

Warm Stories For Families

Izzy Abrahmson's WINTER BLESSINGS Transmits Joy

If you're not Jewish, you might think the holiday of Hanukkah is a lot like Christmas. It comes around the same time of year, there are lights and there are presents. Sometimes it's even spelled with a Ch.

If you are Jewish, you may think Chanukah is a minor festival that's fun, but often celebrated with too much fried food and overburdened by commercialization.

Izzy Abrahmson's WINTER BLESSINGS gives the holiday an old fashioned spin that feels good and makes sense today. Humorous and heartwarming, it will delight readers of all ages, religions and backgrounds.

"In The Village, Chanukah comes too early or too late," Izzy explains. "It's always a surprise, so it shouldn't be shocking that the Schlemiel family actually invented the Chanukah present."

One year, little Shemini Schlemiel storms into her house and demands, "I want a Christmas Present!" This is met by shocked silence, which eventually produces a transformation from greed to the joy of giving.

Another year, the weather gets so cold that the light on the eternal flame in the village synagogue freezes solid.

"Chanukah almost didn't happen," Izzy says. "Candles and matches snapped, and everybody just wanted to stay in bed. Fortunately, Rabbi Kibbitz had a dream that saved the day."

And what about Mrs. Chaipul's nauseating potato pancakes? As *The New York Times* wrote, "The Lethal Latkes is not a murder mystery. It concerns some awful-tasting latkes, and what you might call another Hanukkah miracle: love."

WINTER BLESSINGS shapes a dozen stories and a novella into a delightful collection that made it a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award for Family Literature. It is a perfect read both for adults and families with children.

The audiobook is narrated by Audie-award nominated storyteller Mark Binder.

This is a book that you and your family will read and listen to again and again.



WINTER BLESSINGS

by Izzy Abrahmson

124 Pages

release date October 17, 2021

Fiction • Humor • Judaica

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Celebrating “The Village Life”

Izzy Abrahmson’s award-winning series returns

Izzy Abrahmson started writing stories about The Village as the editor of a weekly for-profit Jewish newspaper. Yes, there was such a thing.

Today, Light Publications is pleased to announce the re-release of revised and expanded editions of the first four volumes in Izzy’s award-winning “Village Life” series, with plans for a newly-rediscovered fifth volume appearing in the fall of 2022.

“The Village is a community that never really existed, but should have,” Izzy explained in an interview. “You’ll meet and get to know the Schlemiel twins, Reb Cantor the Merchant, Mrs. Chaipul the caterer, Doodle the orphan, Rachel Cohen the genius, and of course the famous Rabbi Kibbitz.”

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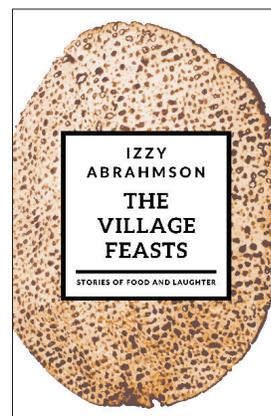
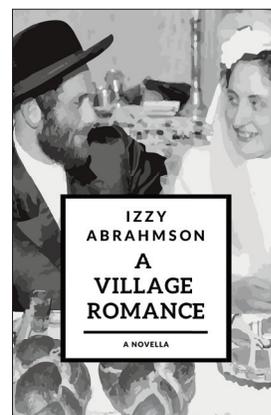
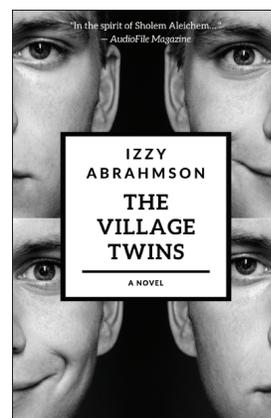
THE VILLAGE TWINS was the first novel to be simultaneously serialized in newspapers and world-wide via email. Abraham and Adam Schlemiel are so identical that their parents, teachers and eventually their wives can’t tell them apart. A comedy written for adults 13-103.

A VILLAGE ROMANCE The caterer, Mrs. Chaipul and wise Rabbi Kibbitz have known each other for years. Finally they get together. Then the problems start. A novella for adults. Short and sweet.

THE VILLAGE FEASTS Every Passover there’s something else! The Gold family can’t afford the price of matzah, spring rains burst the dam on the Bug River, and would anyone really eat matzah made out of cabbage? A humorous collection for families, now with 20% more stories.

“Twenty years ago, the Village Life series broke ground by using cutting edge technology to transmit timeless and joyful stories around the world,” explained Stephen Brendan, editor at Light Publications. “Today, we’re re-issuing updated versions of the books so that a new generation of readers can enjoy the books. We’re also releasing warm and friendly audiobook editions narrated by Mark Binder, an Audie Audiobook Award Nominee.”

“Like rye bread, you don’t have to be Jewish to enjoy them,” Izzy says. “These books are written for people of all backgrounds. Though set in the past, the themes are contemporary, and the humor is universal. I’ve always claimed that the books are Jewish like Faulkner is Southern—but with a lot more laughs.”



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About the Author and Narrator

Izzy Abrahmson is the author of the award-winning *Village Life* series, and pen name for Mark Binder

Mark Binder is a professional storyteller, and the author more than two-dozen books for adults, children and families. He has been nominated for the National Jewish Book Award for Family Literature, the Audie Audiobook Award for Best Original Work, and won a Parents' Choice Gold Award for audio storytelling. He has toured the world delighting readers and listeners of all ages with his stories interspersed with his unique klezmer harmonica sounds.



Mark began writing “The Village Life” stories while working as the editor of *The Rhode Island Jewish Herald*. Over the years, stories from “The Village” have been published in more than 50 newspapers and magazines around the world. **THE VILLAGE TWINS** was originally serialized from 1999 to 2001 in *The Jewish Herald Voice (Houston)*. An early edition was published as *The Brothers Schlemiel (Jewish Publications Society, YA, abridged)*.



A performer with more than twenty years of programs in theaters, festivals, schools, libraries, and community centers across the United States. He has twice toured in Europe and is featured in the Amazon/Audible series, “Story Party Live.”

A graduate of Columbia University, (BA, 1984) Mark studied mythology with *T.E. Gaster* and storytelling with Spalding Gray. He trained with the Adaptors Movement Theater (1985-87). He earned an MA in English and Writing, Acting and Directing from Rhode Island College and the Trinity Rep Conservatory (1990). He holds a third degree black belt in Aikido, has trained in centering and internal martial arts, and promises not to throw you across the room.

During COVID, Mark’s play, **THE RACE**, was produced by The Wilbury Group Theatre, and was the longest-running live theater performance on Zoom.

Mark has twice run for political office, and came frighteningly close to winning once.

For more info: <https://markbinderbooks.com> and <https://izzyabe.com>

For latest media kit, covers and images: <https://lightpublications.com/media>



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About “The Village Life” Reboot

Why are we reissuing Izzy Abrahamson’s award-winning “The Village Life” series?

“Any book you haven’t read is a new book.” – Izzy Abrahamson

Intrepid journalists recently asked us two questions about WINTER BLESSINGS: “Is this a new 2021 title?” and “Why the nom de plume?”

No... WINTER BLESSINGS is a new version of the book from 2011*. It’s been reedited, revised, and has a new ending.

And yes. The WINTER BLESSINGS audiobook is brand new!

Here’s the backstory...

In March 2020, Mark Binder (more about the pen name in a moment) was on a storytelling and book tour in Europe promoting A VILLAGE ROMANCE.* Then... Covid.

During the lockdowns, Mark went into the studio to work on the then unrecorded audiobooks. In the years since publishing the originals, he’s become both a professional storyteller and an Audie Award nominated narrator. As he read, he began to pen changes in the original texts. He also rediscovered a “lost fifth book” called COUNCIL OF WISE WOMEN.

We started looking at the series, and then Mark proposed using a pen name to distinguish the series from his other work. By combining his Hebrew name, Isaac, with his father’s Hebrew name, Abraham... Izzy Abrahamson was born.

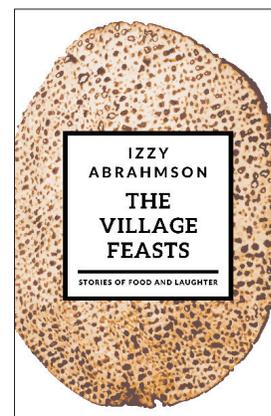
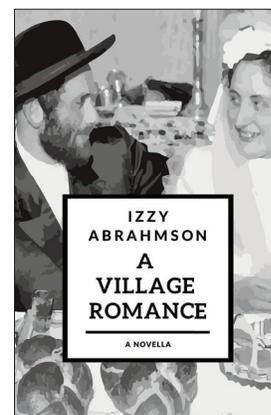
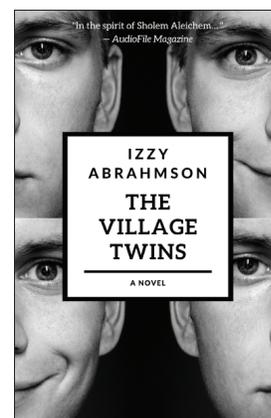
A VILLAGE ROMANCE stayed pretty much the same, but with a beautiful new cover. THE VILLAGE FEASTS was expanded with two new stories, plus a new audiobook. THE VILLAGE TWINS was tweaked and prodded, and we’re going to be serializing the audiobook as a weekly podcast simultaneous with the book’s release in Jan. 2022.

In a time of uncertainty, *The Village Life* books are timeless and therefore timely. Rich with vivid characters, they tell fun, heartwarming and powerful stories and take us to a place that we wished existed, and through the written (and spoken) word lives in our imaginations. They are, it goes without saying, written to be enjoyed by people of all faiths and backgrounds.

Thanks for listening. Let us know what you think.

- Stephen Brendan, Light Publications

*See next page: **A Brief History of “The Village Life”**



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*A Brief History of “The Village Life”

Izzy Abrahamson’s award-winning series returns

Like Dickens, Dostoyevsky, and Singer, Izzy Abramson’s novel about identical twins living in The Village was first published weekly in the *Houston Jewish Herald Voice*, and simultaneously distributed using the latest technology.

“Wired Words/Electric Prose... Weekly installments... are short enough to read easily on the screen and they carry readers into an on-going story. Modern readers unfamiliar with such classic serial writers as Dickens and Dostoyevsky may liken the experience to watching a TV sitcom or drama,” – *The Providence Phoenix*

Today, Light Publications is pleased to announce the republication of the first four books in Izzy Abrahamson’s “The Village Life” series, with a brand new novel coming in 2022.

Series order and timeline

The Village Life Books can be read in any order!

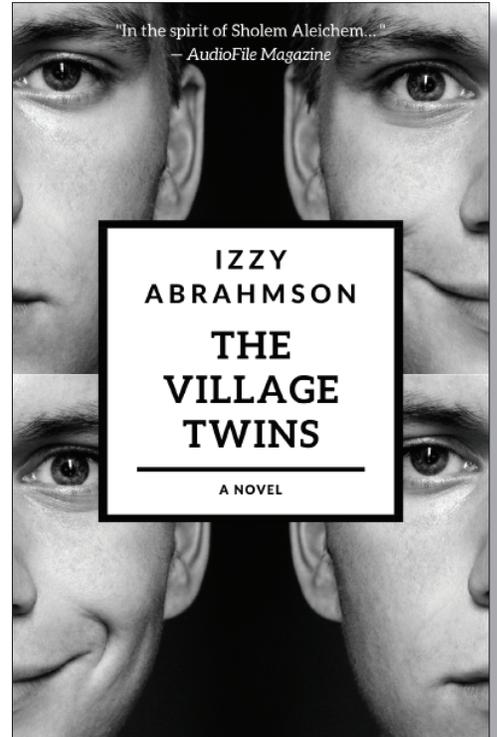
A VILLAGE ROMANCE, a novella. (July 2021)
original title: “The Misadventures of Rabbi Kibbitz and Mrs. Chaipul”
by Mark Binder, 2019

WINTER BLESSINGS (pub date 10/17/2021)
10 Stories and a novella for families and children
Originally published as A HANUKKAH PRESENT (2008) by Mark Binder. Finalist for the National Jewish Book Award for Family Literature

THE VILLAGE TWINS - a novel (pub date 1/9/2022)
a novel for adults
Original title: “The Brothers Schlemiel”. Serialized from 1999 to 2001 in the *Houston Jewish Herald Voice*.
Abridged YA edition from Jewish Publication Society, 2008. Unabridged edition, 2013)

THE VILLAGE FEASTS (pub date 2/6/2022)
Ten Passover Tales. Now with 20% more stories!
Originally published as MATZAH MISHUGAS by Mark Binder, 2009

THE COUNCIL OF WISE WOMEN (anticipated pub date 9/16/2022)



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