

Shabsie The Snowman

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Ari and Shonnie Siegel were delighted to see the fresh snow on the ground. As they waited for the school bus to come to take them to their Yeshivos, Ari said, "I'm going to build a snowman when we come home. Do you want to help me?"

"Sure," Shonnie answered. "That's what I always want to do when I see snow falling, but there just hasn't been enough snow until now."

That afternoon, after the children had come home from their Yeshivos, they left their books in the house and started to make the snowman. First they each made a little snowball. Then they rolled the little snowballs in the snow on the ground until they grew bigger... and BIGger... and BIGGER!

The children then put one big round snowball on the ground, another on top of the first, and a third on top of the second.

They formed the bottom one to look like the snowman's feet, the second as his body, and the one on top became his head.

Little Miriam and Moshe from next door joined them to decorate the snowman. In a little while, two big buttons became the snow-man's eyes, and a carrot became his nose. A little hole in the top snowball became his mouth, and into that mouth went an old smoking-pipe. A tall yarmulke fit just right on the snowman's head, and an old tie seemed made to order for his "sparkling white shirt." The children set up a shovel on his right side, and made him look as if he were holding it.

Moshe, who was rather good at making poems, thought the snow-man deserved a new verse. All the children listened as he sang:

"Late this winter the snow fell down.

We built a snowman on the ground.

We put a pipe into his mouth,

And Erev Shabbos we'll take it out!"

"If our snowman is going to keep Shabbos, let's give him a Jewish name," suggested Shonnie.

"Right!" agreed Ari. "How about Shabsie?"

Everyone agreed to it, and the snowman on the Siegel's front yard became Shabsie the Snow-man.

All that week the children played with Shabsie every minute they could. Once they took the shovel out of his hand, and put in a flag instead to make believe it was

Simchas Torah. Another time they replaced it with a gragger to pretend it was Purim. A third time they gave him a dreidel, as though it were Chanukah. Shabsie was happy because he was a Yiddishe snowman, and the children played Yiddishe games with him. The children, too, were happy and had lots of fun with him.

But then something happened that made Shabsie the Snowman almost melt with worry.

When the children came home from Yeshiva on Friday, they had no time at all to play with him, and they ran right into their houses without even looking at him. That Friday happened to be one of the shortest Fridays of the year and the children had to rush to get ready for Shabbos. All of their Erev Shabbos jobs were waiting to be done. They had to help their mother clean and shop. They had to take their baths and dress in their Shabbos clothes. So they did not even give the snowman a thought. They even forgot to take the smoking-pipe out of his mouth!

Poor Shabsie was so worried. He remembered the song the children sang when they first made him — about taking the pipe out of his mouth Erev Shabbos. He knew a Jew should not smoke on Shabbos, and time was moving so fast. It was almost Shabbos now, and he still had the pipe in his mouth. He realized the children could not play with him Erev Shabbos, and he did not mind that — because they had so much to do themselves. He was happy to wait for them to play with him when they would have time. All he wanted was for one of them just to take the pipe out of his mouth. He was glad that the shovel was no longer in his hand, so that no one would think he was working on Shabbos! But, —

“Dear, oh dear, what shall I do with the pipe?” he thought.

He looked at the sky and noticed that the sun had almost set; and, filled with worry and fear, he began to daven.

“Dear Ribono Shel Olam,” pleaded the snowman. “When I was just a little puddle of water on earth, I was content with my lot. I would have been happy to let the little birds splash around in me forever.

Then You lifted me up to heaven and turned me into a cloud, and I was happy to be one. I would have been satisfied to be a cloud and glide across the sky like a soft, white, cotton ball forever.

“Then You changed me into tiny little snowflakes and made me fall to earth again. I was happy to become snowflakes and would have been pleased to be just white snow forever. When You saw how much the Yiddishe children wanted to make a snow-man, You let them make a snowman out of me... I’m happy to be a Yiddishe snowman. I’m happy to be anything You want, anything at all... But I’m sure, Dear Father in Heaven, that You didn’t do all those things to me just so that I should do something Your Torah says a Jew mustn’t do on Shabbos!”

Shabsie’s eyes started to melt into tears, as the last rays of the setting sun shone on, him. But though he was melting, no one came to take the pipe out.

Finally, he sighed.

"Dear Father in Heaven, I am so sad and worried and afraid that all of me will melt away, but still I would rather melt for the sake of Your Name, than to smoke on Shabbos!"

And he cried without stopping.

Just at that moment a wonderful thing happened. Mr. Siegel was about to go to Shul when Ari said, "Daddy, can I go to Shul with you? I'm all ready. All I have to do is put on my hat, coat, and boots."

"Well," Mr. Siegel said, "it will be very cold tonight ... but... all right."

So Ari hurried, and left with his father to go to Shul.

When they stopped outside and were about to pass Shabsie, Ari noticed that the pipe was still in his snowman's mouth.

"Daddy!" said Ari, "Can you please wait just one more minute? I can't let Shabsie have a pipe in his mouth on Shabbos!"

So Ari took the pipe out of the snowman's mouth, ran in to put the pipe away, and then ran out again as quickly as he could to join his father. As he passed Shabsie, a north wind began to blow to freeze the snowman for the night, so Ari could not hear the snowman whisper, "Good Shabbos, Ari, and thank you very much."

