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**Pinky Bloom, Brooklyn's greatest
kid detective, takes on a new
case just in time for Hanukkah.**



When a valuable ancient Israeli coin is stolen from her synagogue, Pinky sets out to find the thief. But other strange events keep distracting her. Could they be connected to the supposedly magical menorah that her neighbor has left in her family's care? Only Pinky can get to the bottom of this—with a bit of help from her annoying little brother.



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PINKY BLOOM AND THE CASE OF THE MAGICAL MENORAH

JUDY PRESS
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Chapter One

I'm Penina "Pinky" Bloom, Brooklyn's greatest kid detective and sister to Avi, the world's most annoying little brother.

A pair of my favorite sunglasses was missing, and he was the prime suspect!

Taped to his door was a sign that said, *KEEP OUT! SECRET AGENT IN TRAINING!*

Yesterday, Avi had wanted to be a shark hunter. The day before that, it was a race car driver. It looked like he'd already changed his mind again.

"Open up, Avi!" I shouted. "It's time for dinner."

The door opened a crack, and he stuck out his head. “I’m busy being a secret agent, Pinky. What do you want?”

Avi was wearing a floppy hat, a long black raincoat, and MY SUNGLASSES!

“I want those back—now,” I demanded.

“But I need them, Pinky. Secret agents wear sunglasses so they don’t get recognized.”

Before I could tell Avi that he’s a second-grader, *not* a secret agent, the doorbell rang.

I figured it might be my best friend, Lucy Chang. She lives two floors below me, and we’d invited her over for dinner. Tonight was the 25th day of Kislev, the first night of Hanukkah.

Dad didn’t look up from his computer as I raced past him to get to the door.

“Who is it?” I asked, standing on tiptoes and squinting through the peephole.

“It’s me, Mrs. Glick, from next door,” a faint voice answered.

I slipped off the chain and opened the door.

“Sorry to bother you, Pinky,” she said. “Is your mom or dad home?”

Mrs. Glick is really old. She wears thick glasses because she can’t see too well. One time, when I had

a sore throat, she brought me a bowl of chicken soup, and the chicken’s feet were still inside. Gross!

“Come in, Mrs. Glick,” Dad said. “So nice to see you. I’ll call my wife.”

Grown-ups usually talk about boring stuff, but just in case, I hung around. My cat, D. J., was sitting by the bookcase, so I crouched down to pet him.

“Please sit down, Mrs. Glick,” Mom said, shoving aside a pair of dirty gym socks that Avi had left on the couch. “How can we help you?”

Mrs. Glick began her story. “You’ve met my son, Buzzy,” she said. “He’s a very big archaeologist. He works in Israel, digging for ancient artifacts.”

This must’ve sounded boring to D. J., because he wandered off. But I stayed where I was, picking at the scab I’d gotten when I skinned my knee playing soccer.

Ancient artifacts could be cool. I once found a penny from 1974 on the sidewalk outside my building. My dad said it wasn’t old enough to be worth more than one cent, but I kept it for good luck.

Mrs. Glick continued, “After his last trip to Israel, Buzzy brought home a menorah. He said I must always keep it with me. But today I leave to visit my sister in Florida. I can’t take it on the plane,

and I don't want to leave it behind in my empty apartment. What if someone breaks in? Or what if there's a fire?"

"We'll be happy to keep it safe while you're away," Mom quickly offered. I could tell she didn't think any break-ins or fires would happen, but good neighbors do each other favors.

"Wonderful!" Mrs. Glick said. "I'll bring it over right now. You can even light it for Hanukkah if you want. But first, you should know . . ." She lowered her voice. "My Buzzy told me it's not like any other menorah. This one is magical!"

I quit picking at my scab. Hanukkah had just gotten a whole lot more interesting!



Chapter Two

Mrs. Glick brought over her magical menorah and left it on the dining room table.

In kindergarten, I made a menorah out of cardboard and Popsicle sticks. My mom thought it was awesome. That's a mom thing.

The Glicks' menorah was much fancier than that. It had nine branches, one for each of the eight days of Hanukkah, plus the *shamash*, or helper candle, to light the others. On the top of each branch was a silver candleholder that held the candles.

It was almost dinnertime. Avi was supposed to

help me set the table, but he was nowhere in sight.

I knocked on his door, and when he didn't answer, I yelled, "If you don't come out right now, you're going to miss dinner!"

Avi never misses a meal. He bolted out of his room and raced down the hallway. "Hey, what's this?" he asked when he saw the menorah.

I explained that we were keeping it until Mrs. Glick got home. "And she told us it's magical," I added.

"Wow! That means I can make a wish and get anything I want," Avi said.

"Not so fast. Just because someone says something doesn't mean it's true."

"But maybe the menorah *is* magical!"

"Okay, let's test it. Ask the menorah to fly across the living room."

"It can't do stuff like that! A menorah doesn't have wings."

"Okay, so ask it a question, and we'll see if it knows the answer."

Avi addressed the menorah. "Will Grandma Phyllis visit us for Hanukkah?"

Suddenly, a deep voice roared, "Your wish is my command, but only if you clean up your room."

Avi and I stared at each other with our mouths open. What was going on? Had the magical menorah really spoken?

Dad crawled out from under the dining room table. "Got you!" he said, laughing. "I had you going for a second, didn't I?"

Grown-ups always think they're funny, but they're not.

Just then, the doorbell rang. Maybe it was Lucy!

"Guess who, darlings?" a familiar voice sang out. "It's me, Grandma Phyllis!"

"I told you so, Pinky!" Avi said. "I knew the menorah was magical."

Here's the thing: Grandma Phyllis *always* comes for Hanukkah!

But it *was* kind of weird that she showed up right after Avi asked the magical menorah if she was coming.

"How was the trip to Brooklyn?" Dad asked as he opened the door. Grandma Phyllis lives far away, in Queens, so it can take her forever to get to our apartment.

"It was fine!" she said. "I took that car-sharing ride. I had a very nice driver who told me all about his visit to Israel." She stepped inside and set her suitcase down.



That's when I remembered that whenever Grandma Phyllis comes for a visit, she stays in Avi's room, and he moves into mine.

Ugh, Hanukkah might not be so fun after all!