)



# Book Review of The Dancing Demons.



This is a  
boy.

(Andrea 4 yrs. old.)

My name: XAVIER

Title: A TALE

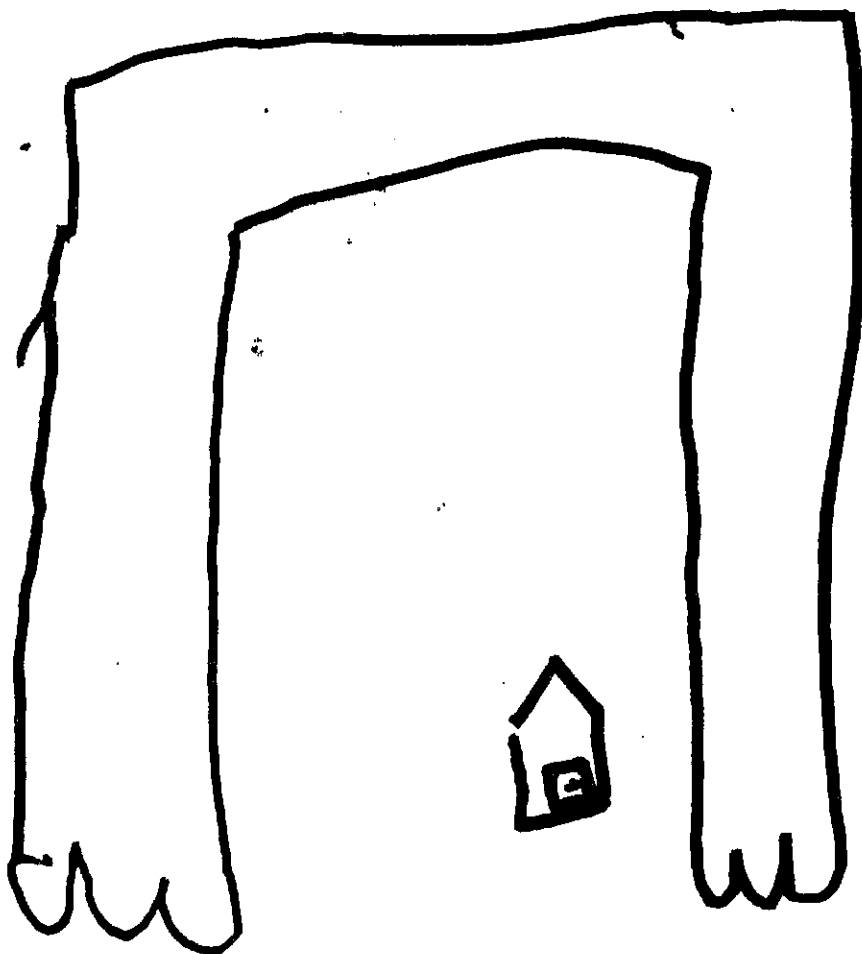
Author: OF TWO HOT HENS

Illustrator: MEHEPITA

How I felt about the book:



My favorite part was:



"When the monsters took the bad boy away."

My name: JENNA

JENNA  
JENNA

Title:

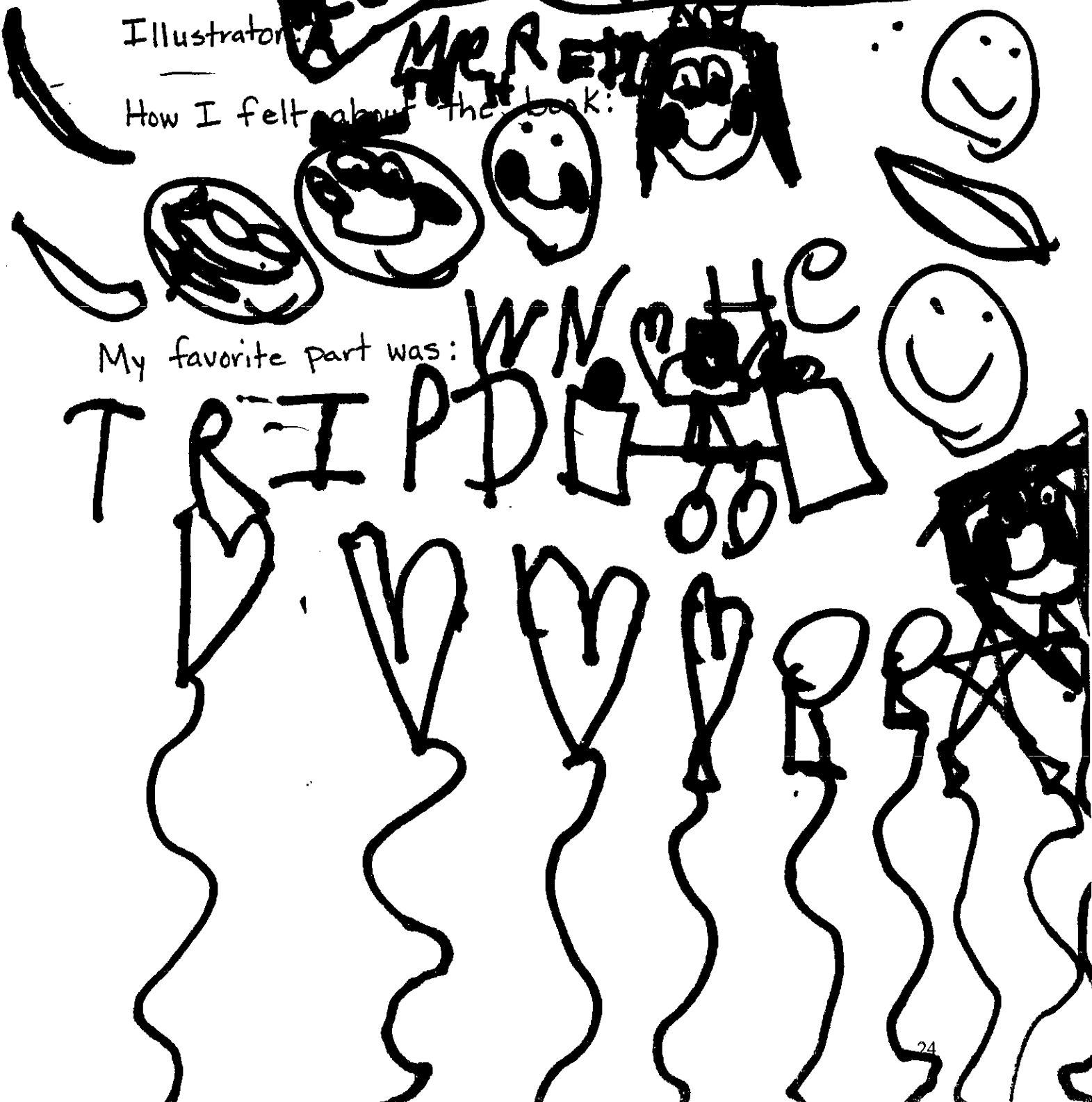
Author:

Illustrator:

How I felt about the book:

My favorite part was:

TRIP WITH  
WONDER



TOPN VANTICO



My name:

LINDSAY

Title:

TITLE: A TALE

Author:

FO ~~ES~~

Illustrator:

TWO PORTALS

How I felt about the book:



My favorite part was:



"When he was in the tree and the members came."

My name: JAL KIE


Title: A Tale of TOW BROWN

Author:

Illustrator:

How I felt about the book:



My favorite part was: 

My name: ZAYN R

Title:

Author:

Illustrator:

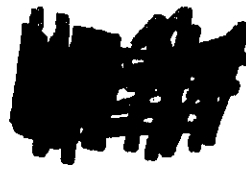
How I felt about the book:



My favorite part was:



My name: Samantha



Title: A Tale of Two Cities

Author: Meredith Glass

Illustrator: Meredith Glass

How I felt about the book:



My favorite part was:

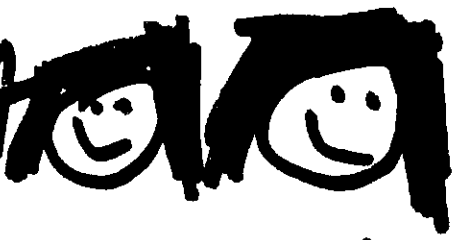


MY FAVORITE PART WAS  
THE WHOLE BOOK:

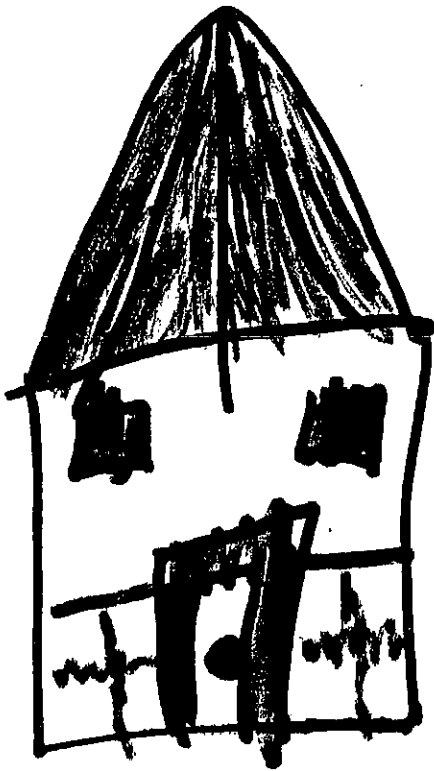




SAMANTHA



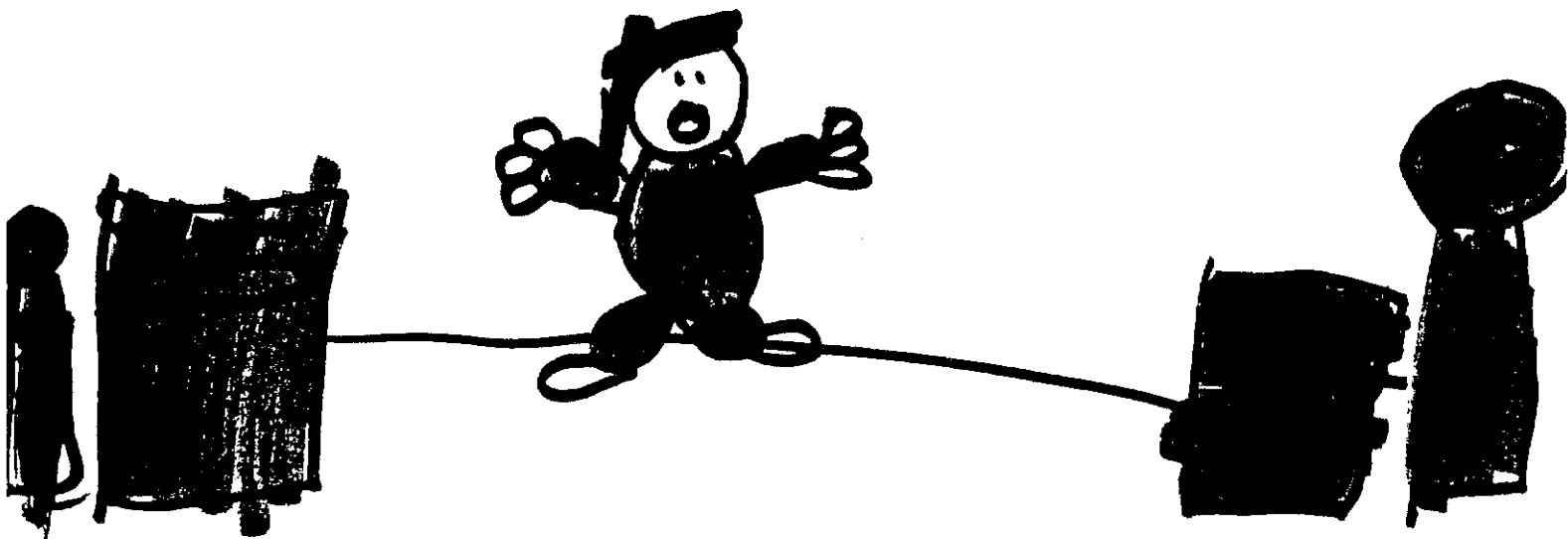
I AM 6



YEARS




OLD



My name: AMANDA

Title: A TALE OF TWO BROTHERS  
Author: MEREDITH GLASS  
Illustrator: MEREDITH GLASS  
How I felt about the book: 😊 GLASS

My favorite part was: 

"When he was in the tree in the woods."

V. THE ENORMOUS FROG

Additional folklore applications revised  
from TE 539: Folklore in the classroom paper.

Folklore Finalr  
The Enormous Frog  
(REVISED FOR THESIS)

The following is a flexible plan to incorporate folklore into our classroom.

***The Enormous Frog*** (Babylon, from the Babylonian Talmud, Aramaic) from *The Diamond Tree*, by Howard Schwartz and Barbara Rush.

Once there was an enormous frog as big as sixty cities. Imagine how big that frog was! Then came a snake with a tail so long it could circle the world, and it swallowed the frog that was as big as sixty cities. Imagine how big that snake was! Then came a raven that covered the sky like a dark cloud, and it swallowed the snake with the tail so long it could circle the world, which swallowed the frog as big as sixty cities. Imagine how big that raven was! And up flew the raven and sat on the branch of a tree whose highest branches touched the sky. Imagine how big that tree was! Then came a giant who cut down the tree whose top branches touched the sky, where sat the raven that covered the sky like a dark cloud, which swallowed the snake whose tail circled the world, which swallowed the frog that was as big as sixty cities. Imagine how big that giant was! And the tree came tumbling down. Then came a voice from far above, calling out the giant's name. Imagine that! (Schwartz, 1991 p.61-62, 117.)

This story can be told and learned by the children during morning meeting, along with other cumulative type stories, like *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in Peoples Ears*. Group discussion about comparisons of the stories could be incorporated once the children are familiar with a few different cumulative stories. This could be especially effective if the comparison is done after the children have explored the stories through many different kinds of activities for each of the stories. The activities for this mini unit are related to *The Enormous Frog*.

**Activity:**

After reading stories, I like to discuss with the children what they liked or didn't like about the story. You could explore ideas about what the children know about frogs, snakes, trees etc.

You could have the children retell the story. You could explore what the children think about the voice, who do you think that voice belongs to?

Following our discussion I will ask each of the children to draw a picture of their favorite part of *The Enormous Frog*. Their work will be displayed on the wall with a writing piece below each of their pictures. Written either by the child or for those not yet writing, by the teacher, recording what the child describes about his/her picture.

#### Activity:

Using large paper the children can draw the frog, the snake, the raven, the tree, the giant, and the voice. The children can make each one bigger than the last until they reach the end of the story. They can then write the words below the picture to hang up on the wall or tape record their version of the story using the pictures they make to help them remember the sequence of the story, each character can be told by a different child.

#### Activity:

Make pictures of the stories characters and laminate them. (Or use felt to create the characters.) Attach the scratchy part of the velcro to the back of the character and have the story available in the flannel board area as well. The teachers can introduce the story in a new way by telling it using the flannel board.

#### Characters:

frog  
snake  
raven  
tree  
giant  
voice

#### Activity:

Adapt the song the farmer in the dell to The Enormous Frog characters.

The frog in the pond , the frog in the pond  
Hi ho the story-o the frog in the pond.  
The frog sees a snake, the frog sees the snake  
Hi ho the story-o the frog sees the snake.  
The snake sees the raven, the snake sees the raven  
Hi ho the story-o the snake sees the raven.  
The raven sees the tree, the raven sees the tree

Hi ho the story-o the raven sees the tree.  
The tree sees the giant, the tree sees the giant  
Hi ho the story-o the tree sees the giant.  
The giant hears a voice, the giant hears a voice  
Hi ho the story-o the giant hears a voice.  
The voice stands alone, the voice stands alone  
Hi ho the story-o the voice stands alone.

#### Activity:

Have the children create a big book of the story. After the children make the pictures on large pieces of paper, the teacher can make lines for text at the bottom of the page. Children can copy in the actual text or the teacher can write in their own version of the story. Tie the pages of the book together and use for morning meeting reading.

#### Activity:

In the science area you could explore frogs, snakes, ravens, and trees.

Each of these studies could be an exploration of environment, or comparisons-how is a frog like or not like me? The tree study could

include nature walks, leaf collecting, who lives in trees? How do we use trees?

This simple little story has much to offer in a classroom setting. I really enjoyed thinking of ideas that the children might like to do and connecting them to this tale. I think that the more experiences you have, the more you can adapt the lessons as you go, based on the interests of the children. It seems a wonderfully rich way to explore language, stories, art, music, culture, science and writing at a variety of levels. This allows children to enter into the learning process at their own level.

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## VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As teachers a main goal for our students is to prepare them to be able to live in and contribute to society. Learning about how people respond to the world can be an enriching experience for all children. Folklore can be used to create bridges between classrooms and family life, between cultures and people, and between curriculum and children.

Folklore provides teachers with unlimited resources for use in classroom settings. Its use is only as limited as the creative imagination of teachers and children combined. Exposure to and exploration of cultures that are different from our own does not mean that traditional teachings, such as math and science, do not remain essential to the curriculum. It is more likely to mean that the areas of math and science can be made more relevant to the children, in ways that provide hands on experiences, teachings that come from within the folklore experience, and from experiences that are witnessed in the child's own community. I have found that if you can relay information to children in ways that allow them to integrate it into their existing body of knowledge you are more likely to be successful.

I feel that my experiences with folklore and its use in the classroom have provided me with an invaluable resource to use throughout my teaching career. It is a tool that I feel is an essential part of the classroom curriculum. Folklore has the ability to cross cultural, economic, and social boundaries. It is my hope that in the same way folklore has assisted my understanding of my religious identity, folklore can be used to explore a better understanding of ourselves, as individual and as a people, and how we relate to our world.

I would like to conclude with the following quote from the book, *Because God Loves Stories*:

"Meaning is different from happiness. Included in meaning is poverty and other unhappy states...Our greatest desire, greater even than the desire for happiness, is that our lives mean something. This desire for meaning is the originating impulse of story. We tell stories because we hope to find or create significant connections between things. Stories link past, present, and future in a way that tells us where we have been (even before we were born), where we are, and where we could be going. Our stories teach us that there is a place for us that we fit, they suggest to us that our lives can have a plot. Stories turn mere chronology, one thing after another, into the purposeful action of plots, and thereby into meaning." (Zeitlin, 1997, p.294)

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## Appendix A Original Version of the Story:

Once, long ago and far away, there lived two brothers, Moishe and Pinkas. Now, God had willed it that both brothers were hunchbacks, but they were as different in all other ways as day is from night. Moishe was a happy, friendly fellow, while Pinkas was a greedy, grasping soul, never pleased with anything he had. Pinkas was forever trying to pick a fight with his brother, and one day he succeeded.

"You go out of your way to be mean to everyone," Moishe told him, "but I'm not going to stay here and let you make me as miserable as you!"

With that, Moishe set out for a long walk in the forest. So long a walk was it that night overtook him in the middle of a small clearing in the wilderness. Hungry and tired, Moishe longed for his nice, warm bed in his nice, warm house. But he knew he would never be able to find his way home in the darkness.

Moishe sighed. "It won't hurt me to go to bed hungry for just one night," he said. Creeping into the hollow of a tree, Moishe curled up and settled down to sleep as best he could.

It seemed to Moishe that he had barely closed his eyes before all at once the silence of the night was broken by a terrific clang, clang, clang, and bang, bang, bang! He opened his eyes-and gasped in amazement. That once empty clearing was now full of the most incredible creatures! Some were tall, some were small, some skinny, some fat-but all had long, sharp claws, huge glowing eyes, and great, curling horns.

"Demons!" Moishe gasped.

Beating on drums, whirling and yelling at the top of their screechy voices, they had come there in the middle of the night to dance.

One small demon stopped in the middle of a spin, sniffing, and sniffing. "There!" he cried, pointing at Moishe. "A human!"

Before Moishe could run, the demons dragged him from his hiding place. "Come, human, dance with us," they insisted.

What could he do? The demons were all about him. So Moishe danced. He danced with all his might, singing as best he could, and the demons all laughed with wonder.

"Why, you are a fine dancer," they cried, "the finest dancer we have ever seen. You must stay with us forever!"

"Oh, no!" Moishe gasped. All the demons glared, so he added quickly, "I can't stay with you just yet. You see, I ... I have business back at home that I must look after."

That made sense to the demons. "But if you leave us," asked the small demon, "how do we know you will ever come back?"

"I will," Moishe promised.

"Yes, you will," the demons agreed, "and to make sure you do, you're going to leave us a pledge."

What could Moishe leave as a pledge? He had nothing on him but his shirt, trousers, and shoes, which the demons refused. "But what else can I give you?" cried Moishe. "I have nothing left but ... but my hump!"

"Why that's a fine pledge!" cried the demons.

With that, they took the hump from his back, as easily and painlessly as could be, and Moishe hurried home straight-backed and amazed. By the time he reached his village, he was no longer running but walking, shoulders back, head up.

Pinkas stared at his brother. "What happened to you?" he asked. "Where is your hump?" Moishe told him all that had happened.

"But everyone knows the demons have hoards of gold!" Pinkas said. "You fool! If you had only been a little cleverer, you could have taken their gold away with you."

Moishe smiled. "I'm quite happy with things as they are, brother."

That wasn't good enough for Pinkas. He brooded and brooded over what had happened to his brother, and finally decided, "I will win that gold for myself."

So he set off for the clearing in the forest, curled up in the hollow of the tree, and fell asleep. Sure enough, that night there came the same terrific clang, clang, clang, and bang, bang, bang! Pinkas opened his eyes to see the demons whirling about, beating their drums and yelling at the top of their screechy voices.

"Wait, wait!" cried the small demon. "A human is watching us!"

The demons dragged Pinkas from his hiding place. "Come, human, you will dance with us," they insisted.

Pinkas danced. He was a terrible dancer, and a worse singer, but his horrible screaming sounded simply wonderful to the demons. Alas for Pinkas, demons can't tell one human from another.

"You have returned!" they cried in glee. "Our marvelous singer and dancer has returned. You honest man, you really have returned to us!"

"Uh ... yes," Pinkas said, looking about for their gold. "Of course I have."

"We shall return your pledge to you," the demons said, "and you shall never, ever leave us."

Before Pinkas could say a thing, they brought his brother's hump to him and slapped it on top of his own hump. And what happened to him after that? Did he go on dancing with the demons for all time? No one can say. But Moishe never saw his greedy, grasping brother again.

The Dancing Demons.

From Rachel the Clever and other Jewish folktales by Josepha Sherman.

Appendix B A Tale of Two Brothers. By Meredith A. Glass

Once, long ago and far away there lived two brothers, Moishe and Pinkas. Both brothers were born with hunchbacks, but in all other ways they were very different. Moishe was kind and friendly. Pinkas was greedy and nasty, never pleased with anything. He was always playing tricks on Moishe, trying to pick fights with him. One day Pinkas went too far. Moishe was so angry he told Pinkas, "You are always being mean and I don't like it!" and with that, Moishe went off into the forest. He walked until it became dark and found himself in a small clearing in the woods. He was hungry and missed his warm house and comfortable bed. It was too dark to find his way home so he curled up in the hollow of a tree. Moishe closed his eyes for what seemed only a moment and all at once the quiet night was filled with a terrific clang, clang, clang and bang, bang, bang! He opened his eyes to an amazing sight. The clearing in the woods was full of all kinds of creatures. Some were small, some were tall, and he couldn't believe the sight at all. Great curling horns and huge glowing eyes, Moishe wasn't expecting such a surprise. "Demons!" Moishe gasped. The demons had come in the night to sing, drum, and dance. A small demon suddenly stopped in the middle of a twirl. "I think I smell, a thing aloomin', I think I smell a little human!" The demons took Moishe from the hollow of the tree and said, "Dance with us human." Moishe did as they requested. Demons all around loved the joyous sound. "You must stay with us," the demons insisted. "Oh no," thought Moishe. Thinking quickly he explained, "I can't stay with you just yet, there are a few things at home I must attend to." This made sense to the demons but they insisted on more than a promise that he would return. Moishe had nothing to pledge but his clothes and his shoes, which the demons refused. "Well all I have left is my hump." "Just perfect," cried the demons, "a fine pledge indeed." With that the demons gently removed Moishe's hump. Moishe hurried home, he began walking, then running. He reached his home and stood straight backed and amazed in front of his brother, Pinkas. Pinkas stared at his brother. "Where's your hump?" Pinkas questioned, "what happened to your hump?" Moishe told Pinkas all that had happened. Pinkas replied, "If you had been more clever you would have remembered that demons have lots of gold. You could have taken the gold with you!" Moishe smiled and said, "I'm very happy with things just as they are." Pinkas began thinking about all that gold. He was sure he could win it for himself, and he headed to the forest. He found the very same clearing and curled up in the very same hollow in the tree. Sure enough, there came the same terrific, clang, clang, clang and bang, bang, bang! The little demon smelled the human and the demons pulled Pinkas out into the clearing. Pinkas joined their party. He was an awful dancer and a worse singer. But the demons just love his dancing and singing. Since demons can't tell one human from another they celebrated the honest humans return. "Hooray, you have returned!!" "Um, yes, of course I have," said Pinkas looking around for the demons gold. "Then we shall return your pledge to you, and you will stay with us for ever and ever." As quick as can be, the demons slapped his brother's hump on top of his own hump!! And what happened after that? Did he go on dancing for all time? No one can say. But Moishe never saw his greedy, trickster brother again.