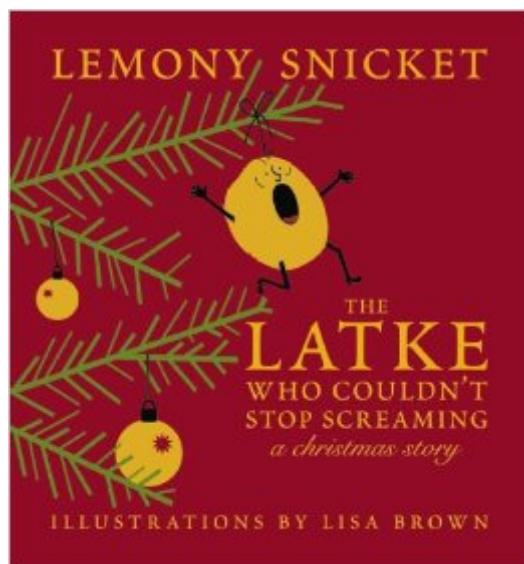


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# The Latke Who Couldn't Stop Screaming: A Christmas Story



## **Synopsis**

Latkes are potato pancakes served at Hanukkah, and Lemony Snicket is an alleged childrenâ™s author. For the first time in literary history, these two elements are combined in one book. A particularly irate latke is the star of The Latke Who Couldnâ™t Stop Screaming, but many other holiday icons appear and even speak: flashing colored lights, cane-shaped candy, a pine tree. Santa Claus is briefly discussed as well. The ending is happy, at least for some. People who are interested in any or all of these things will find this book so enjoyable it will feel as though Hanukkah were being celebrated for several years, rather than eight nights.

## **Book Information**

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (75 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #487,394 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #80 in Books > Children's Books > Holidays & Celebrations > Jewish #1322 in Books > Children's Books > Holidays & Celebrations > Christmas #5412 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Humor & Satire > Humorous

Age Range: 7 - 12 years

Grade Level: 2 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

Finally, a book that reinforces that Hanukkah is not the Jewish Christmas and is not about presents. It is about hope in the face of being outnumbered. Here is a story about a latke in the midst of a Christmas story. It is screaming and wailing. And why shouldn't it? Someone who lives in the house without the xmas lights adorning it has tried to fry the latke in sizzling hot oil. Rather than jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire, this little latke heads for the open window. As the story progresses, we learn about the story of Hanukkah and the misconceptions about the latke and the holiday. A variety of popular Christmas symbols cross paths with the latke and think it is nothing more than a hash brown, a nice side meal to a Christmas ham, and more (or less). Oh, what a deep and meaningful book this is. It gets more insightful with each reading. Why do the colored lights fail

to understand the latke? Why does the candy cane only focus on its minty fragrance and have no inclination for understanding that not everyone desires a peppermint scent? How could a candy stick be so distasteful under its red and white striped mint coating? Each confrontation ends with the latke running and screaming in search of understanding and identity. Until it lands under a pine tree in a snow covered, deep, dark forest (or is this the subconscious). Yet again, the pine tree is only focused on its small, provincial worldview. If something plopped under it, then it must be a present. No? But wait. A family with an axe approaches the pine forest...

The small, square, hardback is a great book for families of all religions to learn a little about Hanukah and the importance of understanding different cultures, but it's just as skewed and wicked as the other Lemony Snicket titles. Holiday lights, a candy cane and a pine tree just can't understand that not everything is about Christmas, especially a little potato pancake. The flashing lights say that the latke is basically hash browns, which go great alongside a nice Christmas ham. Finally the latke finds some kindred spirits: a Jewish family who understands him so well, it eats him.

[To the tune of "There's a Kind of Hush (All Over the World)" as recorded by Herman's Hermits and The Carpenters.] There's a kind of hash, in Lemony's world, that's rightIn Lemony's world, you can hear the sound of a latke with lungsIf you know what I meanJust potato mush, with onions and egg, and friedThere's no better way, than the Hanukah way, with the latke that criedSo read it very carefullyClosely now and you will see what I meanThe latke that screamedBetween the silly bits you'll seeThat there's a lot of historyOn the Jews, and Hanukah's meaningYes there's a kind of hash, in Lemony's world, all rightIn Lemony's world, you can learn a lot, from Hanukah loreSeriously now, this deceptively simple little book effectively illustrates the difference between Hanukah and Christmas for those of us who weren't too sure before (and were afraid to ask). Through funny exchanges with other objects and some delightful illustrations by Lisa Brown, "Snicket" brings out the significance of Hanukah by comparing the traditions of Christmas with the miraculous defeat of Antiochus IV at the hands of the Maccabees, the subsequent re-dedication of the temple, and the oil that burned for eight days. The book ends in true dramatic Snicket fashion, with a kind of hush. Educational, yet entertaining, this is a good, albeit brief, book for everyone. Amanda Richards, December 10, 2007

I hate to tell you this, but if you read this review, you just may end up buying this book (or even more

copies for the loved ones in your family). In his stark, realistic, enigmatic and loving style, Lemony Snicket relates much more about the story of Hanukkah than most of us could imagine. Our majority Christian society blissfully harbors much ignorance about Judaism, and especially the perpetuated myth that Hanukkah is somehow a 'Jewish Christmas.' But as the tragic hero of the story (heroes always perish, don't they?) this latke demonstrates, as do many of us discover, that a simple and straightforward telling of the Hanukkah story can explode this myth. The 'Christmas Story' of the subtitle does not refer to the narrative of the birth of Jesus. Rather the reference is made to the experience of every identifying Jew who, at this end-of-year holiday season, screams in frustration at the unwillingness of society to accept religious differences. I would say that this book will appeal to the older juvenile that the Tags system refers to, but then, again, anyone who has had the unfortunate experience of reading Snicket's series of unfortunate events will truly enjoy this unlikely tale of a screaming and ill-fated latke. At least the latke was consumed by those who, in the final analysis, understood him. (I must say, I wanted seconds, but that will have to wait until his next book. How about a cookbook with a instructions for making a great latke, or a recipe for puttanesca?)

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