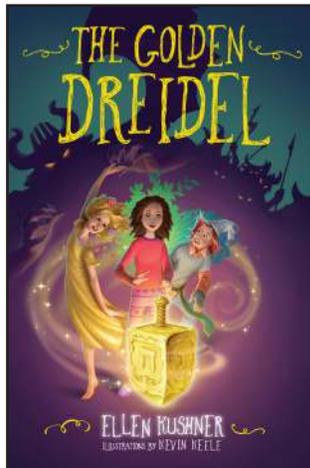


THE GOLDEN DREIDEL ACTIVITY KIT

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Ellen Kushner
Illustrated by Kevin Keele
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e-book available

About the Book

“ . . . fast, furious, and sometimes funny . . . ”
—*Booklist*

Sara wishes her family celebrated Christmas or at least had one of the pretty trees she sees at her friends’ houses. At her family’s big Chanukah party, mysterious guest Tante Miriam gives Sara a one-of-a-kind gift: an enormous golden dreidel. Miriam warns Sara to be careful, for when she spins it, she’s spinning miracles. Sara soon discovers there’s much more to the dreidel than meets the eye, and before long she’s spun herself into a whole new world—one of magical princesses, riddles, and demons. Can Sara discover her wisdom and rely on her courage to help a new friend and find her way back home?



About the Author

Ellen Kushner is the author of several renowned fantasy novels for adults and children, including *Swordspoint*. A writer first, Ellen is also a former NPR radio host and teacher.

About the Illustrator

Kevin Keele is an award-winning professional illustrator and game designer.

THE GOLDEN DREIDEL

Activity Kit

Discussion Guide

Use these questions to kick off classroom discussion, guide pre-thinking and post-reading responses, or inspire a writing or drawing assignment!

Character Development

1. What is Sara struggling with in Chapter 1? Have you faced a similar conflict in your life? How do her friends and family either contribute to her conflict or seek to help her with it?
2. In what ways does Sara grow and learn throughout the book? Who do you think is responsible for her growth?
3. Sara and Seth have trouble sharing. How does the dreidel game demonstrate the importance of sharing and generosity?

Story and Structure

1. Sara says she hates “stories where [magic] just happened for no reason or didn’t make sense” (37). Do you agree or disagree? Do you think the magic in this story happens for a reason? Does it make sense?
2. Do you have a favorite scene or chapter? Why? If you had to remove one scene from the book, which one would you pick?
3. How do Kevin Keele’s illustrations contribute to Ellen Kushner’s storytelling? Do you have a favorite illustration?
4. Why did the princess’s parents send her to Sara’s world? What do you think of their reason? Does it justify the danger the princess faced? Why or why not?

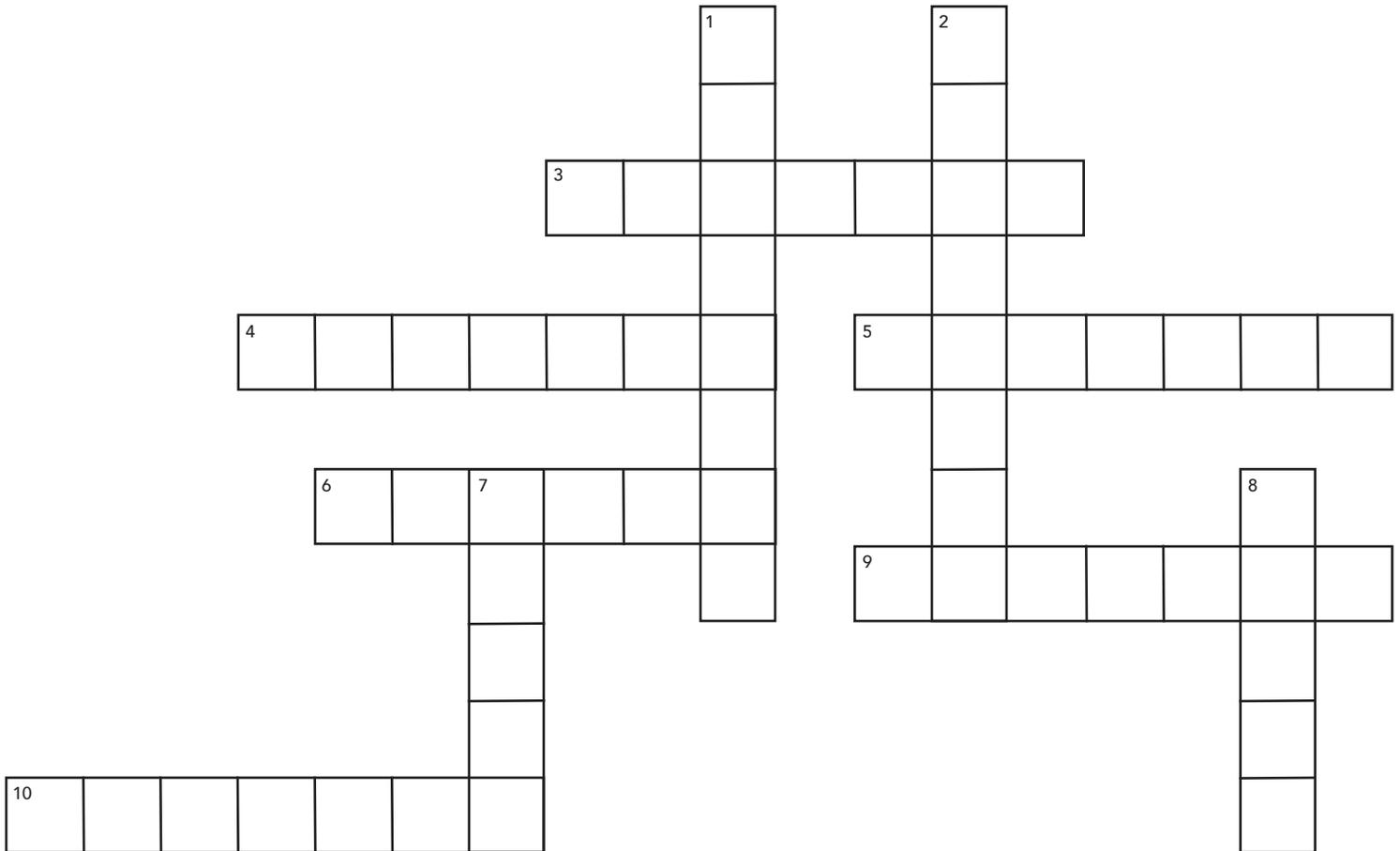
Creative Extensions

1. *The Golden Dreidel* has been adapted into a stage production. If you were to cast a stage production, who would you cast as your favorite character and why?
2. If you could continue the story, what would happen next?
3. Riddles are important to the plot of the story. Do you have a favorite riddle (from the book or elsewhere)? If so, what is it, and why is it your favorite?

THE GOLDEN DREIDEL

Activity Kit

Crossword



Down

1. A mixture of Yiddish and English marked by borrowing from both languages.
2. Also known as the Festival of Lights, celebrated for eight days in early winter.
7. A parchment scroll on which are handwritten the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures.
8. The religious leader of a Jewish congregation.

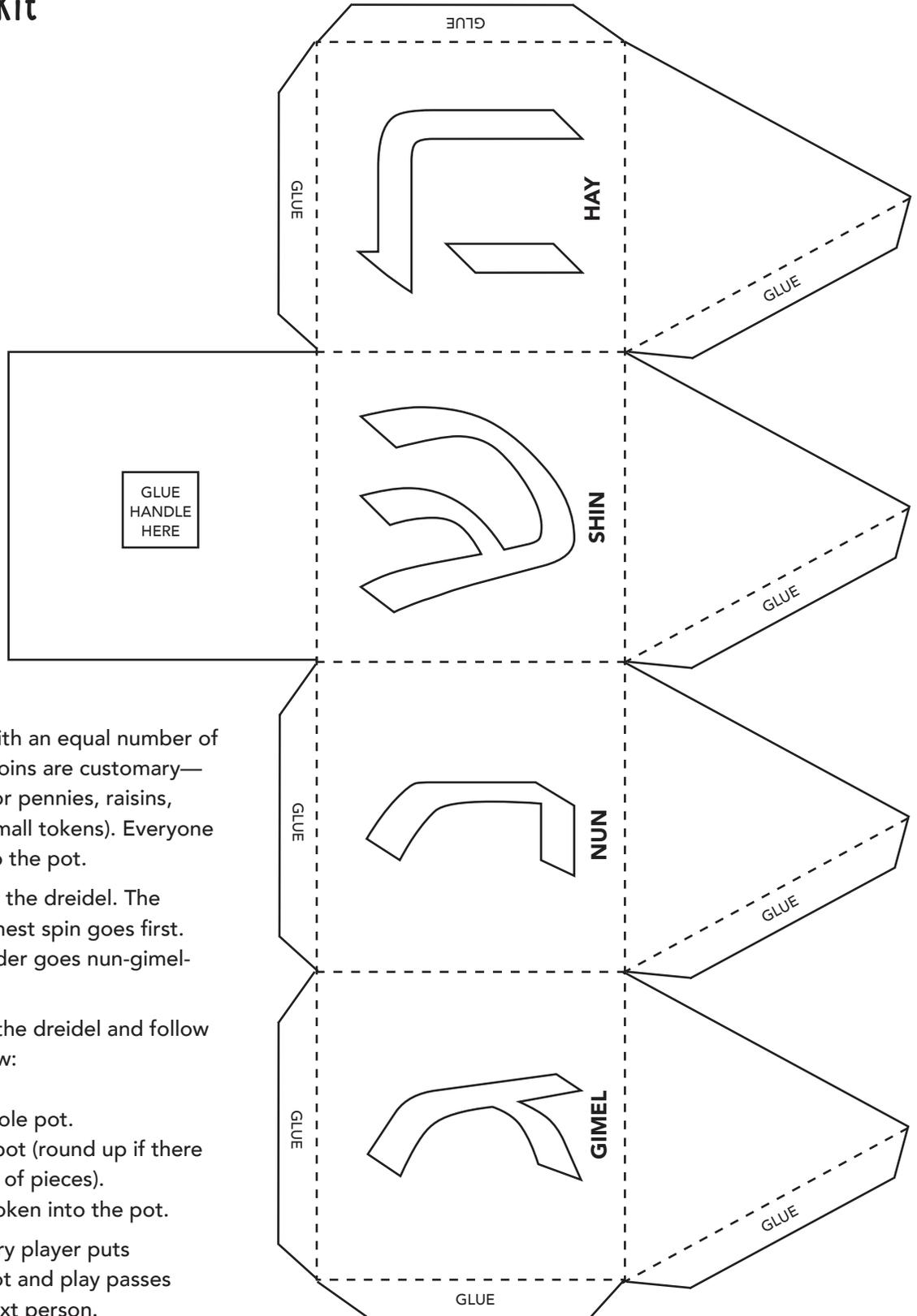
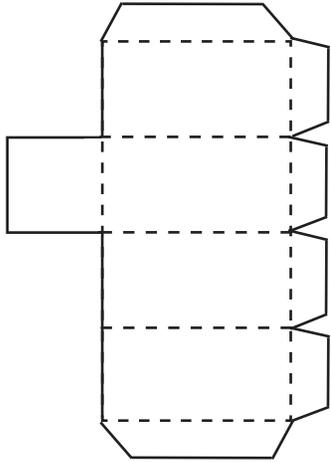
Across

3. A seven-branched candle holder.
4. A four-sided top used to play traditional Chanukah games.
5. An entertainer who keeps things lively.
6. Fried potato pancakes.
9. Saturday, the seventh day and traditional rest day of the Jewish week.
10. A language spoken by Ashkenazi Jews.

THE GOLDEN DREIDEL

Activity Kit

Dreidel Games



Rules of Play

1. All players begin with an equal number of pieces (chocolate coins are customary—you can also play for pennies, raisins, cookies, or other small tokens). Everyone puts one token into the pot.
2. Take turns spinning the dreidel. The player with the highest spin goes first. High to low, the order goes nun-gimel-hey-shin.
3. On your turn, spin the dreidel and follow the directions below:
Nun: Do nothing.
Gimel: Take the whole pot.
Hey: Take half the pot (round up if there are an odd number of pieces).
Shin: Put another token into the pot.
4. After you spin, every player puts one token in the pot and play passes clockwise to the next person.