



A Jewish Christmas Eve

By Linda Parker Horowitz



'Twas the night before Christmas, our synagogue full
Of Jewish activities hap'ning all through the *shul*.
The pews filled with dav'ners singing Hanukkah songs,
And kids playing dreidle games all the night long.

Siddurs were all stacked in rows nice and neat,
So everyone there sang the songs from a sheet.
All toasty and golden, the latkes did gleam
And applesauce tart made them truly supreme.

The mule then escaped from the manger display,
In hopes he would find some additional hay.
He arrived at the *shul*, and to his delight
The latkes had carrots, so he stayed through the night.

A goat he did follow, noting nine candles' light
Started munching on wrapping and ribbon -- a sight!
The *shul* filled with song, it echo'd and grew
That no one er' noticed a goat and a mule.

The Hanukkah spirit rose all evening long,
Suf ganiot consumed swiftly and latkes all gone.
The whirring of dreidles and clinking of coins,
Children all shouting, then *gelt* was purloined.



"Hey! Who stole my gelt?" hollered Sammy dismayed.
"I won it from David, it's mine now. We played!!"

His shouting disrupted with THUD, THUNK, ker-SPLAT!
By Santa Claus tripping on Beth David's front mat.
He threw open the doors, and adjusted his beard.
Then looked all around, saying, "Whoa. This is weird."

"I'm delivering presents," he said with a grin.
Then reviewing his list, his hand stroked his white chin.
"Where is Michael McLaughlin and Susie McGwinn?
They're supposed to be here...this isn't Dub-*lin*?"

His silver hair tossld, he seemed quite confused.
When silence responded, Santa looked all bemused.
"Where am I?" he chuckled, "My GPS lied."
"Temple City," said Rabbi. "L. A. -- the Eastside."



That retort so frustrated, he stomped his big feet.
“I never should follow her voice soft and sweet.
She led me due west from the Pole, not straight East.
My deadline approaching, I never shall meet.”

“The Elves will get riled, then go out on strike!
For missing delivery, they’ll all take a hike.”
“I’d best get my reindeer to hurry on course.
To Dublin, to London, Gedansk and the Norse.”
Adios. A bientot. Dos vidanyah. Good-bye.
I’ll be back soon to visit on Shabbat! Please don’t cry.”

The lilt in his voice, his strumming guitar,
Led into a song that we heard from afar.

Then everyone knew who it was in an instant,
Our cantor so fun, it was Mike, came to visit!
Playing tricks on us all, it was silly to see
Him dressed-up as Saint Nick, all *fahmished* to a tee.

Then we heard him exclaim to his Jewish reindeer
In a voice quite familiar – Mike often sings here.

“On Moishe and Morty, on Eli and Abe,
on Isaac and Izzy, on Schlomo and Dave.”

“Remember the oil, it burned all 8 nights,
Gai gezunt! Oy gevault! Good Shabbos! Good night.”

Glossary:

Shul: Yiddish. A synagogue

Daven: In the verb form “to pray.” Noun, davener, person who prays.

Siddur: Prayer book

Dreidle: A top with sides that has 4 Hebrew letters – Nun, Gimmel, Hay, Shin representing “A great miracle happened there.” Children spin the dreidle to play a game gaining or losing points/candy/pennies (whatever form of “tender” they are playing for) depending on the Hebrew letter showing after the dreidle falls.

Latkes: potato pancakes, a traditional food for Hanukkah.

Suf Ganiyot: jelly donuts, another traditional food for the holiday.

Gelt: Yiddish. Money.

Fahmished: Yiddish. Flustered.

Gai gezunt: Yiddish expression. Go in health.