



THE HUNGRY CLOTHES

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Here are 22 Jewish tales, some told with humor and all sure to inspire conversation. Each story contains a message that resonates with Jewish values.

The characters who come to life in this book are intelligent and imaginative. They often live in poverty without being resentful; they learn from the people around them and use their wits. *Pirkei Avot*, often translated from Hebrew to English as *The Ethics of The Fathers*, is an ancient Jewish text filled with insights and advice on living. In chapter 4, Ben Zoma, a Jewish sage of the 2nd century, asks and answers these questions:

Who is wise? The person who learns from everyone. Who is rich? The person who is content with what he has. Who is honorable? The person who honors others.

How do the characters in this book prove Ben Zoma's statements? Though he was wise, *Honi the Circle Maker* saw things that puzzled him, and he asked many questions. Though the emperor was wealthy, he became rich from *The Figs* given him by a generous old man. Though thoughtless and ungrateful, a man learned about honor from *The Half Blanket* his son planned to give him one day. *The Hungry clothes* teaches us to look at wisdom, richness and honor in different ways. You might ask your children to name other characters in *The Hungry Clothes* whom they see as wise, rich and honorable. Why is it that they think these characters possess these traits?

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

After reading this book with your children, consider the following questions:

- For each story, decide the important Jewish message and challenge yourself to write it down in just one sentence. Are there themes that come up more often than others?
- Do you see yourself in any characters in the book? How are you similar? What makes you different?
- Think about a main character in one of these stories that you really like. If you could meet that person, would you be friends? What would you like to ask about his/her life? What would you want to share about yours?
- Be a detective! From which story does the cover illustration come? Why do you think this picture was chosen for the cover?
- Like the jewel in the final story, "The Scratched Diamond," the world is filled with imperfection. Choose one thing that you can do right now to make the world a better place. In Hebrew, this has a special name: *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). It's something every one of us can help accomplish. Pj