

The MIRACLE CRACKER LATKES

BY JUDY WOLFMAN

A GAGGLE
IS A
NOISY OR
DISORDERLY
GROUP.



ADAM WAS A poor, young farmer who left his home in search of a better life for his family. One day he met an old shoemaker who wanted to retire.

“I will teach you to make shoes, young man,” said the old man. “It’s a difficult but satisfying job. And if you show promise, I’ll turn my business over to you.”

It would be hard work, but Adam knew he could learn the trade. He was excited about the new job and anxious to tell his wife. No longer would he have to watch his crops fail for lack of rain. His future looked bright—he was going to be a shoemaker!

When he’d left in search of work, Adam had told his wife he’d be home for the first night of Hanukkah, but he’d stayed with the shoemaker two days longer than he’d expected, and it was now the third night of Hanukkah as he set off for home.

After walking all day, he was getting tired and hungry. Turning a bend in the road, he saw a town. Perhaps there I’ll find food to quiet my growling stomach, he thought, and a soft, warm bed in which to sleep.

Adam went to the first house and knocked on the door. It was opened by an old woman.

“Yes?” she asked kindly, looking Adam up and down. “What do you want, young man?”

“I’ve been walking all day and have had nothing to eat. Could you spare some food and a bed for the night?”

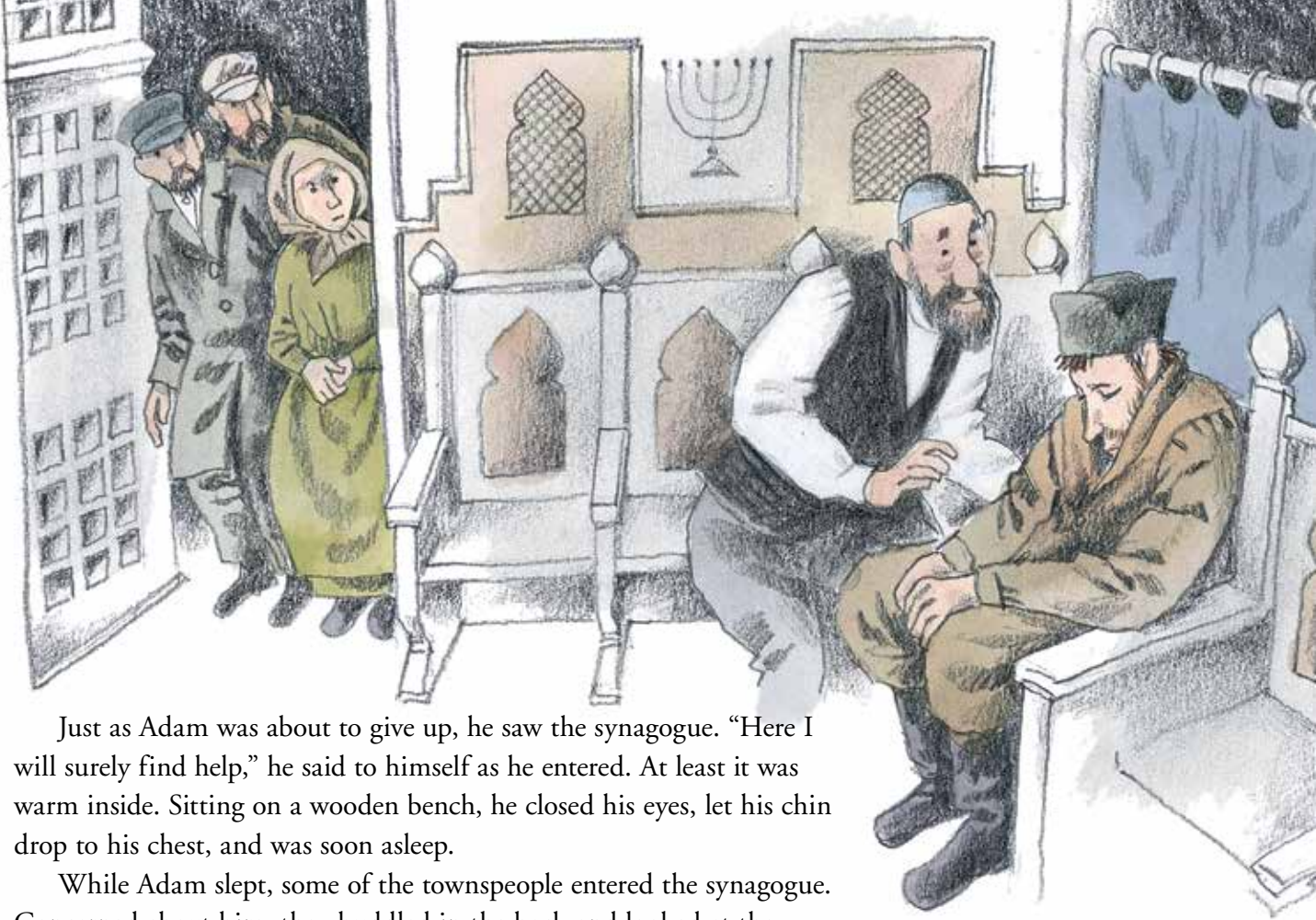
The old woman sadly shook her head. “I’m sorry,” she said, “we had a very dry summer, and I have barely enough food for my own family. Perhaps my neighbors can help.” Slowly she closed the door, mumbling to herself.

Adam went to the next house. His knock was answered by a young woman surrounded by a gaggle of children.

“Do you have any extra food scraps I could eat?” he asked hopefully.

“Are you kidding?” the young woman snapped. “Look at all the mouths I must feed. There’s no extra food around here.” She slammed the door in Adam’s face.

Adam went from house to house, trying to find something to eat, but always the answer was the same. No one had any food to spare.



Just as Adam was about to give up, he saw the synagogue. “Here I will surely find help,” he said to himself as he entered. At least it was warm inside. Sitting on a wooden bench, he closed his eyes, let his chin drop to his chest, and was soon asleep.

While Adam slept, some of the townspeople entered the synagogue. Concerned about him, they huddled in the back and looked at the sleeping man, wondering who he was, where he was from, and where he might be going.

They watched as the caretaker gently shook Adam. “Wake up, young man.”

Adam’s eyes flew open.

“Are you all right?” the caretaker asked.

“I guess I fell asleep,” Adam said sheepishly. “I’ve been walking all day and was tired.” His stomach rumbled. “And I’m quite hungry,” he added. “Might you have something I could eat?”

“Sorry,” the caretaker said. “We have no food here.”

“Nothing? Not even some crackers?”

“Nope. Not even some crackers.”

“That’s too bad,” Adam said. “If I had a few crackers, I could make some latkes.”

The caretaker glanced at Adam sideways. “You can’t make latkes from crackers. That’s impossible.”

“Not really,” said Adam, smiling slightly. “Hanukkah is a holiday of miracles, and I can make latkes from crackers.”

The caretaker slowly scratched his head. “I think I might have a few crackers in the cupboard. Show me what you can do. Come,” he said, leading Adam into the kitchen.

The townspeople followed, whispering back and forth.

“Did you hear that? He said he could make latkes from crackers!”

“Ridiculous! Everyone knows you make latkes from potatoes.”

The caretaker handed Adam a frying pan, cooking oil, a bowl, and several crackers.

“Now,” he said, “show me how you make latkes from crackers.”

Adam broke the crackers into small pieces and dropped them into the bowl.

A short, stout woman stepped forward. “You need eggs to make latkes,” she said.

“Yes,” Adam agreed. “Eggs would make the latkes tastier.”

“I live next-door,” the woman said. “I’ll be right back.”

Soon she returned, followed by the rabbi, who wondered why so many people were in the synagogue. The woman handed two eggs to Adam. Adam cracked them into the bowl.

“You need an onion,” a tall, thin woman said. “It won’t taste like anything without an onion!”

The woman ran out the door and soon returned with an onion.

“You’re quite right,” Adam said as he peeled the onion and grated it into the mixture of crackers and eggs. “An onion will give them splendid flavor.”

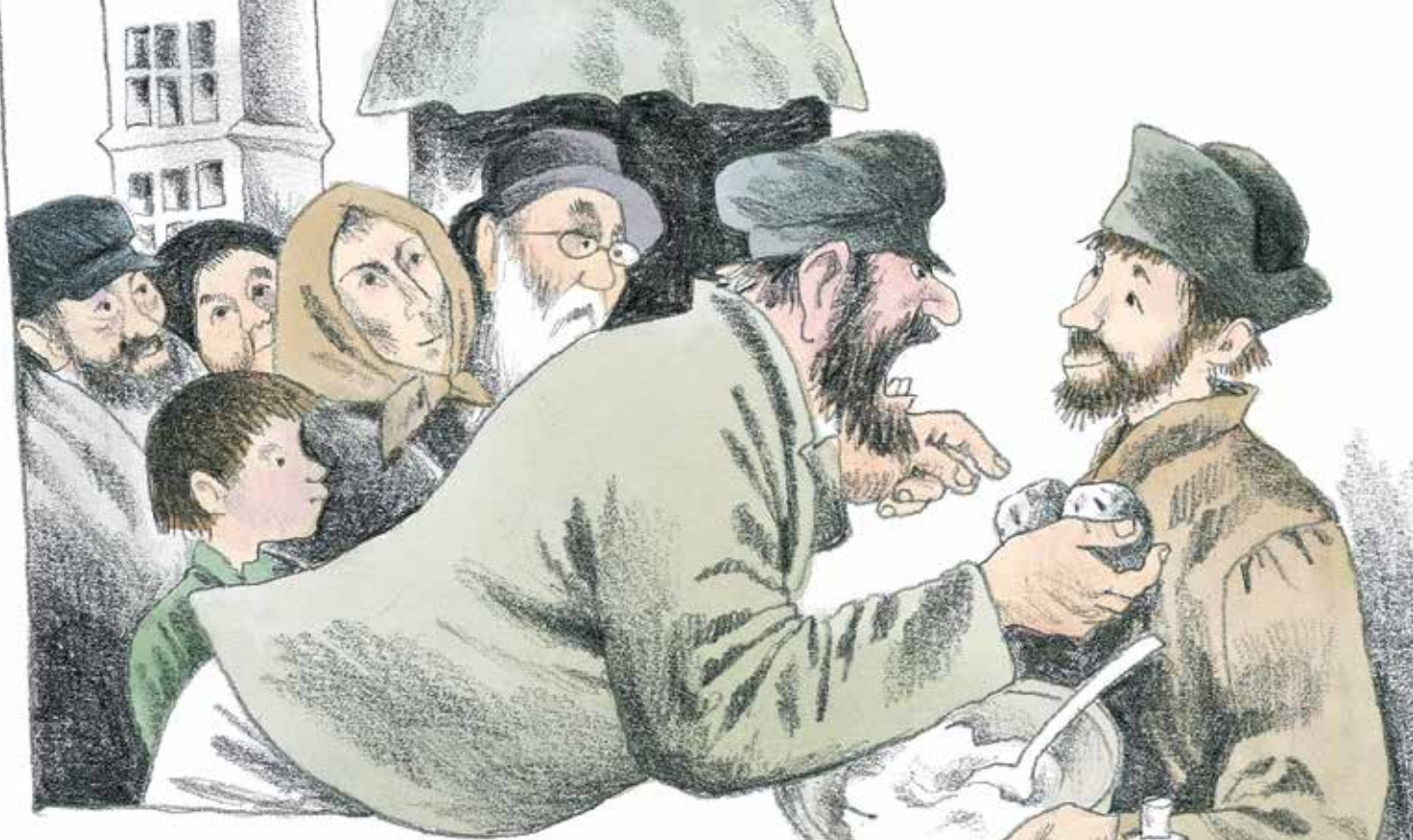
“Here,” said a soft voice behind him. “You’ll need salt and pepper for seasoning.” A small child shyly handed him two wooden shakers, then smiled.

Adam sprinkled the salt and pepper into the cracker, egg, and onion mixture and blended it well.

“Now,” he said, “we’re ready to cook our latkes.”

“Not yet,” said a man as he handed Adam two fat potatoes. “You can’t have latkes without potatoes.”

Adam pushed the man’s hand away. “No,” he said kindly, “anyone can make latkes out of potatoes.”



“What?” the farmer cried out, his face red with anger. “You refuse to take these potatoes from my own field? How dare you insult me like this!”

“I certainly don’t mean to insult you, sir, so if you insist, I will use your potatoes.” Adam took the peeled potatoes and grated them into the crackers, egg, and onion mixture that had been seasoned with salt and pepper, blending them all together.

Adam dipped a large spoon into the mixture and poured it into the hot oil, sizzling in the frying pan.

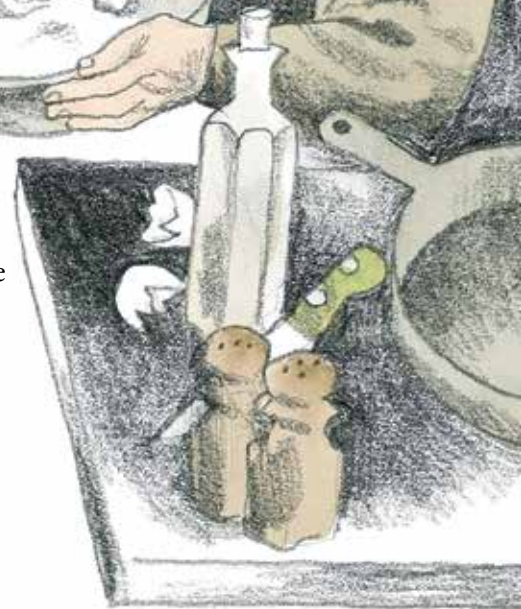
“Ohhh,” sighed the people as they sniffed the air. “It smells delicious. Imagine, making latkes from plain crackers.”

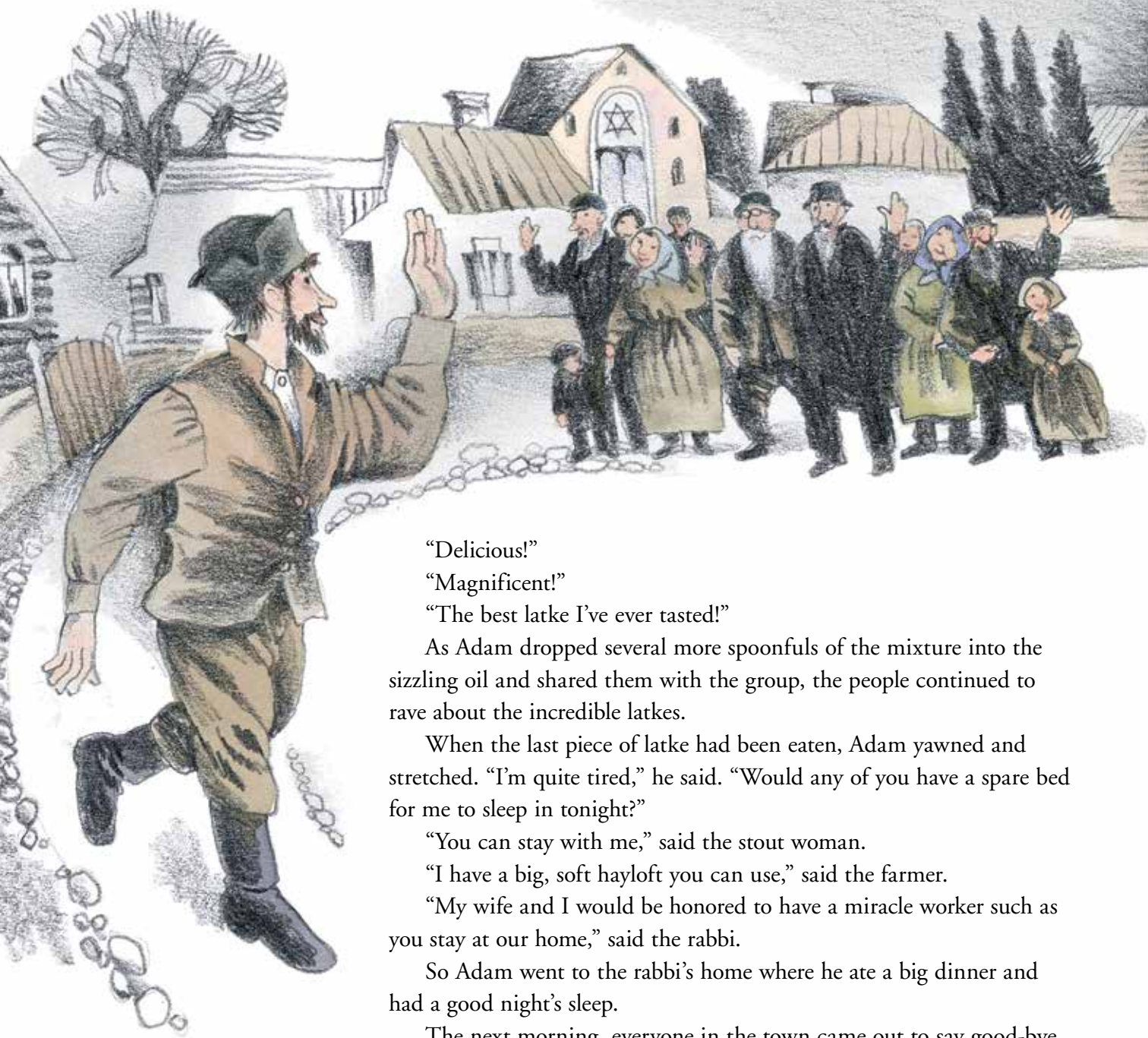
Adam flipped the latke over. “Ahhh,” cried the people when they saw the golden-brown latke. “It’s perfect!”

“If I didn’t see it with my own eyes, I wouldn’t believe it!”

“I don’t see how he can make latkes from crackers,” the stout woman said. Then, turning to Adam, she asked, “Do you think we could taste one?”

“Of course!” Adam replied, placing a latke on a plate and cutting it into small pieces.





“Delicious!”

“Magnificent!”

“The best latke I’ve ever tasted!”

As Adam dropped several more spoonfuls of the mixture into the sizzling oil and shared them with the group, the people continued to rave about the incredible latkes.

When the last piece of latke had been eaten, Adam yawned and stretched. “I’m quite tired,” he said. “Would any of you have a spare bed for me to sleep in tonight?”


“You can stay with me,” said the stout woman.

“I have a big, soft hayloft you can use,” said the farmer.

“My wife and I would be honored to have a miracle worker such as you stay at our home,” said the rabbi.

So Adam went to the rabbi’s home where he ate a big dinner and had a good night’s sleep.

The next morning, everyone in the town came out to say good-bye to Adam. “Thank you for showing us how to make latkes from crackers,” they said. “You have shown us that Hanukkah is still a holiday of miracles.”

Adam smiled and waved to his new friends as he headed for home, eager to tell his wife of their bright future, and more than ever, believing in miracles. 



MIRACLE LATKE RECIPE

BY JUDY WOLFMAN

What You'll Need:

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| 2 cups raw grated potatoes (peeled) | $\frac{1}{2}$ onion (grated) |
| 2 whole eggs (beaten) | $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cooking oil |
| a pinch of baking powder | measuring cups and spoons |
| 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt | potato peeler |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper | grater |
| 1 tablespoon matzo meal,
breadcrumbs, or crackers (crushed) | large bowl |
| | frying pan |

What to Do:

1. Peel 2 or 3 potatoes. Soak in cold water to keep from turning brown.
2. Drain the potatoes, then grate them. Measure 2 cups.
3. In a large bowl, mix together the grated potatoes, grated onion, matzo meal, salt, pepper, beaten eggs, baking powder.
4. With an adult's help, heat oil in the frying pan until hot.
5. Drop the batter by large spoonfuls into the hot oil.
6. Turn and brown on both sides.
7. Drain latkes on a paper towel.

Serve with applesauce or sour cream and enjoy your miracle latkes.

NOTE: This recipe will make 8 medium latkes. If you want more, use more potatoes and increase the onion, matzo meal, and seasoning to taste.

