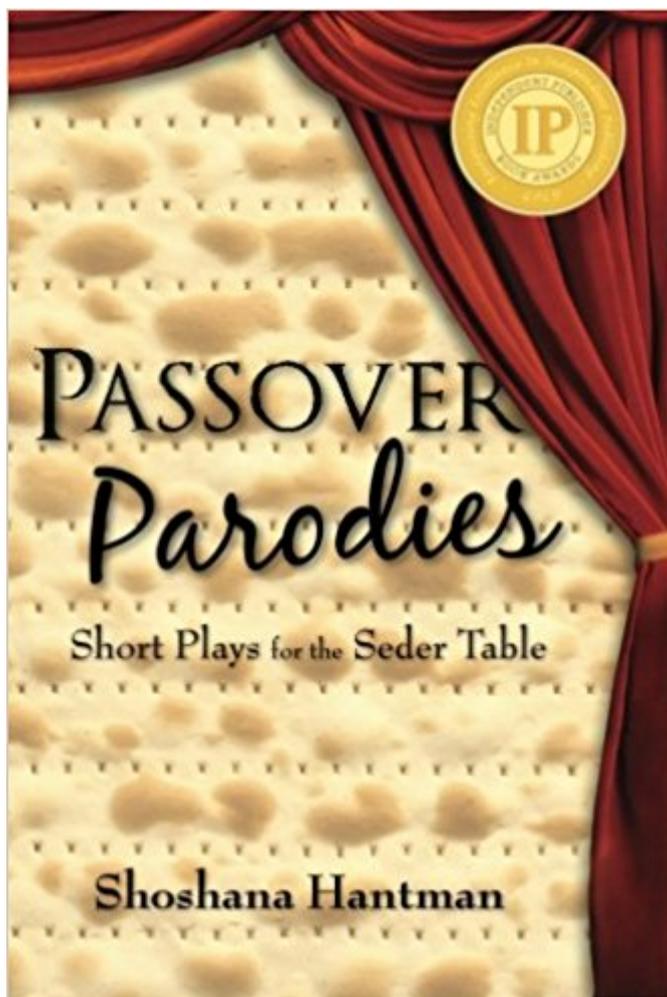


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Passover Parodies: Short Plays For The Seder Table



Synopsis

What was the least interesting seder you ever attended? And what was the most interesting? If your experience is like most of ours, your worst seders were dry readings of the haggadah, unoriginal and done by rote. The better seders, on the other hand, were imaginative and thought-provoking. The best may even have included a clever surprise. An incredible 95% of American Jews participate in a Passover seder every year; it's the best-attended Jewish ritual. Yet most participants find the seder dull, repetitive, and incomprehensible. They attend out of a sense of duty, but they don't enjoy it. Passover Parodies is a series of ten-minute plays for the Passover seder table. Families select one each year (or more, if they're ambitious) to read aloud. Like the traditional humorous Purim-shpiel, the plays entertain, educate, and provoke the discussion that is supposed to dominate a seder. A family might choose to examine Jewish tradition through the eyes of Sherlock Holmes ("This cracker was produced by someone in a most urgent rush. Furthermore, it has been broken along one side. A segment has been removed. Why? That is what we must endeavor to find out."), or experience the exodus from Casablanca ("I remember every detail: the Egyptians wore skirts, you wore a tallis. But mostly I remember the wow finish. A guy in a basket, floating in the bulrushes, with a comical look on his face because he has a diaper that needs changing."), or starring four young Marx Brothers ("Pharaoh, you have to let my people go. If you don't, my ancestors would rise from their graves and I'd only have to bury them again."). They might let Hermione Granger explain the magic of the ten plagues, or challenge traditional God-belief on Sigmund Freud's couch. Some of these plays can replace parts of the seder; for example, the Shakespeare play "Much Ado About Bupkes" tells the Exodus story. Others can complement the rituals, or provide new viewpoints, or simply add humor to what can be a dry ceremony. Readers can choose the themes they like, perhaps reading a different skit each year. The plays also vary in cast size, to accommodate both large and small seders.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Cute idea, however, many of the parodies were not appropriate for a family and used adult humor that would not allow it to be used at the seder table. :-)

wish the short plays were a bit shorter. it is a moderate amount of time to devote when you are also trying to complete a good amount of the seder

They are ok. You can adjust them as needed.

Good book but I was looking for a kid play. The kids are from 3-15. Not a good fit. For adults, very good.

A lot of fun. Added to the unHaggada, everyone participated much more and had a great evening

Very clever, but it got tiresome after a few chapters! Children, not familiar with the model book or movie, would miss the fun.

We have used skits from this book for the past two years for second night Passover seders. Since we've already had the first night to do a more traditional seder, we have used the skits to replace most of the Maggid for the second night seder. Last year we did the "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" skit and this year we did the Sherlock Holmes skit. Our kids and guests in their late teens and early 20's especially enjoyed reading the parts (with dramatic voices and accents), but everyone at our seders enjoyed the skits including a middle-aged friend who is a rabbi (former congregational "pulpit rabbi", now hospital chaplain). Because the skits refer to the important elements of the seder and the story of the Exodus in a very different context and with a lot of humor, I think it enables people familiar with the traditional seder text to see those things in a new way. Definitely better than reading the same old text for the second night in a row (I especially dislike the haggadot with the archaic English translations). And for our guests who are less familiar with the

regular seder, I think these skits are more accessible than the long drawn out stories of Talmudic rabbis using word play to determine the number of plagues. Initially, my college-aged daughter was very resistant to the idea of using an alternative text. But then she and her two friends of the same age at the seder really enjoyed the skit. Now she has been inspired enough that she's thinking of helping to write our own original skit with a theme such as Star Trek or based on a musical. We are planning to continue to use skits from this book or our own versions for second night seders in the future. We haven't tried one of the skits from "Passover Parodies" with songs yet. I'm thinking that if we do that, I'll send out YouTube links to the songs are parodied in advance of the seder so that people can become familiar with the tunes.

This one was a winner for our family! We have older children and college students who have been through the Maggid section of many haggadahs over the years, they KNOW the story. We decided to supplement the Maggid section of our haggadah with three of these Passover "Spiels" and did we ever have fun! I didn't know if our boys would find them corny or funny, but the verdict is in: hilariously funny! The insider jokes on the Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy (Voegyptian Poetry anyone?) was the perfect combination of Seder Story and Douglas Adams. While we don't do much leaning on pillows to show that we are "reclining and at ease," these little plays gave us a spirit of ease that made us feel like the "free men" we are supposed to be celebrating. Also, this allowed the story telling of Maggid to be interactive, not just a pushed outwards recitation of the same repetitive narrative that the kids could say in their sleep after all these years. This mixed it up, they didn't know what was coming next, so they were engaged and interested (and giggling!) - our boys declared it the most fun seder ever. Now that's the way to tell a story folks!

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