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The Wedding That Saved a Town

Yale Strom
Jenya Prosmitsky, illustrator
Kar-Ben Publishing (September 2008)
Unknown $7.95 (32pp)
978-0-8225-7380-7

Weddings are a facet of every culture, however their purposes and their customs vary greatly between cultures. Gaining an understanding of various customs often leads to cultural respect, and thus award-winning author Yale Strom's book can serve as a way to expose children to a traditional European Jewish wedding custom. Strom is also a renowned klezmer musician, filmmaker, and scholar of the Jewish faith.

In this modern folk-tale, the main character, Yiske, is asked to perform at a wedding. Yiske gladly accepts the offer, but he soon learns of the grim reasoning for the wedding. The people of the town are sick, and only a traditional "shvartze chaseneh" can help lift the illness. Yiske then sets his mind to finding the perfect couple for the wedding in hopes of a cure. The last page of the book contains an author's note and a glossary of Yiddish words that are seen throughout the book.

Jenya Prosmitksy's illustrations are cartoon-like, bringing light to what may appear otherwise as a dismal tradition. Colorful and full of expression, they compliment Strom's strong characters. Prosmit-sky grew up in the former USSR and has illustrated other children's books, including, *A Mink, A Fink, A Skating Rink: What is a Noun?* and *Hairy, Scary, Ordinary: What is an Adjective?*

The book is valuable for children and educators alike. For children, it is a hopeful and animated tale. For educators, the book can be used to enhance multiculturalism in the classroom. In addition, Jewish students might feel more comfortable in the classroom if a traditional tale of theirs were integrated with dominate Christian traditions.
KAITLYN MOORE (February 13, 2009)

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