



## **The Adventures of Rabbi Harvey: A Graphic Novel of Jewish Wisdom and Wit in the Wild West**

*Steve Sheinkin*

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**A fresh look at Jewish folktales--wise, witty, hilarious.**

After finishing school in New York, Rabbi Harvey traveled west in search of adventure and, hopefully, work as a rabbi. His journey took him to Elk Spring, Colorado, a small town in the Rocky Mountains. When he managed to outwit the ruthless gang that had been ruling Elk Spring, the people invited Harvey to stay on as the town's rabbi. In Harvey's adventures in Elk Spring, he settles disputes, tricks criminals into confessing, and offers unsolicited bits of Talmudic insight and Hasidic wisdom. Each story presents Harvey with a unique challenge--from convincing a child that he is not actually a chicken, to retrieving stolen money from a sweet-faced bubbe gone bad. Like any good collection of Jewish folktales, these stories contain layers of humor and timeless wisdom that will entertain, teach and, especially, make you laugh.

## **The Adventures of Rabbi Harvey: A Graphic Novel of Jewish Wisdom and Wit in the Wild West Details**

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# **From Reader Review The Adventures of Rabbi Harvey: A Graphic Novel of Jewish Wisdom and Wit in the Wild West for online ebook**

## **Michelle Pegram says**

This graphic novel follows the exploits of the wild west rabbi, Rabbi Harvey, as he shares his wisdom and understanding of the world in order to help people navigate unusual and everyday experiences in life. Harvey, in his calm, non-preachy, and wryly witty manner, manages to convince a young boy that being a human is just as inviting as being a chicken, finds a way to prevent a man from cheating a mother with mouths to feed, tricks people into exposing their devious plans among other deeds. Told through stylistic, appealing images and in a straightforward fable style, these stories are fun and unexpected.

The author combined classic tales from a variety of sources with his love of the wild west to create a work that is appropriate for upper elementary through high school and creates a variety of discussion points. These are stories with morals and in which the good guy usually wins, which opens the door to activities about morality and ethics.

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## **Aneesa says**

A Western set in a world where everyone's Jewish. Bonus if you can get your wife to do all the voices.

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## **Abi (The Knights Who Say Book) says**

(3.5) Clever and enjoyable, but it would have been better with actual illustrations.

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## **Amelia says**

I like the chicken story

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## **David says**

Rabbi Harvey in the old West, out in Colorado, where he finds a town in need of a Rabbi. He dishes out justice with wisdom, a bit of wit and a lot of charm.

Here is one graphic book that is actually easy to read where the artwork doesn't get in the way of the text and actually provides a reminder that these ancient stories aren't set anywhere else but the frontier town of Elk Spring, Colorado. My grandson read the story of Nathan the Candle maker with me the first evening I had the book, and thoroughly enjoyed it.

I'm not Jewish, neither is my grandson, but these charming stories are a great way to introduce the wisdom of the Talmud and Jewish folktales to a broader audience.

It has inspired me to pull my copy of Dr. Abraham Cohen's **Everyman's Talmud** off the shelf and give it another read after it has sat there for so long. It is also a worthy book, but not nearly as much fun or accessible to youngsters as the Rabbi Harvey book, and Rabbi Cohen did not include any quirky art.

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### **Katie says**

This was really fun.

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### **Kiely says**

This book is hilarious and strange!

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### **Wendy says**

This is only my second graphic novel. As I am used to long paragraphs of descriptions, conversations and the like, this was a quick read for me. But, it was also a joy and delight to read. You want a taste of Jewish humor and wisdom? Read this book. The Rabbi Harvey is witty, forthright and very savvy. Gentile or Jew, you will smile while reading these little tales of the West.

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### **Kate says**

This was a quick, fun read and I enjoyed it. Highly recommended for fans of Jewish folktales, regular folktales, wisdom tales, and even people who just like a good riddle.

The book is very suitable for YA readers (I'd say 10 and up, really), but I'm so old I remember the Berlin Wall and I loved it too, so don't let that categorization turn you off. Also, while I put this on my "religion" shelf, it's not a particularly religious book--but the main character IS a rabbi, so it comes up.

I will seek out more Rabbi Harvey. What a kind, wise, funny man. :)

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### **Angela says**

The juxtaposition of Jewish storytelling and the Wild West seemed random to me at first. And let's face it, it IS random. In reading the introduction, Sheinkin explains that as an American Jew, he has drawn from the mythology of both cultures and combined them.

The graphic novel is actually a collection of many Jewish stories. They star Rabbi Harvey, a rabbi/sheriff watching over the people of Elk Spring, Colorado. He settles disputes, discovers the truth, runs dishonest people out of town, all while cracking jokes and educating his townsfolk (and the reader) Jewish wisdom and culture.

Rabbi Harvey fits well in the pantheon of tricksters throughout literature. He uses logic to outwit his opponents, solve problems, and save the day. He's willing to go to great lengths to help the people in his town. He finds his way out of sticky situations again and again.

Some of the stories will spark discussion about cultures and changing times/perceptions, but most will simply entertain.

I do wish that there was some commentary included. At times, I wanted to know more about the story, and what it means in the Jewish community. How well-known is it? That sort of thing.

The pictures are fairly simplistic and use a limited color scheme of warm reds, oranges, browns, and yellows. Overall, the artwork was my least favorite part. I think I would have liked it better with more color.

However, this is a fun introduction to Jewish folktales, and it's a great example of literary fusion. Reluctant readers will appreciate the graphic novel format and the shorter stories contained within the larger book.

- No language issues
  - No sexual situations. There is a story where Rabbi Harvey pretends to be a chicken, and does so naked, but there are always strategically placed objects.
  - Social drinking
  - No violence, but there are threats of violence that Rabbi Harvey evades
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### **Vince says**

Fine, a unique retelling of old Jewish fables in a western setting. I enjoyed the unique approach to this, but it wasn't really for me.

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### **Melki says**

**"No one gets a bar mitzvah in this town without my say-so. Is that clear?"**

"Big Milt" Wasserman

Things were wild in the Western town of Elk Spring.

Merchants were helpless when Daniel "The Lion" Levy demanded new suits, no charge. Restaurant owners cowered at the approach of Moses "Matzah Man" Goldwater and his endless cries for free matzah pot pies and coffee.

Then a stranger dressed in black came to town, a stranger with plans to deliver justice using "only the weapons of wisdom, kindness, and humor."

It's Rabbi Harvey, the wisest man in the west. He can solve any dispute, answer any question, and even cure a boy who thinks he's a chicken.

In one of my favorite Rabbi-tales, the wealthy Mr. Katz has lost his wallet. It is found by the town's wheelwright, Will Brown. He is tempted to keep the money inside, but decides instead to return it to its

rightful owner. Instead of being grateful, Katz thinks the wheel maker a schmuck for not keeping the money, and plans to have a little fun.

*"There's only two hundred dollars in here. I had three hundred dollars when I lost it."* he exclaims.

What is there to do besides head to the Rabbi for a ruling?

*"Mr. Katz's wallet contained three hundred dollars. Mr. Brown found a wallet with only two hundred.*

*Clearly, we have two different wallets here. No one claimed the wallet with two hundred dollars, so it goes back to its finder, Will Brown."* is the Rabbi's decision. Katz goes home empty-handed, but perhaps a little wiser for his troubles.

Most of the cartoon tales in the book are humorous, though when the Rabbi sets up his "Stump the Rabbi" booth at the Spring Fair, things unexpectedly get a little "deep." One young man asks him, "...say I wanted to carry a card in my pocket. Something that would remind me of what is important. What would I write on the card?"

The Rabbi's answer?

*"On one side of the card, write: The universe was created for me. On the other side, write: I was created from dust."*

The last question of the day proves to be the most difficult, when a boy asks, *"Slavery, the Civil War, stealing land from Indians...How could all these things happen in our country? I don't understand where was God?"*

The Rabbi appears almost stumped for a second before he responds with, *"Where were people?"*

Not bad for a guy with a unibrow.

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### **Patrick Weix says**

Aimed at the preteen market, but a fun diversion.

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### **Shira Glassman says**

An American Western retelling of a bunch of Jewish folktales, set in Elk Spring, Colorado, and featuring the kind of "but what if everyone in [not a traditionally Jewish-dominated setting] were Jewish?" shenanigans that I do in my fantasy novels. I like this kind of gimmick because I like it when we get to be *in things*. Not just shtetl-things or Shoah things or New York things. Fantasy, westerns, sci-fi, other parts of our history...

As an example: you know the old gag about outlaws taking over a saloon, intimidating all the lawful residents of the town, and then the good guy/sheriff/whoever bursts in and there's silence, even from the out-of-tune piano? In this book, the leader of the criminals who have taken over the town is at the bar telling a joke, and Rabbi Harvey bursts in and *beats him to the punchline*. Shock; gasp. The same story also has a matzo=cardboard joke, which as you know from "Aviva and the Aliens" in Tales from Outer Lands is always a portkey to my heart. :P

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## **Franky says**

This book definitely has originality and, as the title states, a wittiness to it. Normally I'm not too much into graphic novels, but this worked and thought it was quite well put together. The illustrations were excellent and add an extra dimension to the storytelling. We follow the tales and adventures of Rabbi Harvey, who has a knack for handling dilemmas, riddles and problems, big and small, in Elk Creek, Colorado in the West. He encounters oddball, eccentric characters and seemingly unsolvable situations in his small town; nonetheless, Rabbi Harvey always has an answer for everything. And, let's face it: he's just a fun character to follow.

Not only were the episodes quite entertaining and clever, but there is moral aspect to the tales. I probably enjoyed the first in the series, "Meet Rabbi Harvey", the best, but all were engaging and humorous.

A quick, very enjoyable read and I'll look for more episodes for Rabbi Harvey from this author in the future.

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