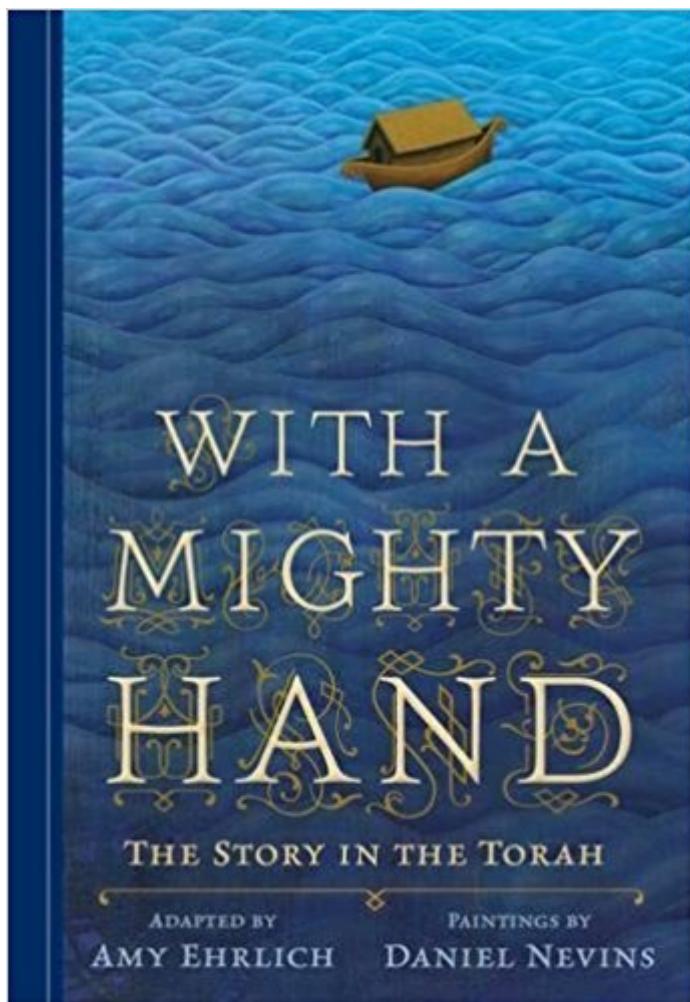


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# With A Mighty Hand: The Story In The Torah



## **Synopsis**

Amy Ehrlich retains the beauty, drama, and mystery of the Torah in this unique adaptation, gorgeously illustrated with paintings by Daniel Nevins. The Torah is the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, which Christians call the Old Testament. It tells the story of the beginning of the Jewish people and their relationship with God. From Adam and Eve to the first patriarch, Abraham, to Moses, who led his people to the promised land, the stories in the Torah have been studied and revered since it was first written down nearly 3,000 years ago. Now in this glorious volume, Amy Ehrlich crafts an authentic, lyrical adaptation that is presented as a continuous narrative, one that honors the complexities of the original text. Daniel Nevins' richly hued paintings bring the ancient wonders of the Torah to resonant life, making this truly a gift to savor, share, and treasure. Back matter includes notes, and a bibliography, and an artist's note. Including: an author's introduction, a genealogy of the Torah, a map of the region, annotated endnotes, a bibliography, and an artist's note.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 9 and up

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 12

## **Customer Reviews**

\*Starred Review\* No one has ever claimed the Torah, the first five books of the Jewish Bible, is always easy to understand. Rather, the complexity and nuance have made the Torah a subject of constant contemplation, interpretation, and argument for more than 2,000 years. How then to

present this venerable work to young people? Of course, there are many versions of the simpler, most dramatic stories. But anyone with even a cursory knowledge of the Torah knows that much of it is confounding, archaic, and, in some cases, like the binding of Isaac, deeply disturbing. So veteran writer Ehrlich has taken on a mammoth job -- and she handles it impressively. In an extended introduction, both thoughtful and personal, she explains her way forward was *à oëto* follow the thread of the story, *à •* which means focusing on those stalwart figures, from Adam and Eve to Moses. Although the language is adapted for young people, and the more legalistic books, like Deuteronomy, are shortened, the stories remain intact, and nothing is sugarcoated. The dramatic nature of the stories demands impressive artwork, and Nevins provides it. The full-page pictures, mostly colored in the hues of desert sands and skies, feature sturdy characters, almost as if, like Adam, they're molded from clay. Much care has been taken with the book's dignified design. This version of the Torah will elicit thousands of questions, as it always has. It will be up to readers to form their own answers, and this is where they become coauthors with God. Grades 5-8. --Ilene Cooper

So beautiful and new. Ehrlich's transcendent verse . . . renders these familiar stories as shocking, perplexing and remarkably compelling *à* just as they always have been. *à* "Kirkus Reviews (starred review)[V]eteran writer Ehrlich has taken on a mammoth job -- and she handles it impressively. ... Although the language is adapted for young people, and the more legalistic books, like Deuteronomy, are shortened, the stories remain intact, and nothing is sugarcoated. The dramatic nature of the stories demands impressive artwork, and Nevins provides it. The full-page pictures, mostly colored in the hues of desert sands and skies, feature sturdy characters, almost as if, like Adam, they're molded from clay. Much care has been taken with the book's dignified design. This version of the Torah will elicit thousands of questions, as it always has. *à* "Booklist (starred review)[Ehrlich] has ... [broken] up the detailed text and giv[en] it more appeal to young people. Yet the integrity of the biblical tales, the sacred feel of the text, and the flow of ancient history remain intact. .... Nevins' handsome, richly colored oil on wood paintings, freely scattered throughout the pages, range in style from graphic renderings of the burning bush to a surrealist depiction of Jacob wrestling with God. ... This beautifully executed adaptation deserves strong consideration for Judaica and public library collections. *à* "School Library Journal (starred review)A child poring over these handsomely designed pages, made vivid with Daniel Nevins's autumn-toned paintings, will get a sense of the importance of lineage and ceremony in the Jewish faith without having to struggle through complicated dietary laws or confusing lists of

"begats." The Wall Street Journal Ehrlich succeeds admirably in an ambitious effort to "write a version of the Torah" by teasing out the narrative thread of Yahweh's covenant with Israel and following it "through thickets of genealogy, law, and ritual." ... Beautiful craftsmanship makes this an excellent title for gift giving, but consider it also as a wonderful selection for young people who would like to reconnect their scriptural puzzle pieces into one vibrant picture. Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books This is not your typical children's illustrated Bible. Veteran author Amy Ehrlich's *With A Mighty Hand* elevates the genre for all ages. Ehrlich retells the five books of Moses in language that is poetic, rhythmic, sophisticated, and accessible. The beauty of the words is matched by the stunning illustrations, each one a midrash on the texts. This Torah adaptation is a treasure! Cantor Angela W. Buchdahl, Central Synagogue, New York, NY *With a Mighty Hand* is incredibly moving. The love and respect and joy that went into its making from the author and the artist and everyone involved just rises off the page. Truly, the book invites the reader into a pause, a hush, and an entirely awesome kind of journey. This is Candlewick magic at its finest. Gigi Amateau, author of *Come August, Come Freedom* [A] beautiful book to look at: Daniel Nevins's paintings are lively and provocative. I've never seen a more arresting manifestation of Jacob's all-night wrestling match; I looked at the rainbow illustration of the burning bush for a full minute before turning the page. ... [I]t would have been nice, growing up, to have a volume like 'With a Mighty Hand': visually pleasing and stripped of confusing matter that could threaten any child's understanding, attention span and ultimate captivation. 'With a Mighty Hand' is a great transitional Torah -- something between an illustrated book of Bible stories for children and the full heft of the actual Five Books of Moses, still told in its own words, on its own terms, making what was once intimidating palatable. The New York Times Book Review This is a beautiful example of fine bookmaking, from the embossed dust jacket to the thick, lush pages, wide margins and golden design at the corner of every page. Greensboro News & Record *With a Mighty Hand* retells the stories in the Bible illustrated with expressive, richly colored paintings by Daniel Nevins. ... Each Parasha is described clearly and concisely making the Torah and ancient Jewish history more understandable to the young reader. The essence of each of the Torah personalities is eloquently presented and clearly communicated, resulting in a greater understanding of Jewish heritage. Jewish Book World

Beautifully illustrated

Gorgeous book. The art work for the illustrations is breathtaking. A wonderful addition to any

household, Jewish or not.

Daniel Nevins' creative illustrations give the reader an entirely new way to experience these timeless stories Torah / Old Testament stories.

I am looking forward to giving this as a gift at holiday time. Not only is the book beautifully laid out but the illustrations are gorgeous.

Love the retelling of well known stories, and the illustrations are amazing. I highly recommend to all, especially children will enjoy.

When I received a review copy of *With a Mighty Hand: The Story in the Torah*, I swooned. At a time when the printed word seems to be hanging in the balance, and the Nones (those with no religious affiliation) are a newsworthy phenomenon, it was more than heartening to read this beautiful volume, an illustrated retelling of Bible stories. In hardback no less! Candlewick Press deserves high praise for publishing this beautiful volume. In author Amy Ehrlich's capable hands, the stories in the Torah (the Hebrew Bible) come to life in vivid prose that hews quite close to the original text. Ehrlich distills the Five Books of Moses into a single narrative. Children's bible stories often focus on those passages rich with visual potential--while skipping the darker side of these stories. This is not your father's Golden Bible version. Ehrlich presents the Torah in full: animals marching two by two and Noah drunk from wine, exposed in nakedness to his son Ham. Recounted are the days of creation as well as Adam and Eve's blame-shifting conversation with God after they ate the forbidden fruit. What an opportunity to talk to a child about taking responsibility for one's actions and the all-too-human tendency to lay blame elsewhere. Reading the Tree of Knowledge chapter this time around, I saw something new in the text. The serpent's punishment is to crawl upon the ground, metaphorically eating dust all the days of his life. Dust figures in Adam's fate as well: He will not live forever but will return to dust. Eve, however, is punished not with dust, nor with bearing children in pain as I have always understood it. She is punished with a multiplication of the pain of her childbirth. This passage, as presented by Ehrlich, raises two questions. What does it mean that Eve's punishment has nothing to do with dust? And second, was Eve's punishment lighter than Adam's and the snake's? Admittedly, childbirth is no walk in the park, but the text seems to be telling us that God would multiply a pain that was already Eve's destiny come childbirth. The snake lost its legs, left to crawl belly-to-dirt for all time and Adam lost eternal life in the Garden, both

consequences that had no mirror pre-forbidden fruit. Daniel Nevins, the artist chosen to illustrate the book, has done glorious work. His paintings have a depth and solidity in both his figures and in his color palette that echo well the seriousness of the text. There is poignancy, too. Nevins' illustration of Moses, post Golden Calf, is heart-breaking. The father of this wayward tribe of Hebrews kneels prostrate upon the ground, his staff and the tablets are strewn upon the earth beside him. Moses, one hand on the ground, one resting upon the back of his head, holds a posture of such submission and defeat that one can almost hear him weeping in fury and frustration. Nevins rendered the splitting of the Sea of Reeds as a double-page spread with the yabasha, the dry ground, turning the interior of the book's spine into part of the Israelites' path to freedom. The whitecaps of the waves reach like hands from the confines of the pages. He was a marvelous choice to bring these stories to visual life. There are any number of reasons why I'm eager for grandchildren one day. With a Mighty Hand gives me another reason. I dream of quiet afternoons and evenings reading portions of this beautiful book with them, visiting and revisiting the text, exploring the illustrations, discussing the moral issues inherent in each chapter. The Hebrew Bible is a storybook like no other, as relevant today as the day it was given, because its stories speak to us all. I look forward to the day it speaks to my children's children. May God bless me so.

The work of this book is very commendable as too many families are failing to transmit Judaism and Torah to their children. The illustrations are excellent. It's well written but I have to take one major issue with the book that greatly bothers me. That issue is the transliteration of G-d's name. Much like when we read Torah or any of our liturgy with the actual name of G-d we substitute it with one of many titles. (Adonai, Adoshem, Elokim, HaShem, etc etc) This observance is done out of reverence for G-d's holy name. By printing the name transliterated using the English alphabet it leads the high potential for the disrespectful or casual use of G-d's name. I know most people who are buying this book are probably either not Jewish or more on the secular side. However on the path to learning or teaching Torah respect for the name of G-d is a very important issue. After all it's one of the mitzvot found in the ten commandments to not use the name in vain. Ironic that in a book teaching Torah this mitzvah is over looked. We received this book as a gift but I'm still not sure if I will use this book for our children for this one issue. Should we use the book we will do the same as we do in Hebrew and when coming across the name we will replace it with Adonai. Perhaps the first mitzvah to be taught before embarking on this read.

I was very impressed with this book. It's written by someone who is in love with the Scriptures! The

text is very close to the original -- although it is written for children. While reading it, my heart kept burning within me. I saw this first in the public library. I then ordered it for my grandchildren. I am an evangelical Christian. My two grandchildren are Jewish -- both of them on the bar mitzvah track. My grandson will be bar mitzvahed this June. He's taking the preparations very seriously. I do hope that **WITH A MIGHTY HAND** will be a great blessing to both grandchildren. The book is written with such love! Surely, surely, we do have a God who moves **WITH A MIGHTY HAND!**

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