

Hershel of Ostropol and the Chanukah Goblins

[Based on *The Adventures of Hershel of Ostropol* and *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins*, both by Eric Kimmel. Script written by Rabbi Amy Scheinerman.]

Cast:

Hershel of Ostropol:

Townsperson (TP) #1:

Townsperson #2:

Townsperson #3:

Rabbi:

Goblin #1:

Goblin #2:

Goblin #3:

King of the Goblins (King):

SCENE 1 *Small village in the mountains. It is wintertime.*

TP #1: Did you hear? Hershel of Ostropol is in town.

TP #2: Hershel of Ostropol? Who is he?

TP #1: Oh, no, he's famous. He travels from village to village and people tell the most amazing stories about him. Once, he had no money to buy food so he went to an inn and demanded food. The innkeeper said he had no food. Hershel said, "If you don't feed me, I'll do what my father did!" The innkeeper was so scared, he fed Hershel a huge meal and didn't ask for payment.

TP #2: Why? What did his father do?

TP #1: Hershel told people the next day that when his father didn't have money and couldn't find food, he went hungry for the night.

TP #3: (enters the scene and joins in the conversation) I heard that Hershel outwitted Count Potocki on many occasions.

TP #2: You're kidding?! No one can outsmart that cheapskate.

TP #3: Hershel did. The Count bet that Hershel couldn't tell him a story the Count wouldn't believe. Hershel told the Count the tallest tale in the world, about a wolf that jumped into the mouth of a bee and ate its way out, clouds that taste like honeycake, and a bee's rib bone long enough to make a slide from heaven to earth. Then he told Count Potocki that his own mother was suffering in Gehenna, punished for bringing him into the world. Before he could think, the Count burst out, "I don't believe you!" Hershel walked away with 1,000 rubles.

TP #2: This Hershel sounds like an amazing fellow. Maybe he can help us. If he can outwit Count Potocki, perhaps he can outwit the goblins who have robbed us of Chanukah.

TP #1: I don't know if anyone is that clever. Here comes the Rabbi. Let's ask him.

Rabbi: Good day. You all look so serious. Has something important happened?

TP #3: Rabbi, we have learned that Hershel of Ostropol is in town and we are thinking that perhaps he can help us. Here it is the first night of Chanukah, and we cannot light a candle, spin a dreidel, or eat a latke.

Rabbi: Ah, I see your point. But the power of the goblins is very great, my friends. I cannot imagine that even Hershel of Ostropol could break the curse they have placed on our village.

Hershel: (walks into stage with a small bundle slung over his shoulder) Shalom aleichem, my friends! How are you today? What a lovely village you have here, but how quiet and dark it is for the first night of Chanukah. Where can a fellow get a good plate of latkes?

Rabbi: Aleichem shalom, my good man. You won't find latkes here. The goblins that haunt the old synagogue on the hill hate Chanukah and they have placed a curse on us.

TP#1: Whenever we try to light a chanukiah, they blow out the candles.

TP #2: When the children play dreidels, they break them.

TP #3: If we cook latkes, they thrown them on the floor.

Rabbi: The goblins make our lives miserable all year long, but especially during Chanukah

Hershel: Goblins don't scare me! Tell me how to get rid of them and then start cooking latkes. I'm getting hungry.

Rabbi: It's not was easy as you think, Hershel. You must spend eight nights in the old synagogue. Each night you must kindle and bless the Chanukah lights. On the eighth night, the King of the Goblins, himself, must kindle the lights. This is the only way to break their power.

Hershel: I'm not afraid, Rabbi. If I can't outwit a few goblins, my name isn't Hershel of Ostropol.

SCENE 2 *A short time later, in the same public area of the small village.*

TP #1: Hershel, we have prepared some supplies for you. Here is a chanukiah, candles, and matches.

TP #2: And here are some hard-boiled eggs to eat.

TP #3: This jar of pickles is for you, too.

Rabbi: Take care of yourself, Hershel.

SCENE 3 *The old synagogue on the hill. It is a crumbling and gloomy building, dark and frightening.*

Hershel: (Opening the squeaky door) Well, here I go. (Hershel places the chanukiah on a small table, puts a candle and shammas in it, and strikes a match)

Goblin #1: Hey, what are you doing?

Hershel: I'm lighting Chanukah candles. It is the first night of Chanukah.

Goblin #1: Oh, no, not around here it's not.

Hershel: Who's going to stop me? A pip-squeak like you?

Goblin #1: I may be small, but I'm strong.

Hershel: How strong are you? Can you crush rocks in your bare hands?

Goblin #1: You can really crush rocks in your bare hands? No! Couldn't be! Nobody's that strong!

Hershel: Watch me! (Hershel crushes one of the hard-boiled eggs in his hands.)

Goblin #1: Leave me alone! (Goblin flies away in fear.)

Hershel: Gladly. (Hershel lights first Chanukah candle and recites blessings.)

(SIGN: "THE SECOND NIGHT OF CHANUKAH")

Hershel: Ah, delicious. Pickles and hard-boiled eggs. Not as good as latkes, but it will do.

Goblin #2: (entering) What are *you* doing here? Get out!

Hershel: Here, catch! (throws him a pickle)

Goblin #2: Mmmm! This is a good pickle.

Hershel: Kosher sour dill. Want more? I have plenty in this jar. Take all you like. (Hershel holds out the jar.)

Goblin #2: Gee, thanks. (Goblin shoves his hand in the jar and his hand becomes caught; he cannot get it out.) I'm stuck! You put a spell on me so I can't get my hand out!

Hershel: That's right, I put a very powerful spell on you. You came to prevent me from lighting Chanukah candles tonight, so I'm going to force you to watch me light them. How do you like that?

Goblin #2: No, no, anything but that! I *hate* Chanukah!

Hershel: (Lights candles and recites blessings.) And now, shall I tell you how to break the spell?

Goblin #2: Yes, yes, I can't stand it any longer!

Hershel: Let go of the pickles. Your greed is the only spell holding you prisoner. (Goblins lets go of pickles, frees himself from the jar, and flies away in a rage.)

(SIGN: "THIRD NIGHT OF CHANUKAH")

Hershel: (Hershel is setting candles in the chanukiah.) I hear you.

Goblin #3: When are you going to light the candles?

Hershel: Later. There's plenty of time. Want to play dreidel? It's fun and you can win lots of money?

Goblin #3: Win money? Sure. I love gold. How do you play?

Hershel: First you have to have lots of gold. Do you have gold?

Goblin #3: Sure. (Dumps pile of gold onto the table.) Is this enough?

Hershel: Fine. Now we use this little top. It's simple. Listen carefully. We spin the top. If the letter *shin* comes up, you give me a handful of gold. If the letter *hay* comes up,

you give me half your gold. If *gimel* comes up, you give me all your gold. Get it?

Goblin #3: Wait. There's one more letter.

Hershel: Oh, yes, that's *nun*. If the dreidel falls with *nun* up, I don't give you anything. Ready? Let's play.

(Goblin #3 spins dreidel. Top lands with *shin* up.)

Hershel: Too bad. You give me a handful of gold.

(Goblin #3 spins dreidel. Top lands with *hay* up.)

Hershel: That's a *hay*. You give me a half your gold.

(Goblin #3 spins dreidel. Top lands with *gimel* up.)

Hershel: You're not having good luck tonight. *Gimel*. You give me all your gold.

(Goblin #3 spins dreidel. Top lands with *nun* up.)

Hershel: Well, that's that. I don't give you anything. Too bad. Want to get more gold and play again?

Goblin #3: No! I hate dreidel. I hate Chanukah, and I hate you! (Goblin starts to fly off.)

Hershel: Oh, don't go! I know more games. We'll have fun.

(Hershel lights chanukiah and recites blessings.)

(SIGN: "EIGHTH NIGHT OF CHANUKAH")

Hershel: (Hershel sits beside table. The chanukiah, with candles in it. sit on the table and matches lie beside the chanukiah.) Well, I've seen just about every size and shape of goblin I could imagine. It's the last night of Chanukah. Tonight the King of the Goblins, himself, will come to try to prevent me from lighting the Chanukah candles.

King: HERSHEL OF OSTROPOL!

Hershel: Did I hear something?

King: IT IS I, THE KING OF THE GOBLINS!

Hershel: Don't be silly. It's one of the village boys trying to scare me.

King: I AM THE KING OF THE GOBLINS!

Hershel: I don't believe you.

King: BEHOLD! I STAND BEFORE YOU. DO YOU BELIEVE ME NOW?

Hershel: It's too dark. I can't see anything. There are matches on that table. Why don't you light one of those candles so I can see who you are?

King: INDEED YOU SHALL! (King of Goblins lights one candle.)

Hershel: You know, it's still dark, why don't you light a few more candles.

King: (King of Goblins lights the remaining candles.) NOW, HERSHEL, DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

Hershel: I know you're not Queen Esther.

King: VERY FUNNY. THIS JOKE WILL BE YOUR LAST.

Hershel: That's what you think. Be gone, or I'll kick you out.

King: HOW DARE YOU SPEAK TO THE KING OF GOBLINS THAT WAY!

Hershel: I'll speak any way I want. You, yourself, have lit all the Chanukah candles on the last night of Chanukah. And now I shall say the blessings. (Hershel recites blessings.) Your spell is broken. You have no power over me. Be gone with you!

King: (Rants and raves, then flies away.)

TP #1-4 and Rabbi enter, carrying plates of latkes and dreidels:
Thank you, Hershel, you have saved Chanukah for us.