



An Etrog from Across the Sea

Discussion and Activity Guide

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Illustrated by Stacey Dressen McQueen

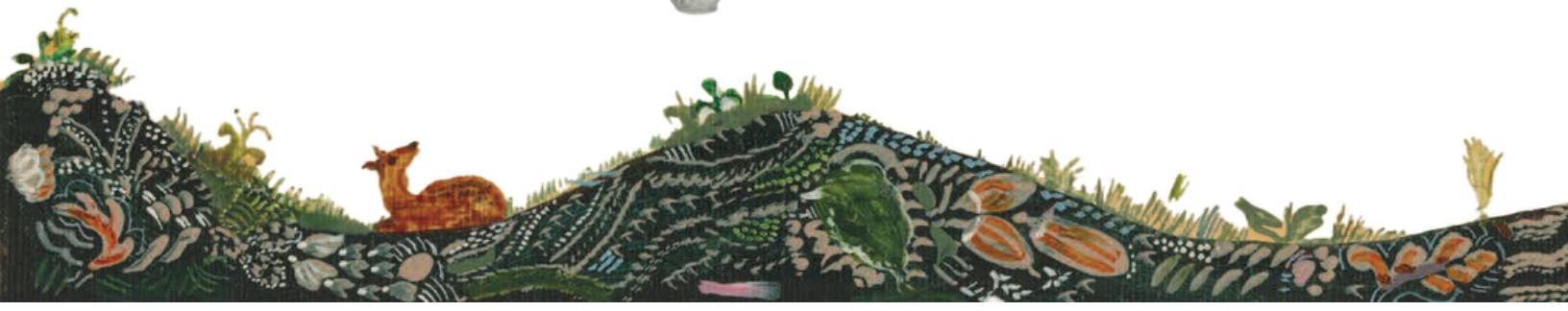
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1. The Gomez family had a silver cup meant for mustard as their etrog holder. Does your family have an important family heirloom? What is it? What is its history? How does your family use it?

2. Take a look at this picture of the actual etrog holder. It was crafted in London to hold mustard. It is now part of the collection of the American Jewish Historical Society.

How would you describe it? What clues do you see about its history? By looking at the etrog holder, what can you tell about Gomez family?





3. Leah worries that something happened to Papa, but Aaron snaps that Papa is fine, just delayed. Why do you think Aaron loses his temper? If you were Leah, how would you respond? Leah is anxious about her father. Do you think Aaron is also? When you get anxious, what helps make you feel calmer?
4. Why does Grandpapa Luis gives Leah the etrog holder? Have you ever received a special gift like this?
5. Leah and Aaron argue some in the book. What do they argue about? It's natural for siblings to argue sometimes. How do you and your siblings or close friend make up after you argue?
6. Leah prefers the rustic, outdoor setting of their homestead in the woods to the hustle and bustle of the city. Why? Do you prefer country, suburban or city living?
7. Because Papa isn't home, Leah and Aaron must take on some new responsibilities. What are some of those responsibilities? How do you help out when the adult(s) in our family are busy or traveling?
8. The illustrations in the book are based on folk art and embroidery for the time period. The illustrator, Stacey Dressen McQueen, researched the art style of the time period extensively to create the book. How would you describe the style? How does it add to the telling of the story?
9. There are many small and detailed images in the illustrations. Can you find one or more: butterfly, rabbit, synagogue, duck, menorah, horse, whale, canoe, hammer, pig, ram, oxen, water wheel, pirate, Shabbat candles. What else can you find?
10. Leah and Aaron are very excited to get a beautiful etrog from Corsica, an island off the coast of France. It is a Sukkot tradition to choose an etrog that is beautiful and smells good. It's based on the value of Hiddur Mitzvah – making the Jewish customs, beautiful. Can you think of other examples of Hiddur Mitzvah? How do you make your Jewish celebrations beautiful?

Explore More:

1. Illustrators do a lot of research before starting to do the art for a book. Learn more about the artwork in an Etrog from Across the Sea and then try to do your own drawing in the style. Interview with illustrator Stacey Dressen McQueen about illustrating the book: <https://www.letstalkpicturebooks.com/2024/07/lets-talk-illustrators-296-stacey.html>
2. The Gomez Mill House is a real place. Visit the website for pictures of the house and its surroundings. How do the pictures compare to the illustrations in the book? The house had many additions after the Gomez family lived there but, if you look closely, you can see the original house. <https://www.gomez.org/>

