

THE GOBLIN IN THE SYNAGOGUE CELLAR

by Jacqueline Jules

LONG AGO IN Eastern Europe, a synagogue stood in the center of a village. All the townspeople were proud of their fine synagogue, the biggest building for miles and miles around.

One afternoon, the rabbi was leaving the synagogue to visit Mrs. Moskowitz, a widow who lived just outside of town. Mrs. Moskowitz had broken her leg earlier that week, and the rabbi hoped a visit would cheer her up. As the rabbi put on his hat and coat, he heard a thumping sound. The noise came from below his feet.

Is there something in the cellar? the rabbi wondered. He bent down and put his ear to the floor. He heard a scratching sound and then a clang.

“Maybe I should look into this,” the rabbi said to himself. He looked at the clock. If he didn’t leave right away to see poor Mrs. Moskowitz, he would not make it back in time for evening services.

“It’s probably the wind,” the rabbi told himself as he closed the synagogue door.

But the sound puzzled him all the same. When he ran into Seymour Rosen at the end of the street, the rabbi still had a troubled look on his face.

“What’s wrong, Rabbi?” Seymour asked.

“I’m not sure,” the rabbi answered. “There’s a strange noise in the synagogue cellar.”

“What did it sound like?”

I promised Cousin Pookie his Coming Out Party would be the most awesome event the Meadow has seen!



And so it shall be—at least the music!



A caterpillar only does this once.





“I heard thumping, then scratching,” the rabbi said. “It ended with a clang.”

“Rabbi!” Seymour exclaimed. “That sounds like a goblin!”

The rabbi shook his head and laughed. “A goblin! Very funny! I will look into it when I return.”

“Where are you going?”

“To visit Mrs. Moskowitz. She has a broken leg.”

Hannah Feinbusch came up to the corner just as the rabbi hurried off.

“Did you hear about the noise in the synagogue cellar?” Seymour asked.

It's kinda like a caterpillar
Bar Mitzvah.

Coming Out Party?
Wazzat?



A Bugmitzvah?



Another coming of age
ceremony.



But zat takes place in zee
synagogue—zee Jewish place
of worship, led by zee rabbi—
zee Jewish religious leader.



“No, tell me,” said Hannah.

“The rabbi heard a thump, a screech, and a clang. I think it’s a goblin.”

“A thump, a screech, and a clang?” Hannah repeated. “That *does* sound like a goblin.”

“The rabbi is worried,” Seymour said.

“Where is he off to?” Hannah asked.

“To visit Mrs. Moskowitz, who has a broken leg,” Seymour said.

Hannah said goodbye to Seymour, and walked down the street to her home. On the way, she ran into Joseph Greenblatt, hunched over his cane.

“Did you hear about the goblin in the synagogue cellar?” Hannah Feinbusch asked.

“What’s that?” Joseph put his hand behind his ear. He had trouble hearing.

“A goblin,” Hannah repeated louder.

“In the cellar?” Joseph asked.



“Yes,” said Hannah, hurrying off. “And Mrs. Moskowitz has a broken leg.”

As Joseph was thinking about what Hannah had said, Lila

Do we even know this
Cousin Pookie dude?



He’s that older cousin we went skateboarding
with on the raspberry bush, right?





Mendelbusch came up to say hello.

“You look upset,” Lila said.

“I am,” Joseph answered.

“Hannah just told me there is a goblin in the synagogue cellar.”

“There is?” Lila asked, alarmed.

“Yes,” said Joseph, “and it broke Mrs. Moskowitz’s leg.”

“Oh my!” said Lila. “I must warn my grandmother.”

Lila hurried to her grandmother’s house. “Grandmother! Grandmother!” she shouted. “You must stay away from the synagogue. A goblin has taken it over. A bone-breaking goblin!”

“We must tell the neighbors!” said her panicked grandmother.

The two of them knocked on the neighbors’ doors to tell them the news. Soon, everyone in town was knocking on doors to warn others about the goblin. . . .

It was green. It had brown warts on its face, enormous ears, and giant red eyes. Its teeth were as large as an elephant’s tusks.

“It’s six feet tall!”

“No, it’s ten feet tall!”

“First it breaks your bones, then it eats you!”

“Its claws look like knives!”

Yes, yes. You’ll recognize him
when you see him.



By the time the rabbi came back to town after visiting Mrs. Moskowitz, the townspeople had gathered around the synagogue. They each carried a bucket of milk because Joseph Greenblatt thought he had heard many years ago that goblins hate milk.

“Please be calm!” the rabbi called. “What is the problem?”

“There’s a goblin in the synagogue!” Lila Mendelbusch said.

The rabbi looked surprised. He opened the door of the synagogue and slowly walked inside. Everyone followed him. For a few minutes, they all stood in silence, staring wide-eyed at each other, holding their buckets tightly. Then an echoing howl came up from the basement. The townspeople jumped. Milk sloshed and splashed.

The rabbi bent down and put his ear to the floor.

“What is the goblin saying?” Seymour Rosen asked. “Can you understand?”



The rabbi chuckled and stood up. “Now I do.”

He walked across the sanctuary and opened the cellar door.

Overnight delivery for Sam Caterpillar. Sign here.



Oh! Yeah! Cousin Pookie’s in the house!



Ahh... nope, Sam. Can’t say I recognize his, umm... face.





rabbi's shoes echoed on the wooden stairs. *Clump! Clump! Clump!*

The people raised their buckets of milk, ready to attack.

Clump! Clump! Clump! The rabbi's shoes echoed back up the stairs. Then the townspeople heard another sound.

"*Mew! Mew!*"

The rabbi walked through the cellar door with something small, gray, and furry in his arms.

"*Mew! Mew!*"

It was a tiny cat. Everyone crowded around to look.

"Poor little kitten," the rabbi cooed, "stuck in the cellar."

"It must be hungry," Hannah Feinbusch said, putting down her pail of milk.

A saucer was found, and the little cat drank until she was full. The rabbi made a bed for her in a back corner. From that time on, the townspeople were proud of their fine synagogue and of Goblin, their synagogue cat. 🕷

"Rabbi!" Lila called out. "No!"

The rabbi raised his hand to calm the people. "Stay where you are."

The cellar was deep, and the

Pookie's in his cocoon, Spider.



Looks more like Cousin Shrink Wrap.

