

HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHANUKAH

Based on *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* by Theodore Seuss Geisel

Revised by Rabbi Alan Cook for Chanukah 2007

All the Jews down in Jew-ville liked their faith a whole lot,
They loved Purim, and Pesach, Sukkot and Shabbat.
They'd study the Torah and say all their prayers,
And some men wore kippot to cover their hairs.
And on every doorpost, mezuzot were hung,
And they all loved their kreplach- the old and the young.
Yes the Jews down in Jew-ville liked their faith a whole lot,
But the Grinch, who lived just north of Jew-ville, did not.
The Grinch was not fond of the whole Jewish notion
He did not care one bit for the noise and commotion
The praying and swaying and laughing and singing
That each Jewish holiday always was bringing
But one time of year made him so mad he cursed
The Grinch felt that winter was simply the worst!
The Grinch hated winter! The whole winter season!
Now please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason.
It could be his head wasn't screwed on just right.
It could be, perhaps, that his shoes were too tight
But I think that the most likely reason of all
May have been that his heart was two sizes too small.
But, whatever the reason,
His heart or his shoes,
He stood there on Chanukah, mad at the Jews.
Staring down from his cave with a sour, Grinchy frown
At the frosty white windows below in their town.
For he knew every Jew down in Jew-ville that night
Would soon kindle the first of the Chanukah lights

“And they’ll fry up their latkes!” he snarled with a sneer.

“Chanukah’s nearly started! It’s practically here!”

Then he growled, with his Grinch fingers nervously drumming,

“I MUST find some way to keep that day from coming!”

For, tomorrow, he knew, all the Jewish girls and boys,
Would tear open bright paper, revealing their toys
And then! Oh the noise! Oh the Noise! Noise! Noise! Noise!
That’s one thing he hated! The NOISE! NOISE! NOISE! NOISE!

And after the noise, they’d sit down to a feast

And they’d feast! And they’d feast!

And they’d FEAST! FEAST! FEAST! FEAST!

They’d have brisket, and latkes, and kosher roast beast
Which was something the Grinch couldn’t stand in the least.

And THEN they’d do something he liked least of all!

Every Jew down in Jew-ville, the tall and the small,

Would stand close together, in one great big ring,
They’d stand hand in hand, and the Jews would all sing!

They’d sing! And they’d sing!

And they’d SING! SING! SING! SING!

And the more the Grinch thought of this Chanukah-sing

The more the Grinch thought,

“I must stop this whole thing!

“Why for fifty-three years I’ve put up with it now

“I MUST prevent Chanukah’s coming! But how?”

Then he got an idea!

An awful idea!

The Grinch GOT A WONDERFUL, AWFUL IDEA.

“I know just what to do!”
the Grinch said to himself,
As he took down a box from his uppermost shelf.
And from that very box the Grinch pulled out a suit-
Dark blue, sharply tailored, with pin stripes to boot,
Then he fashioned a black beard, and also some *payes*,
From yak hair he’d brought back from the Himalayas
And a shirt and a tie, his disguise near-complete,
The Grinch shined his loafers and slipped in his feet
He then found some fabric scraps under his bed
And fashioned a kippah to cover his head.
With his costume complete, the Grinch said,
“Watch out, Jews...I look just like a rabbi! Just like one of you!”

(Now, I know that such stereotypes just aren’t PC,
But the Grinch wasn’t sensitive like you and me
For instance, when he heard ‘bout Ann Coulter’s ranting,
The Grinch found her choice of words rather enchanting.
Besides, with no friends, he had nothing to lose
By acting unkindly toward all of the Jews)

So the Grinch got his car and he emptied the trunk,
“I’ve found a way to stop the Jews! Who’d have thunk?”

Then he put it in gear and he started on down
Toward the homes where the Jews lay a-snooze in their town.
All their windows were dark. Quiet snow filled the air.
All the Jews were all dreaming sweet dreams without care
When he came to the first little house on the square.

“This is stop number one,”

the Grinch-rabbi hissed

And he crept to the door with a bag in his fist
The door was unlocked, so it needed no busting

The Grinch said,

“These Jews are quite simply too trusting.”

He tip-toed inside, with a smile most unpleasant,

Then loaded his sack up- he took every present!

Sweaters and underwear, neckties and socks!

Clothing and toys, each and ev-e-ry box!

He unplugged the cords and he stole the TV,

Along with some games and the Nintendo Wii.

He stuffed them in bags; he made them quite heavy,

And tossed them in back of his '63 Chevy.

Then he slunk to the icebox. He took the Jews' feast

He took the chopped liver and kosher roast beast

He emptied out veggies, and acting quite jerky,

He took every crumb of the baked stuffed Tofurkey

He cleaned out the fridge- each and every last dish

He even stole each piece of gefilte fish!

He took all the food- and then, oh what a horror!

The Grinch set his eyes on the family's menorah!

The Grinch took the menorah and slunk towards the door,

When he heard a young voice, someone not more than four,

Little Cindy-Lou Jew, the youngest Jew daughter,

Had crept out of bed for a cold glass of water.

She stared at the Grinch, and she said,

“Rabbi, why? Why are you taking our Chanukiah? Why?”

But you know, that old grinch was so smart and so slick,

He thought up a lie, and he thought it up quick!

The Grinch said,
“My dear, I will tell you the facts,
Your Chanukiah is just covered with wax.
I’m taking it home where I’ll clean it up rightly
And then it will shine for you ever more brightly.”

And his fib fooled the child. Then he patted her head
And he got her a drink and he sent her to bed.
And when Cindy Lou was tucked into her bed quite snugly
The Grinch did a deed that was terribly ugly
He grabbed the menorah, that nasty old louse,
And carried it quietly out of the house.
Then he did the same thing to the other Jews’ houses,
Leaving crumbs much too small for the other Jews’ mouses!
It was quarter past dawn; all the Jews were still sleeping,
When the Grinch, in his Chevy, back home started creeping.
His car loaded with presents! The ribbons! The wrappings!
The bows and the cards and the bags and the trappings!
Three thousand feet up! Up the side of Mount Crumpit,
He rode with his load to the tiptop to dump it!

“Ha ha, silly Jews!”
He was Grinch-ishly humming
“You’re now finding out Chanukah is not coming!
“You’re just waking up! I know just what you’ll do!
“Your mouths will hang open a minute or two
“Then you Jews down in Jew-ville will all cry BOO- HOO!”
“That’s a noise,”
Grinned the Grinch,
“That I simply MUST hear!”

So he paused. And the Grinch put a hand to his ear.

And he did hear a sound rising over the snow.

It started in low. Then it started to grow...

But the sound wasn't sad!

Why this sound sounded jolly!

It couldn't be so!

But it was so, by golly!

He stared down at Jew-ville

The Grinch popped his eyes!

Then he shook!

What he saw was a shocking surprise!

Every Jew down in Jew-ville, the tall and the small,

Was singing! Without any presents at all!

Outside of the temple, though 'twas cold and snowing,

The Chanukah lights were quite vibrantly glowing,

And the Jews had joined hands in one teeming throng,

And they all started singing their Chanukah song.

The Grinch hadn't stopped it from coming! IT CAME!

Somehow or other, it came just the same!

And the Grinch, with his grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow,

Stood puzzling and puzzling:

"How could it be so?

"It came without ribbons! It came without tags!

"It came without packages, boxes, or bags!"

And he puzzled three hours, till his puzzler was sore.

Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before!

Perhaps Chanukah doesn't come from a store!

Perhaps Chanukah means a little bit more!

The Grinch drove his loot back to Jew-ville with speed

He told them
“I’m sorry,”
For his nasty deed.
He told the Jews,
“You know, guys, I don’t think I get it.
My plan spoiled Chanukah- but you wouldn’t let it
So, these Chanukah days, which I’ve always resented,
Aren’t based on the number of gifts you’re presented?”

Then some Jewish children came out of the crowd,
And started to speak, in voices clear and proud,

“So, you want to know all of the Chanukah story
We’ll tell you about it, in all of its glory
Many days in the past, quite a number of weeks,
Israel was ruled by an empire of Greeks.
They changed all the laws and they made lots of rules,
Defiled the Temple and closed all the schools.
King Antiochus made Torah taboo,
Making it hard to live life as a Jew

But there was one brave man- a good man, and pious
Who lived in Modin and was named Mattathias.
His five sons fought with him to keep the Jews free
And this brave group of men called themselves Maccabees.

This fine band of rebels, though small, and though weak,
Fended off several assaults by the Greeks
The Greeks, riding elephants, entered the fray
The Maccabees, bravely, stood right in their way
The battle raged on, it was really quite glorious

And in the end, the Jewish crew was victorious.

They went to the Temple, and to their chagrin,
Discovered the filth that the Greeks had brought in.
The Jews cleaned the Temple, exerting much toil,
But found they were lacking in vials of oil
They kindled a light, and this weak little blaze,
Continued to glow, and it glowed for eight days.

And these are the Chanukah miracles, Grinch:
The way that the Jews beat the Greeks in a cinch,
And the way that the oil from that little cruse
Created a light that shined bright for the Jews

So that's what we celebrate Chanukah for-
It's not for the presents we buy from the store,
But for all of the good that God's done in the past
To help to ensure that the Jews will long last."

Then Cindy-Lou Jew tugged the sleeve of her dad,
And said, "If you please, I've got something to add."

She said, "Every year, as long as I remember,
There's quite a dilemma when we reach December
For Christmastime comes, and my joy is quite fleeting,
I don't like the feeling that we are competing
With yuletide parades and displays full of lighting
This season's for caring, it isn't for fighting.
But lately it seems that some non-Jewish friends
Think Christmas is something they have to defend
'gainst gross apathy and the secularization
That they feel is prevailing throughout the whole nation.

Well I say, let them have their carols and trees,
And crèches and Santas, whatever they please.
At Chanukah time, we Jews should feel inspired
But I don't think an airport menorah's required.
So let's handle this calmly, approach it with reason,
Then all can find cause to rejoice in this season.
For the figure whose birth Christians choose to recall,
Did he not preach, "Peace on earth, and goodwill toward ALL?"
And when victory came to that small band of Jews,
Were they not celebrating their freedom to choose
A meaningful form of religious expression?
To me, it seems this is the prevailing question:
How each can be free, to express in their way
The joy and the spirit they feel on this day.
To kindle the lights, and rejoice in God's graces,
And to drive out the gloom from the world's dark places."

And then Cindy-Lou added, her voice gently shaking,
"Was that not the point Dr. Seuss was a-making?
If we stick to our morals, and keep our faith strong
I believe, in the end, we can all get along."

When the Grinch heard these comments his eyes opened wide,
And his insides got filled up with great Jewish pride.
And what happened then?
Well, in Jew-ville they say
That the Grinch's small heart
Grew three sizes that day!
And the minute his heart didn't feel quite so tight,
He zoomed with his load through the bright morning light!
And he brought back the toys!

Put back all the chotchkes!
And he, he himself
The Grinch fried up the latkes!