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Playscripts, Inc.  
325 W. 38<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 305  
New York, NY 10018

Phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY (639-7529)  
Email: [info@playscripts.com](mailto:info@playscripts.com)  
Web: [www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com)

*Dedicated to my parents, Rick and Rae,  
who taught me to live every day as if it was a holiday.*

## **Cast of Characters**

SAMSON, 13, a smart but not confident Jewish boy

TARA, Samson's ditzy classmate whose family is from Mexico

MS. SCATTER, a hard of hearing choral director

KALI, a strong, beautiful girl that Samson has a crush on

T-REX, the school bully

MOM, Samson's mother

DAD/MORDECHAI, Samson's father / Samson's Jewish orthodox grandfather as a young man

BECCA, Samson's older punk sister

GRAM, Samson's grandmother

GEFILTE, she is Samson's kvetching goldfish

THE DREIDEL DUDE, a cool Bob Dylan-style Santa for Jewish children

NANI, Kali's grandmother

DADI, Kali's grandfather

IMANI, T-Rex's sister

SANTA

INNKEEPER

HOT SPANISH LOVER FISH

TV REPORTER

TOWNSPEOPLE

## **Character Notes**

Cast can be larger or smaller depending on your needs. Doubling is encouraged as well as extras playing various townspeople.

## Production Notes

This play has been rewritten since the first Manhattan production and now can be produced with as little as seven actors playing several roles. The original vision was for a large cast size and I recommend if you have the resources to use a large cast. A cast CD of the songs “Our Miracle” and “Respect Y’all” is available upon request. Please contact Playscripts, Inc. for details.

## Acknowledgments

*Holiday Schmoliday* was first performed by Manhattan Theatre Source, December, 2004, with the following cast and crew:

SAMSON..... Matt Anci  
T-REX / FATHER /  
GRANDFATHER / DREIDEL DUDE..... David Marantz  
MS. SCATTER / BECCA / ENSEMBLE..... Lisa Morse  
TARA / GEFILTE / ENSEMBLE..... Cathryn Lundgren  
KALI / GRAM /  
ENSEMBLE ..... Sameerah Luqmaan-Harris  
  
Director .....Antonio del Rosario  
Producer ..... Lynne Elson  
Costumes .....Sarah Prato  
Indian Dance Choreographer ..... Rachna Patel  
Samson’s song,  
“Our Miracle” written by ..... Joanna Parson  
Rap “Respect Y’all” written by ..... Lisa Morse

# HOLIDAY SHMOLIDAY

by Lynne Elson

*(Lights up on SAMSON, 13 years old, standing with his peers on high risers singing a harmonic Christmas song while the choir director, MS. SCATTER, conducts. They continue singing softly as SAMSON steps forward and talks to the audience.)*

**SAMSON.** It was that time of year again. Everyone was jolly and merry and egg-nogged up except me. My family doesn't celebrate Christmas. But Christmas was everywhere, on television, on lamp-posts, on Donner, on Blitzen. It was annoying. I couldn't concentrate on the notes, and choir is my favorite. So I closed my eyes and wished it away. I wished to take away Christmas. I tried to imagine a world without it. But it was impossible.

*(Christmas trees enter and try to grab SAMSON. He screams as he runs around the stage away from them.)*

**SAMSON.** Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

*(Stopping momentarily:)*

Don't worry this isn't real. This is just what Christmastime feels like to me.

*(Returning to his running:)*

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

*(SAMSON's scream turns into a note that the choir sings. When he pops back onto the risers, the Christmas trees freeze. MS. SCATTER flips through papers and continues to conduct while looking down. Then she takes off a shoe, scratches, flips through papers and puts a piece of gum in her mouth while she conducts wildly absorbed in the music of her mind. The students end the song but MS. SCATTER continues conducting. TARA, a talkative 12-year-old waves at MS. SCATTER.)*

**TARA.** Okay. So, Ms. Scatter. Hellooo! Okay, what is she doing?

*(KALI taps MS. SCATTER on the shoulder.)*

**KALI.** Excuse me.

**MS. SCATTER.** (*Loudly:*) What? Oh. Yes. Such nice perfect smiles and tall postures. I could just feel the enthusiasm.

**T-REX.** Feel is right, yo. She can't hear a thing.

**MS. SCATTER.** Now, don't be nervous. Did I ever tell you about the time that I froze when I stepped on stage at Woodstock?

**ALL STUDENTS.** (*Groaning:*) Yes.

**MS. SCATTER.** I never got over it. So many people staring at me with piercing, judging eyes. Looking at me like I had four heads and was naked, naked as the day I was born. But it won't be like that for you. It's Christmas, everyone loves Christmas songs. Al-rightee...I told you to wear something festive, I reminded you to bring your song sheets. I told you about the TV show that wants to tape us.

**TARA.** TV Show? Okay, like real TV, TV?

**T-REX.** Hold up Miss S. You didn't tell us about no TV show.

**MS. SCATTER.** Oh, a producer wants us to sing for the opening and closing of her show—a big news program, ABC, NBC, one with a C anyway.

(*STUDENTS whisper to each other excitedly. TARA calms herself.*)

**TARA.** Okay. Okay.

**KALI.** We're gonna be on TV? We're going to be on TV?

(*Girls scream girlishly and jump up and down together as MS. SCATTER tries to speak.*)

**MS. SCATTER.** Don't be late tomorrow. We'll run through the finale again and—

**T-REX.** Yo, this is serious. Listen up.

**MS. SCATTER.** I still feel like I forgot—Oh Samson. Why didn't you remind me? I forgot to do "Dreidel, Dreidel."

(*STUDENTS moan.*)

**MS. SCATTER.** Not only are we singing for the whole town now, we're singing for thousands of people across the U.S. Maybe Samson has a different (*Hard Ch sound:*) "Ch"anukah song he can bring in tomorrow. We can rehearse it a few times before. What do you say, Samson?

**SAMSON.** It's okay, we don't need a Chanukah song.

**MS. SCATTER.** Pardon?

**T-REX.** He saaaaiid, "There are no good Chanukah songs."

**MS. SCATTER.** Harmonica songs? I don't think that's what I'm looking for, but thank you, T-Rex. If Samson doesn't come up with a "Ch"anukah song, then "Dreidel Dreidel" it is. If you're staying for the Christmas tree decorating—meet me in the main hall. Everyone else—see you later, I mean, not later—you know—tomorrow.

**STUDENTS.** (*Overlapping:*) Yeah, Christmas! Deck the halls! I want to do the tinsel! I call the tinsel!

(*STUDENTS walk toward the Christmas trees.*)

**SAMSON.** Hey Kali, um—you walking home?

**KALI.** I'm decorating the trees. Aren't you?

**SAMSON.** (*Looks at trees.*) Nah, I'm suddenly allergic to Christmas trees.

**KALI.** Bah Humbug.

**SAMSON.** Listen, I want to ask you something. I'd like you to invite you, I mean, if you want to, um—there's this party—

**KALI.** Yeah?

(*T-REX gets in SAMSON's face. He's wearing headphones that blare a Hip-Hop song. He pulls his headphones off his ears.*)

**T-REX.** Yo, Samson. I won't sing that stupid "Dreidel, Dreidel" again this year, you hear me?

**SAMSON.** I don't like it either.

(*T-REX pushes SAMSON to the ground.*)

**T-REX.** I won't look bad on TV. You better find a song that highlights my killer vocal stylings. You know I got a reputation. I don't do anything that's uncool. You know what I'm saying?

*(KALI gets in T-REX's face.)*

**KALI.** You think you got something, you pock-faced ugly Grinch? Come on—come on...

*(T-REX backs off. SAMSON is embarrassed.)*

**T-REX.** You got spunk. I like that. *(To SAMSON:)* You on the other hand, need a girl to protect you?

**SAMSON.** No—I—

**T-REX.** A song that makes me look good, or— *(Threatens him with a punch.)* Got it?

*(T-REX exits.)*

**SAMSON.** Why'd you do that?

**KALI.** I don't know. I guess all this "Fa la la la la" makes me energized.

**SAMSON.** Right, it would. You're not the outcast who doesn't celebrate Christmas. I gotta go.

**KALI.** You really got some serious "Poor me" blinders on. I'm not sure I want to come to your party.

**SAMSON.** That's not even what I was going to ask you.

**KALI.** Fine, what then?

**SAMSON.** You don't know any cool Chanukah songs, do you?

**KALI.** No, because I celebrate Christmas, right? Serious blinders.

*(KALI storms away.)*

**SAMSON.** Great.

*(SAMSON walks home. It starts to snow.)*

**SAMSON.** I blew it. *(Mocking himself:)* "Uh—you don't know any cool Chanukah songs do you?" Smooth, Samson. Real—smooth. I just should have asked her. What's the big deal? What if she thinks

I'm weird, I mean—come on. Why would she want to come to my Bar Mitzvah? She doesn't like me.

*(STUDENTS throw snowballs and one hits SAMSON.)*

**SAMSON.** Ow. I don't even like me.

*(He moans, enters his house and shakes off the snow. MOM and DAD rush at SAMSON, both holding a forkful of potato pancake. They walk together as if they are of one body, or attached at the hip.)*

**MOM.** Taste mine.

**DAD.** No, taste mine first. I added a special ingredient this year.

**SAMSON.** I'm not hungry.

**MOM.** You don't have to be hungry to taste. Come on, tell us whose recipe is better. We want to serve latkas at your Bar Mitzvah.

*(SAMSON moans.)*

**DAD.** Are you not feeling well, Son?

**SAMSON.** Yeah, that's it.

**DAD.** Well, rest up. It's almost Chanukah. You don't want to be sick for the festivities.

**SAMSON.** What festivities? We turn the light bulbs on the menorah, give out our gifts and boom it's over.

**MOM.** The quicker it's over, the quicker we eat the latkas.

**SAMSON.** So big deal, they're just oily hash browns anyway.

*(MOM and DAD gasp.)*

**SAMSON.** Forget it. Latkas rule. They rule.

*(DAD pulls SAMSON aside.)*

**DAD.** Son, your mother needs a break, a celebration, some fun. What with your Bar Mitzvah next week, and all the planning she's been doing, the food, the band, the take home gifts—

**SAMSON.** I was thinking. I don't need a Bar Mitzvah.

**DAD.** What are you saying?

**SAMSON.** Dad, no one in school's Jewish. Why do I have to be different? Can't I just have a birthday party like everyone else? Chanukah's already bad enough.

*(MOM pulls SAMSON aside.)*

**MOM.** Samson, sweetheart, we need to keep things as normal as possible. You remember what a big deal all of this was when your grandfather was around. Your father misses him so much.

**SAMSON.** Me too.

**MOM.** So why don't we get ready to celebrate Chanukah tomorrow and then all of my time can be devoted to your Bar Mitzvah?

**SAMSON.** Fine, but Mom—

**MOM.** No buts. This time of year was always your Poppy's favorite. Think about how your father feels today, huh? We don't want to stir up anything sad. Okay?

**SAMSON.** Right, no stirring. Just turning. The light bulbs—get it?

**MOM.** Actually there'll be no turning of the light bulbs this year.

**DAD.** No sir, we got the clapper.

*(DAD and MOM clap. The Menorah turns on.)*

**SAMSON.** *(Sarcastically:)* Wow, now I'm excited. Listen, I need a song for choir tomorrow. A Chanukah song. Don't even say, "Dreidel, Dreidel."

**MOM.** Oh well, there's—

**DAD.** Yeah, there's— Oh it's on the tip of my tongue.

**MOM.** Me too.

**DAD.** *(Sings to the tune of the Doors' "Light My Fire":)* Come on baby light my menorah.

**SAMSON.** Dad.

**DAD.** *(Singing:)* Come on baby light my Menorah.

*(MOM joins in. They are enjoying themselves.)*

**MOM & DAD.** Come and set the latkas on fire...! Yeah, yeah...

**MOM.** Speaking of—

**DAD.** You don't think we left it on, do you?

**MOM.** A catastrophe!

*(MOM and DAD rush off stage. SAMSON shakes his head sadly.)*

**SAMSON.** Maybe Gram would know a song. Gram? Gram! Becca, is Gram in there?

*(SAMSON knocks on his sister's door. The door is covered in "Do Not Enter" signs and danger signs. BECCA, 16, opens the door. Loud music comes from inside. BECCA is dressed in all black, has several piercings and dyed hair. She holds a comb and hairspray.)*

**BECCA.** Oh, it's Shark-breath. I bet you're here to annoy me.

**SAMSON.** I need a Chanukah song for tomorrow.

**BECCA.** I win. How 'bout double or nothing. Let's see—

**SAMSON.** Becca, I really need a song for choir tomorrow.

**BECCA.** Nobody cares about Chanukah. We don't get off from school. We don't get cute holiday cartoons on TV.

**SAMSON.** You don't have to tell me.

**BECCA.** Best just to ignore it. Like I do.

**SAMSON.** But, Becca, you used to like it.

**BECCA.** I was a kid.

**SAMSON.** And now you're a—?

**BECCA.** Listen, when I was a kid, it was magical. We got eight great gifts. It lasted eight nights and it was fun having everyone around, a big family thing. Now I see it for what it is. It's just trying to keep up with the capitalist, corporate, commercialism. You want to know what your problem is?

**SAMSON.** Not really.

**BECCA.** Your problem is that you wish things were different. Don't hold your breath. Chanukah will never be as big as Christmas. You remember what Poppy used to say?

**SAMSON.** I hardly remember what he looked like.

**BECCA.** He said, “Chanukah is a time for memories.” Well, I’m all about making memories not reliving the old ones. The old ones are depressing.

**SAMSON.** If you don’t have any idea of a song, just say so. Geez.

**BECCA.** Scram!

**SAMSON.** Would Grandma know any?

**BECCA.** I bet you she doesn’t. What shall we wager?

**SAMSON.** Nothing. I’m not betting you.

**BECCA.** Fine. Suit yourself.

**SAMSON.** Where is she?

**BECCA.** I’m not telling you.

**SAMSON.** Gram!

*(GRAM was hiding, embarrassed by her hair. It is standing up in punk colored spikes.)*

**GRAM.** Good idea not betting Becca. She always wins. Look at this? I have hair that looks like it comes from the Good Humor man.

**SAMSON.** Gram, I need your help.

**GRAM.** Of course, Bubbela.

*(GRAM and SAMSON exit Becca’s room.)*

**SAMSON.** You know any Chanukah songs?

**GRAM.** Ah, my favorite. What’s his name—the handsome one with the moves—Neil Diamond. Now there’s someone I might have left your grandfather for.

**SAMSON.** He sings Christmas songs, Gram. So does Barbara Streisand. So do all of them. I swear, I hate being Jewish!

**GRAM.** Young man, I don’t like to hear talk like that.

**SAMSON.** I’m sorry, Gram.

**GRAM.** If your grandfather, may he rest in peace, if he heard you talking such nonsense.

**SAMSON.** I'm sorry, Gram. I'm just upset.

**GRAM.** You don't know upset. Upset is waiting and waiting for the day to come when your grandfather could come to America. He had to save enough money. He could not send me a gift. Only letters. I kept every single one hidden under my bed. Then one day I received a letter telling me that he was going to send me a gift. It was coming by boat. I waited at the dock. It was the best present I ever received, it did not come in a box, no. It came wearing his father's suit and holding every letter I wrote to him tied in a bundle with string. To this day, it still makes me cry.

**SAMSON.** You're talking about Poppy, right?

**GRAM.** Of course I'm talking about Poppy! He waited until Chanukah to arrive. He said he wanted to be my Chanukah miracle. It was important to him, my Mordechai.

**SAMSON.** So should I go wait by the dock for a miracle?

**GRAM.** Okay wise guy. You don't appreciate. I have receipts. I can bring the gifts back.

**SAMSON.** I appreciate. I appreciate. Can I open a present when I wake up tomorrow?

**GRAM.** Meshuggina, we open our gifts after sunset like always. What do you think this is Christmas? We don't celebrate Christmas.

*(GRAM exits.)*

**SAMSON.** We don't celebrate Christmas. We don't celebrate Christmas. Don't I know it!

*(Christmas carols are sung outside the window. SAMSON looks outside.)*

**SAMSON.** *(Shouting outside:)* Hey! Does anyone know a Chanukah song?

*(The Carolers sing "Dreidel, Dreidel." SAMSON screams and shuts the window.)*

**SAMSON.** It's not fair!

*(GEFILTE, a larger than life girl goldfish, pops her head out of her bowl.)*

**GEFILTE.** Pitiful. Disgraceful.

**SAMSON.** Gefilte, you've got it so easy. No troubles, just swimming all day.

**GEFILTE.** Stuck behind a sheet of thick glass! You know how distorted everything looks when you look through glass. My eyes are not supposed to stick out like this. I should be the one depressed. I should be the one hiding my head in a pillow. But I can't. Fish don't have pillows! I want things too, you know. I want to experience something besides this cock-a-may-mee room. I want to travel. I want to see the world!

**SAMSON.** Want to move by the window?

**GEFILTE.** Oh goody. I get to stare at the street. Spare me.

**SAMSON.** Hey, you don't know any Chanukah songs, do you? Gefilte? Come on. It's urgent. The bully at school is gonna kill me—right in front of the girl I like, right in front of the whole world—he'll probably do it live on television.

*(GEFILTE ignores SAMSON and jumps back in his bowl. SANTA CLAUS enters the window.)*

**SANTA.** Ho! Ho! Oh. Wrong house.

**SAMSON.** Great! Just great! Rub it in why don't you!

*(SANTA exits.)*

**SAMSON.** Where's my Chanukah miracle?!

*(SAMSON jumps into bed and puts the covers over his head. Lights flash. Flying in on a large dreidel is the DREIDEL DUDE and two DUDETTES. He is a Bob Dylan hipster type, wearing sunglasses, a large Jewish star and has a guitar strapped on his back. The DUDETTES park the dreidel and wait as DREIDEL DUDE takes off his glasses looks around and finds SAMSON.)*

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Hey, kid.

**SAMSON.** I said, leave me alone!

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Whoa, touchy.

*(SAMSON pulls the covers off his head and sees DREIDEL DUDE for the first time.)*

**SAMSON.** Who are you?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** I'm the man with a plan. I'm here to take you on a little journey.

**SAMSON.** I'm not supposed to get into a car with strangers.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Do cars spin? Do cars fly?

**SAMSON.** No.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** So then hop on the dreidel, man. It's perfect a time for "Blowing in the wind."

**GEFILTE.** Hold it, Buster! I'm the guard fish.

*(GEFILTE growls.)*

**SAMSON.** Where would we go?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** To find you a song.

*(SAMSON jumps on the dreidel. BECCA enters.)*

**BECCA.** Where do you think you're going?

**SAMSON.** I'm going to find a song. Don't tell Mom and Dad, please.

**BECCA.** You can't just sneak out like that. They'll be so mad, they'll ground you and you won't even get to be in the stupid concert tomorrow.

**SAMSON.** That's a great idea. I can just not show up tomorrow! I'll pretend I'm sick.

**BECCA.** You make me hurl. It's no fun fighting with you. I bet that you can't find a song, and I bet you are a laughing stock that'll go down in history as a spineless, wimpy wannabe.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** She's right.

**SAMSON.** Hey, you don't even know me.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** So then, prove her wrong, Dude.

**SAMSON.** Okay. I bet you I find a song and I save the day tomorrow.

**BECCA.** A bet?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Samson's going to show up with a song—

**SAMSON.** —not Dreidel Dreidel—

**DREIDEL DUDE.** And then you have to—

**GEFILTE.** —Start a Samson fan club and wear something other than black.

**BECCA.** No way! I don't own anything but black. Doesn't matter. You won't win. And if you don't win, then what do I get?

**SAMSON.** You get to snitch to Mom and Dad, and I'll tell everyone at school that I'm not your real brother. Deal?

**BECCA.** Deal.

**SAMSON.** Okay.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Let's go.

**GEFILTE.** Wait. Are you sure about this?

**SAMSON.** Do you have any other ideas?

**GEFILTE.** What do we know about him?

**SAMSON.** He's—"the man with a plan." I really need this song. Come on.

**GEFILTE.** Me? I'm not going.

**SAMSON.** Why not? You said you wanted to travel.

*(SAMSON and GEFILTE jump on the Dreidel. Lights flash as the DUDETTES and DREIDEL DUDE steer the flying dreidel. SAMSON is looking down at the town below. GEFILTE is holding on to the pole of the dreidel for dear-life.)*

**GEFILTE.** Do you have a license for this thing? I don't think you're following the speed limit.

**SAMSON.** It's amazing. You can see everything from here.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Groovy, ain't it?

**SAMSON.** Look—there's leaves on the trees—it's not winter anymore.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Oh it's winter. Just winter down South. You dig?

*(Joyous Mexican holiday music begins.)*

**SAMSON.** What's happening over there?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Let's check it out. I wouldn't mind jamming with them awhile.

*(SAMSON and DREIDEL DUDE hop off the dreidel. GEFILTE has motion sickness and does not look so good.)*

**DREIDEL DUDE.** What about the goldfish, Man?

**GEFILTE.** I'm fine right here, "Man." And for your edification, I'm not a goldfish, I'm a highly evolved Carp.

**DREIDEL MAN.** Don't stress, man. It's not good for the soul.

**SAMSON.** Yeah, don't stress.

**GEFILTE.** Don't tell me what to do. I'll stress if I want to.

*(The Mexican music grows louder. A parade enters led by TARA. She's dressed as a pregnant Mary, and behind her are children dressed as angels. Others hold the statue of Joseph and Mary. They sing and a band of guitar players follow close behind. SAMSON and DREIDEL DUDE walk toward them.)*

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Bye, Goldie.

**GEFILTE.** I'm a carp! A carp!

*(A child hands a lantern to GEFILTE. She softens.)*

**GEFILTE.** For me? Gracias.

**SAMSON.** Hey, that looks like Tara. What's she doing here?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Who's Tara?

**SAMSON.** She's a girl from school. Hey, Tara! Tara!

*(TARA sees SAMSON and runs over. She is playing the Virgin Mary with a pregnant stomach.)*

**TARA.** Okay, Samson, you like scared me.

**SAMSON.** What are you doing here?

**TARA.** Like hello, I fly down every year for the La Posada celebration.

**SAMSON.** La Pos-what?

**TARA.** La Posada. Okay. It's like how my family celebrates the birthday of Jesus' birth. We reenact the nativity scene every year. Oh, like come to my Aunt's house later. After, we have this big party with dancing and singing and a piñata! It's the best. Okay, okay—I gotta go—I'm playing Mary and they can't start without me. Oh hey, did you find a Chanukah song yet?

**SAMSON.** No.

**TARA.** Oh well, I'm not worried. I kinda like Dreidel Dreidel.

*(TARA knocks on a door. Behind the door is the INNKEEPER.)*

**INNKEEPER.** ¿Quién toca a mi puerta tan tarde este noche? Vete, no tenemos cuartos. *[Who knocks at my door so late at night? Go away, we have no rooms.]*

**SAMSON.** What is he saying?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** He's the Innkeeper who won't let Mary and Joseph in.

**JOSEPH.** En el nombre del Dios, te vuego, mi esposa amovada no puede viajar mas.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** "In the name of Heaven I beg you—my beloved wife can no longer travel."

**SAMSON.** No Santa Claus? No presents under the tree?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** No but children put their shoes out on the window ledge before they go to bed and when they wake up there's a present inside. They celebrate La Posada for nueve—nine nights.

**SAMSON.** Really? I always thought we had the longest celebration. Chanukah is eight holy nights.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Get ready, this is the part where everybody screams, "Bienvenido." Welcome.

*(DREIDEL DUDE gets the audience involved.)*

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Come on everybody. This is cause for celebration—the birth of baby Jesus. Okay, are you ready? All together: Bienvenido!

*(Audience responds.)*

Oh man, I know you can do better than that. Try it again, ready—get set—Everybody—

**ALL.** Bienvenido!

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Now that's what I'm talking about.

*(The music grows louder and all dance. SAMSON walks away.)*

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Try the dance, Dude.

**SAMSON.** No, no—that I definitely can not do.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** It's a physical appreciation for the divine spirit.

**SAMSON.** Thank you for bringing me here. But I almost forgot. I have to find—

**DREIDEL DUDE.** —a Chanukah song. Everything in due time, my friend. First, you've got to look at things wider, bigger, see the forest not just the trees.

**SAMSON.** You just said they don't have Christmas trees.

*(DREIDEL DUDE shakes his head sadly. He plays guitar and dances along with the music.)*

**DREIDEL DUDE.** A song is meant to be felt. Here— *(Points to his heart, then his feet:)* and here. You've got to get it into your body to really know it.

*(DREIDEL DUDE helps SAMSON learn the dances. He soon learns how and the crowd surrounds him, joyously dancing with him. He enjoys the camaraderie. They continue dancing offstage as SAMSON dances by himself.)*

**SAMSON.** Okay check this out.

*(SAMSON dances with gusto. KALI enters and stands in the corner staring at SAMSON. She blows him a kiss and winks at him.)*

**SAMSON.** Okay this isn't really happening, but I wish it was.

*(SAMSON walks over to KALI. They slow dance together. SAMSON spins her away from him, and he pulls her in for a kiss but she disappears and GEFILTE takes her place.)*

**GEFILTE.** What do you think you're doing?

**SAMSON.** Um, nothing. I just—

**GEFILTE.** Dance your tushy back on this twirling taxi. We have to get moving.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** He's right.

**GEFILTE.** Don't mess with me. Huh? I'm right?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** We've got more people and places to visit.

**GEFILTE.** More? More! Now hold on there, Chanukah Harry.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** That's not me; that's my brother.

*(GEFILTE grabs the DREIDEL DUDE's arm to try and drag him, but he is not strong enough. SAMSON hops on the dreidel but continues to dance. Lights show it spinning again. GEFILTE holds onto the dreidel for dear life.)*

**GEFILTE.** Where's the seatbelts?

**SAMSON.** *(To DREIDEL DUDE:)* Hey, how did you know I needed to find a song, anyway?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** We all need to find our own song. You, I could tell, needed my help.

**SAMSON.** If I don't find a Chanukah song, then T-Rex, the meanest, toughest guy in choir—he said he's going to rearrange my sorry little Jewish vocal chords.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Interesting.

**SAMSON.** What?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Interesting you put it that way. Calling yourself sorry and little. He didn't say that.

**SAMSON.** How did you—?

**GEFILTE.** You're creeping me out. He's creeping me out. I demand to know where you're taking us!

**SAMSON.** Yeah, where are we going?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** It's your choice. Should we celebrate Boxing Day?

**SAMSON.** I don't think that celebrating a holiday that glorifies a violent sport is one I'm looking for.

*(DREIDEL DUDE strums a tune on his guitar. As the DREIDEL DUDE speaks we see the holidays from around the world represented by one or two actors with props, filling up the stage with colors and celebration.)*

**DREIDEL DUDE.** *(Laughs.)* There are lots of holidays you don't know about, kid. A lot of them. In Canada and England they give boxes of money and food to those who need it. They call it Boxing Day.

**SAMSON.** So it's like, charity?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** You got it, Little Dude. Hey, how 'bout we go watch the shadow plays in Indonesia?

*(Shadows form on the back scrim of large Indonesian paper cut out puppets.)*

**SAMSON.** Gefilte look. This is sooo cool.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Somewhere cool you want? How 'bout Sweden?

*(Swedish music for Santa Lucia begins.)*

**SAMSON.** It's not like any celebration of Christmas I've ever known.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** What's wrong with Christmas anyhow?

**SAMSON.** Nothing. It's just that I've been jealous of Christmas for as long as I can remember. I secretly wished I could have the scent of pine in my house, and watch TV without wondering where the boys were that were like me. I used to draw a yarmulke on the Grinch and pretend I was stealing Christmas. Nice, huh? But that's when I thought I was the only one in the world not celebrating Christmas.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** There's winter solstice and Ramadan and Chinese New Year. Not everybody celebrates Christmas.

**SAMSON.** Where I live, they do.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Really? Are you sure?

**SAMSON.** Well, I guess Tara doesn't celebrate Christmas exactly as I thought she did. But everybody else does.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** That settles it. We're going to the festival of lights—

*(Bells are rung and chanting is heard. Women and men one by one bring tea light candles to the picture of the Goddess Lakshmi and Durga to prostrate in front of them.)*

**SAMSON.** But Chanukah's the festival of lights. This is definitely not Chanukah.

*(KALI enters dressed in traditional Indian dress with bells on her ankles, a bindi on her forehead and she poses ready for the dance. SAMSON hides from her view.)*

**GEFILTE.** What are you doing?

**SAMSON.** *(Whispering:)* That's Kali.

**GEFILTE.** The girl you've been whining about all year? Get over there, say hello.

**SAMSON.** No. I'm not ready. I want to impress her. I got nothing to impress her with.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** You will. You will when you Wow her with your song.

**SAMSON.** I'm never going to find a song.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Have faith, little Dude. You're on track. You just need to see—

**SAMSON.** —the forest not just the trees. So what are they doing? It doesn't look like Tara's family's celebration.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** It's Diwali [*pronounced Divalee*] celebration.

**SAMSON.** Another holiday I didn't know about. Great. Now I know what Kali meant by "serious blinders."

*(KALI and other girls perform a choreographed dance to an Indian song.)*

**SAMSON.** Look at her. Isn't she beautiful?

*(Kali's family and SAMSON applaud.)*

**KALI.** Thank you.

**NANI.** My precious girl, come here.

*(NANI, Kali's grandmother gives her a big hug and kiss.)*

**NANI.** This is for you. Open it.

*(KALI opens a gift. A statue of the Goddess Lakshmi.)*

**KALI.** Oh thank you Nani. She's so beautiful.

**NANI.** Do you know who she is?

**KALI.** Of course, she's the Goddess Lakshmi. During Diwali she visits us and brings wealth and prosperity for the new year.

**NANI.** Good, now you can do puja to her at your house. I think it is time. Go see if Dadi is ready with the fireworks.

*(Explosion of fireworks begins. All rush outside to witness them. Colored lights explode as if fireworks onstage. NANI takes hold of SAMSON's arm and ushers him outside with them. DREIDEL DUDE drags GEFILTE outside. Everyone looks up and exclaims Oohs and Ahhs watching the fireworks.)*

**SAMSON.** Wow.

**KALI.** Samson? What are you doing here?

**SAMSON.** I uh—

**KALI.** Did you find a song for Chanukah?

**SAMSON.** No, I'm still looking. This is amazing. I can't believe I didn't know you celebrated Diwali. Serious blinders, right?

**KALI.** Yeah well, I didn't go around announcing it. I wanted to invite you to my house to celebrate with us, but I didn't know if you wanted to because you hate the holidays.

**SAMSON.** I don't hate the holidays. I used to look forward to it when I was little. We used to read the story of Chanukah and then give one gift to everyone and watch each person's expression as they opened it. It was our tradition.

**KALI.** Tradition is what's fun about the holidays. I'm so glad my relatives come in from India every year. It just wouldn't be the same without seeing them and eating my Nani's cooking.

**SAMSON.** I know. I kinda miss when Poppy was around. We don't do any of the traditional stuff anymore.

**KALI.** I love traditions. They're so full of meaning. Why'd your family stop doing them?

**SAMSON.** I don't know, it's just not the same without Poppy. Becca and I know the story of Chanukah backwards and forwards. I don't even believe in it anymore.

**KALI.** Yeah but, sometimes when you do the traditions it makes you believe again. I don't know—I think you should start them again.

(DREIDEL DUDE *whispers to* SAMSON.)

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Ask her.

**SAMSON.** I can't.

**KALI.** Who's that?

**SAMSON.** Oh, he's uh— "The man with the plan." So Kali, I uh, tried to ask you before if I could invite you to—it's a traditional thing—if you remember T-Rex came in and—

*(Crowd exits except for Kali's grandfather, DADI.)*

**DADI.** Kali, you and your friend hurry. You know this family and sweets. Nani made Jalebi, Peda and Kheer, especially for you.

**KALI.** Nani made kheer?

**SAMSON.** What is that?

**KALI.** It's like rice pudding, but better. Are you coming?

**SAMSON.** I—I don't know—I still have to find a song.

**KALI.** Suit yourself. But you don't know what you're missing! Hey, was there something you wanted to ask me?

**SAMSON.** No, I—it can wait.

*(KALI exits. All board the Dreidel again. SAMSON drags his feet.)*

**SAMSON.** Oh man. I had the perfect chance to ask her to come to my Bar Mitzvah and I blew it. Again!

**GEFILTE.** What's wrong with you? She said she likes traditions. I think she'd say yes.

**SAMSON.** No she wouldn't. Why would she? And anyway, I don't know if I'm having a Bar Mitzvah. Let's just find a song. A really great song, maybe I can impress Kali. And then I know she'll like me and I can definitely ask her. Come on let's go. Where to next?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Are you sure you're ready to find your song?

**SAMSON.** What do you mean? That's what we've been doing all along, right? Isn't that why we're out here?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** You think you're ready now? What about T-Rex?

**SAMSON.** Oh, yeah. He's gonna kill me if I don't find something that shows off his talent. Man, I should have stayed home and hid under my covers.

**GEFILTE.** He's nothing to be afraid of. Let me at him. I'll straighten him out.

**SAMSON.** Thanks Gefilte, that's all I need. He already thinks Kali fights my battles for me.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** You really think he's that tough?

**SAMSON.** Oh, I know he is.

*(The dreidel flies again then stops suddenly.)*

**GEFILTE.** I'll show him. He can't mess with us. I got moves he never even dreamed about.

*(GEFILTE does a mixture of karate and disco. Lights up on T-REX painting a rain stick with bright green, red and black paint. He is very focused on the details. In the corner of the room is an altar set with a colorful African cloth and a mkeka [mat] on top of it. There are Kwanzaa decorations, statues, posters and two ears of corn on the table.)*

**SAMSON.** Holy cow, that's him!

*(SAMSON hides behind DREIDEL DUDE. GEFILTE hides too.)*

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Don't worry my merry men.

*(DREIDEL DUDE magically sweeps his arm toward T-REX and strums his guitar.)*

**GEFILTE.** Excuse me?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Now he can't see you if you don't want him to. Can't hear you either.

*(SAMSON comes out from hiding.)*

**SAMSON.** Really?

*(SAMSON waves his hand in front of T-REX's eyes and nothing happens.)*

**SAMSON.** Oh man, this is great! I always wanted to do this. *(To T-REX:)* You don't look so tough now, big guy. *(Makes funny faces and sticks his tongue out at him:)* I'm not scared of you! You look like a regular kid, doing arts and crafts. Isn't that sweet? In art class he goofs off and the teacher's always yelling at him. Hey, he's good. Why's he got to act tough all the time?

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*(T-Rex's sister, IMANI, 10 years old, enters. T-REX hides the rain stick behind his back.)*

**T-REX.** I thought I told you to stay away!

**IMANI.** It ain't my fault. Mom wants you to make the fruit bowl for the altar.

**T-REX.** Why can't you do it?

**IMANI.** 'Cause she wants you, stupid.

**T-REX.** Wha'd I tell you 'bout that?

**IMANI.** Wha'd you tell me 'bout what?

**T-REX.** Listen, we don't fight during Kwanzaa. For seven days you got to be nice. You heard what Rev. Martin said at church, didn't you? It's about unity, about community, and about creativity. Which is what I'm doing now, so get lost.

**IMANI.** Ely, wha'chyou doin? I want to see.

**T-REX.** No.

*(T-REX and IMANI struggle as SAMSON whispers to DREIDEL DUDE and GEFILTE.)*

**SAMSON.** Ely? T-Rex's real name is Ely? No way.

**T-REX.** Oh look, now you ruined it. It wasn't dry yet.

**IMANI.** What is it?

**T-REX.** What do you mean, what is it? It's a rain-stick. It was supposed to be your present, but now you ruined it.

**IMANI.** Ely, you made me a gift?

**T-REX.** See when it dries you can turn it upside down and...

*(T-REX demonstrates. It sounds like rain.)*

**IMANI.** I love the sound of rain.

**T-REX.** I know.

**IMANI.** And you made it for me?

*(IMANI, shocked, examines the gift.)*

**IMANI.** I'm sorry, maybe I can fix it.

**T-REX.** Just, go see if you can help Ma with the preparations.

**IMANI.** I'm supposed to do the kinara.

*(IMANI takes out a special candle holder and black, green and red candles. She places them in the holder and puts it on the altar. She arranges the African statues and decorations around it.)*

**IMANI.** I got you something for Kwanzaa too.

*(IMANI takes a wrapped gift out from under the table. She hands it to T-REX. He opens it.)*

**IMANI.** I didn't know what to get you since we're not supposed to buy something big. So I thought of this. Mom helped me fix it up.

*(It is a hard-cover book. T-REX opens the cover and read the first page.)*

**T-REX.** This is the first book Dad got me for our first Kwanzaa celebration.

**IMANI.** You like it? The cover was falling off, and the binding was messed up, so Mom and I fixed it. It's good as new.

**T-REX.** It still has Dad's signature in it.

**IMANI.** 'Course it does. That's the best part. *(Reading:)* To Ely, my favorite son. *(To T-REX:)* He could say that since you're the only one.

**T-REX.** Shut up.

**IMANI.** Thought we're not supposed to say that anymore?

**T-REX.** Come here.

*(They hug.)*

**T-REX.** You think he's looking down on us right now?

**IMANI.** I hope so.

**SAMSON.** Maybe we should go.

*(SAMSON sneaks back onto the dreidel. Lights fade on T-Rex's house.)*

**SAMSON.** I don't think anyone at school knows about his dad. I feel bad for him.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** You're not afraid of him anymore?

**SAMSON.** Well, no. Not really. I want to find a part just for him in my song. Let's go, I'm really ready now.

(SAMSON *yawns.*)

**GEFILTE.** But you're exhausted. (*To DREIDEL DUDE frantically:*) Samson's just a minor, a babe, a wandering Jew! It's almost morning and he still doesn't have a song! And without the song, he doesn't get to impress Kali, and if he doesn't impress Kali he won't have his Bar Mitzvah, without his Bar Mitzvah, he won't be a man!

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Breathe with me. In, out. In, out.

(DREIDEL DUDE *and* GEFILTE *do breathing exercises.*)

**SAMSON.** You're really worried about me.

**GEFILTE.** Who else have I got to be worried about?

**SAMSON.** I didn't know you cared so much Gefilte. I'm feeling your love.

(SAMSON *hugs* GEFILTE.)

**GEFILTE.** You're all dry, get off me. Stop that mine claynah ness.

**SAMSON.** (*Shocked:*) What did you say?

**GEFILTE.** What? What did I say?

**SAMSON.** That mine claynah something. Poppy used to call me that and pat me on the head.

**GEFILTE.** He always shook his head when he said it, so I thought it meant bad boy.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Who's this Poppy you keep talking about?

**SAMSON.** My grandfather. He would have known a Chanukah song. He grew up strictly Orthodox.

**GEFILTE.** He never once rapped on my glass bowl. Do you know how much underwater noise that makes? It's horrendous.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** It sounds like you both miss him.

**SAMSON.** He passed away a few years ago.

**GEFILTE.** Uh, excuse me, Sir Dude—why is the dreidel moving without you steering it? It's turning on its own. Where's the abort button?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Ask Samson. Only he knows.

**SAMSON.** What do you mean me? I have no idea.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** The dreidel doesn't only just go north and south. It doesn't only stay in the here and now, if you catch my drift.

**GEFILTE.** Drift? We're drifting into the past? I don't like this. I don't like this at all!

*(Lights flash wildly, music is played backwards with the sound of wind blowing. Blackout.)*

*End of Act I*

## ACT II

*(Same as before. Lights and sound of wind and backward music heightens.)*

**GEFILTE.** That's it! I don't like this drifting into the past! I don't like this wild goose chase! I'm turning this thing around.

*(GEFILTE grabs the wheel and suddenly the dreidel and all sound stops.)*

**GEFILTE.** I broke it. Oh no, I broke it.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Chill, Goldie. We're here.

**GEFILTE.** Where's here?

*(MORDECHAI, a man who looks like Samson's father, but is dressed in a prayer shawl and an Orthodox dark suit. He chants, holding a prayer book.)*

**SAMSON.** That's Poppy. Look at him, he's so young. I can't believe it. We drifted back into the old country. Poppy? It's me. Poppy? I'm sorry, do you speak English?

**MORDECHAI.** Of course I speak English. I'm an educated man.

**SAMSON.** It's amazing. You look just like—Dad.

**MORDECHAI.** You must be mistaken. I am not your father.

**SAMSON.** No, you're my grandfather.

**MORDECHAI.** *(Disturbed:)* Who put you up to this? Was it Miriam? Tell her I will not rush into things. I can not make this decision, yet. Better yet, tell her there is someone else.

**SAMSON.** Poppy, I know you don't believe me, but it's true.

**MORDECHAI.** Son, I'm nobody's grandfather. I'm not even sure I'll ever get married.

**SAMSON.** Oh, you will.

**MORDECHAI.** This you know for certain?

**SAMSON.** Her name's Yetta.

**MORDECHAI.** (*In shock.*) You know about Yetta and I? Nobody knows about Yetta.

**SAMSON.** I know that together you have a son named after your father, Isaac.

**MORDECHAI.** Yes. Yes that is the name of my father. But how does this happen? Yetta lives in America.

**SAMSON.** You move to America.

**MORDECHAI.** No, this can not be. My whole life is here.

**SAMSON.** It's a great story. Grandma loves to tell it. Just between you and me, I love to listen to it. It's the best romance story I ever heard, better than *Titanic*.

**MORDECHAI.** I drown in the ocean?

**SAMSON.** No, no—Poppy. It's a happy ending.

**MORDECHAI.** This is too much. I do not believe you.

**SAMSON.** You have to. What can I do to convince you?

**MORDECHAI.** What else do you know about me? Something no one could have told you.

**SAMSON.** You love to laugh.

**MORDECHAI.** Me? You *are* mistaken.

**SAMSON.** You do when I know you. Okay, something else—I know that you and Gram write lots of letters back and forth. She told me you keep all of hers in a bundle, tied with yarn.

**MORDECHAI.** Ha! They are tied with string! String not yarn.

**SAMSON.** And you have an old silver harmonica. Your grandfather gave it to you. You keep it by your heart, right—

(*SAMSON reaches into Mordechai's coat pocket and grabs a harmonica.*)

**SAMSON.** —Here! You see. I am your grandson.

**MORDECHAI.** What is it? What have you come to warn me?

**SAMSON.** It's not like that.

**MORDECHAI.** In the Bible, when angels come, it is to caution and counsel.

**SAMSON.** I'm no angel. I didn't even come for you. I came for me. I need a Chanukah song.

**MORDECHAI.** For this you give me a heart attack? There are so many. Why do you not know them? They do not have Chanukah in America?

**SAMSON.** Yes, they still do. It's just different. Everything's about Christmas over there. The songs on the radio, the movies on TV.

**MORDECHAI.** Chanukah, it is not a major holiday. Now, if you are talking Passover or Yom Kippur, that's another story.

**SAMSON.** Poppy, I need a Chanukah song. The only one anyone sings is "Dreidel, Dreidel." And it's a child's game. You taught it to us.

**MORDECHAI.** This is true it is a child's game, but a very important one. During the time of Greek oppression it was forbidden to study Torah. But the Jewish people, we believe in study, so we made the dreidel for children to learn Hebrew letters.

*(MORDECHAI spins a dreidel.)*

**MORDECHAI.** Look at it spinning, spinning. Like the world. Like your mind. You are confused about something, no?

**SAMSON.** Yes, I am.

**MORDECHAI.** What does it mean when you spin the dreidel and it lands on the Gimmel?

**SAMSON.** It means you win it all.

**MORDECHAI.** And Hei?

**SAMSON.** Take half.

**MORDECHAI.** And Nun?

**SAMSON.** Nothing.

**MORDECHAI.** Ah but Shin—

**SAMSON & MORDECHAI.** You must pay in.

**SAMSON.** So?

**MORDECHAI.** So? So, do you not see how beautiful? A metaphor for life. Some days you win it all, some days are so-so and some days you must put in more, no? Each and every day you spin the dreidel and sometimes you must commit to turning it, to turning around your situation. That brings out the miracle. The Macabees did not dwell on the fact that they were oppressed. They focused on the Gimmel of life that was on the other side of Shin. Then they turned their situation around, like a dreidel and created a vehicle for a Divine miracle.

**SAMSON.** How Poppy? How do I turn my situation around?

**MORDECHAI.** With faith. Faith and commitment. You want to move, you walk, you want to fly you—

**SAMSON.** Create a flying dreidel!

**MORDECHAI.** I was going to say build wings, but create a flying dreidel, why not? You are a good student?

**SAMSON.** I try to be. I study.

**MORDECHAI.** You study Torah?

**SAMSON.** Yes, I mean, I am supposed to have my Bar Mitzvah next month.

**MORDECHAI.** Well of course you have Bar Mitzvah. How will you become a man without Bar Mitzvah? You will see. All the studying will bring you great strength and in the study is the discovery.

**SAMSON.** The discovery of what?

**MORDECHAI.** The discovery of where G-d conceals his greatest teaching: the Divine is in the least likely of places. (*Tapping SAMSON on his chest, near his heart:*) That is where the miracle is.

**SAMSON.** I, I am the miracle? I don't know if everyone in America will believe in miracles.

**MORDECHAI.** This is not a good sign. I do not like this America.

(*MORDECHAI turns to leave.*)

**SAMSON.** No, wait. I won't be born if you don't move there. It's not that bad. It's nice really. There's lots of different beliefs and cultures. I learn about them in school. And there's grandma. You and grandma teach me to sing. I'm a very good singer.

**MORDECHAI.** Do you sing in a temple as a cantor, like me?

**SAMSON.** No, Poppy, but I love singing. It makes me stop thinking about all my problems. Little problems, not big, stupid really—I don't know why I bothered you.

**MORDECHAI.** You have your eye on a girl.

*(SAMSON is embarrassed.)*

**MORDECHAI.** Ah, love. It makes you do strange things. Is this why you need a Chanukah song?

**SAMSON.** Sort of. I need a cool Chanukah song.

**MORDECHAI.** A "cool" Chanukah song?

**SAMSON.** Something that will get people to tap their feet, or dance a little. Like the ones you used to sing to me and Becca.

**MORDECHAI.** Becca?

**SAMSON.** Yeah, Rebecca. She's your granddaughter.

**MORDECHAI.** That's Yetta's mother's name.

**SAMSON.** I know.

*(MORDECHAI takes SAMSON into his arms and leads him across the stage.)*

**MORDECHAI.** Friends, this is my grand— *(He stops.)* my new friend. He's come from far away to learn a Chanukah song. Let us sing my favorite.

*(Men with long beards, dark suits and orthodox hats enter. Women enter with shawls wrapped around their shoulders and heads. Music begins, and MORDECHAI sings in a booming voice the traditional song for Chanukah, "Hanerot Halalu." As he sings his happiness grows. The women and men dance together but their hands can not touch out of religious custom. To dance together they must hold a scarf between them. The women ask SAMSON to dance as they all*

*sing. After the first round of singing, GRAM enters as a young woman and MORDECHAI stops to watch her. She wraps a shawl over her head and lights the menorah as the music fades out. GRAM can not see him but maybe feel his presence.)*

**GRAM.** *(As a young woman:)* Bo-ruch a-tah ado-noi e-lo-hei-nu me-lech ho-olom a-sher ki-de-sho-nu be-mitz-vo-sov ve-tzi-vo-nu le-had-lik ner shel cha-nu-kah. A-men.

*(GRAM blows him a kiss and he catches it. GRAM exits. MORDECHAI sadly watches her go. DREIDEL DUDE enters with GEFILTE. SAMSON knows he must say goodbye.)*

**SAMSON.** It is hard to say goodbye.

**MORDECHAI.** More than you know.

*(SAMSON hugs his grandfather tightly.)*

**SAMSON.** I don't want to say goodbye. It was hard enough the first time.

**SAMSON & MORDECHAI.** Thank you.

**SAMSON.** What are you thanking me for?

**MORDECHAI.** You brought me a light that is brighter than the nine candles on the menorah. Brighter than all the candles everywhere. Now I can see what I could not before. My future.

**SAMSON.** Becca thinks you're only concerned with the past.

**MORDECHAI.** Maybe I am. You will see—when you grow up, things start to look different. You want to share with the future all that you have experienced and learned from the past.

**SAMSON.** Poppy—I miss you in the future.

**MORDECHAI.** Well, now I will miss you and you have not been born yet. *(Shaking his head and patting SAMSON's head:)* My little miracle. Mine claynah ness.

**SAMSON.** So that's what that means! My little miracle.

**MORDECHAI.** Go, go now. There is much to do to prepare for America. Share the song, Samson. It is now your gift to share.

(SAMSON joyously returns to the dreidel. GEFILTE is still dancing.)

**SAMSON.** Poppy gave me a song! Did you hear it? Did you?

**GEFILTE.** It's perfect! I knew you'd find a song.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** It was a transcendental experience, Little Dude.

**GEFILTE.** You know what this means? This means you won the bet! Whoo-hoo! I can't wait to see the look on Becca's face.

(The dreidel flies again. Christmas lights and Chanukah lights shine out of house windows.)

**SAMSON.** And everyone in Choir's gonna say I saved the day! I'm so excited. We're going to be on TV—and for the first time I'm going to be proud—proud to show the world my traditions. (*To the world:*) Hello everybody! I'm Jewish! And we've got more than just "Dreidel, Dreidel!" Why was I so down on Chanukah in the first place, Gefilte?

**GEFILTE.** Beats me. Personally, I find it comforting to stay at home, surrounded by loved ones and traditions. Home sweet home. Can I have a sign that says that for my Chanukah present?

**SAMSON.** Sure, Gefilte. I feel like giving everyone what they want for the holidays!

**GEFILTE.** (*Bursting with enthusiasm:*) Look! It's our street! Our home! Everyone tucked in, bursting with holiday spirit and love for their fellow man. Makes my gills swell. (*Cries and hides her eyes.*) Excuse me a moment.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** This season touches us all. From Mexico to Manhattan. From India to Indiana.

**SAMSON.** You're right. All. All of us. I could have been born in Mexico or India, then I wouldn't be eating latkas I'd be eating tamales or naan.

(SAMSON loses his excitement.)

**GEFILTE.** What?! What? Your frown is dragging on the floor. What could the matter be now?

**SAMSON.** Singing just a Chanukah song isn't good enough anymore.

**GEFILTE.** Humans are so complicated.

*(Holiday lights and candles glow all around.)*

**SAMSON.** *(Looking at the lights:)* I want to share all I learned. All of it.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Do you know what all the letters on the dreidel stand for?

**SAMSON.** Poppy and I were just talking about it. Gimmel, Hei, Nun and Shin.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** No, I mean what they represent. Seeing the whole not just the trees.

**SAMSON.** What do you mean?

**DREIDEL DUDE.** The initials, they stand for: Ness Gadol Hayah Sham. A great miracle happened there. So we don't forget the miracle of Chanukah, the miracle that is within us all. Just when the situation seems beyond hope—

**SAMSON.** Turn it around like a dreidel!

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Exactly.

*(DREIDEL DUDE puts SAMSON's hands on the wheel.)*

**SAMSON.** I can't—I never learned how!

**GEFILTE.** What are you doing? He can't drive. He can't even rollerblade without crashing.

**DREIDEL DUDE.** Come on, Goldie—back him up. Just this once. Try it.

**GEFILTE.** *(Dryly:)* Go Samson. Go Samson.

**SAMSON.** I'm doing it, Gefilte! I'm driving. I feel like I can do anything!

*(SAMSON parks the dreidel at his bedroom. BECCA is there.)*

**SAMSON.** And then reality sets in.

**BECCA.** Did you do it?

*(SAMSON walks past her depressed.)*

**BECCA.** Ha! I knew it. You couldn't find a song.

**GEFILTE.** You're wrong, so very, very wrong. I can't wait to see you in pink. Or how about pink and yellow?

**BECCA.** You won. You won the bet?

**SAMSON.** I did. I did, all right. But none of that matters now.

**BECCA.** No one's ever beat me before. I've never lost a bet.

**SAMSON.** Poppy gave me a song. It's perfect. But that's not enough anymore. I need a song that honors everybody's holidays. Why shouldn't everybody's culture be honored? But I don't know how to do that. Except if I write my own song. I'm doomed.

**BECCA.** You have to write a song?

**SAMSON.** You know what, Bec, you won the bet. All right? I'm going to fall flat on my face tomorrow and the whole choir is going to laugh at me.

*(DREIDEL DUDE whispers in GEFILTE's ear. He waves and gets back on his dreidel.)*

**DREIDEL DUDE.** I left you both a memento. Take care now. Peace.

*(The DREIDEL DUDE and the dreidel disappear.)*

**DREIDEL DUDE.** *(Offstage:)* Happy Chanukah, Dudes!

**SAMSON.** What's so happy about it?

**BECCA.** One says, "To Gefilte. Some gold for you. From, the Dreidel Dude."

**GEFILTE.** Gold? Did he say Gold? Open it. Open it.

*(BECCA unwraps the gift. It is a bowl just like Gefilte's with a male fish in it.)*

**HOT SPANISH LOVER FISH.** 'ello, my name is Fernando. *(Kisses her hand.)* You are the most beautiful carp I have ever seen. Such soft, sexy scales. I'm going to like it here.

**GEFILTE.** (*Giggling and blushing:*) Oh, yes, well, there really is no better place than right here. (*To SAMSON:*) Open the Dreidel Dude's gift, Samson. Maybe it's just what you're looking for too. Now excuse us. Sometimes fish need privacy too.

*(GEFILTE covers the two bowls from view. BECCA hands SAMSON his gift. She opens his card.)*

**BECCA.** (*Reading:*) "To Samson. Words are like prayer, they are good on their own but..."

*(SAMSON opens the gift. He takes out sheet music.)*

**BECCA.** "better when put to music." He gave you his sheet music. That's perfect. Now you have a song.

**SAMSON.** It's a choir, Becca. We need words to sing.

**BECCA.** I can't believe you. You are so close. I can't believe I'm going to say this. Don't ever ask me to repeat this. But—I think you can do it. I really do.

**SAMSON.** You do?

**BECCA.** Come on little brother. Wait a minute, I know just the thing that'll get you inspired.

*(BECCA exits. BECCA returns pushing in MOM, DAD, and GRAM.)*

**MOM & DAD.** Becca, really—are you sure we can't wait until tomorrow?

**BECCA.** Now Gram. He needs it. Trust me.

*(GRAM hands him a wrapped gift box. SAMSON opens it. SAMSON opens the box to reveal Poppy's silver harmonica.)*

**SAMSON.** Poppy's harmonica!

**GRAM.** He told me a long time ago that he wanted you to have it.

*(SAMSON plays the harmonica.)*

**SAMSON.** I've got an idea.

**BECCA.** Everybody out. Out! Out! Genius at work. Come on!

## **THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!**

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