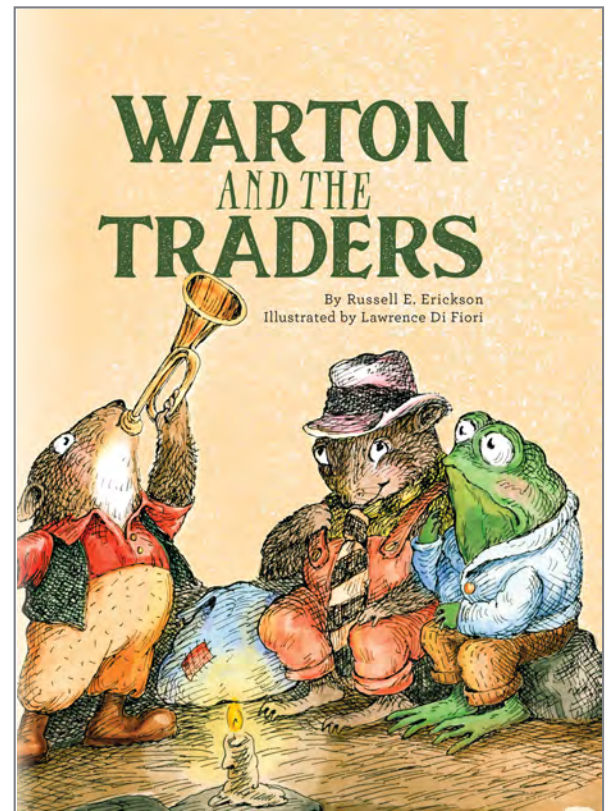


About the Book

Winter is approaching, and Warton and Morton Toad are preparing their supplies. Warton will make the journey to their Aunt Toolia's house, bringing her the food that will help her through hibernation. However, as Warton walks to her house, he has to hide from a wildcat chasing after him. Also hiding in a log are wood rats named Higg and Bundy. They explain that they're traders; they believe everything can be traded for something of equal value. Spending the night hiding from the wildcat together, the three become friends, before parting ways.

As Warton finally makes it to his Aunt Toolia's, he sees that she's not home. In fact, her home is unusually messy. He asks all of Aunt Toolia's neighbors, but none of them have seen her recently. With help from a bird, Warton learns his aunt might have ventured into the Bog, a dangerous place, and follows after her.

Warton finds his aunt! She is taking care of an injured fawn who cannot move. Even with her help, the little deer isn't getting any better. Warton goes off to search for help and discovers the home of the traders, the wood rats he met earlier. But to get their help, he needs to trade his services for theirs. He makes a plan to rid of the wildcat from the Bog and, successfully saving the wood rats, gets their help to reunite the fawn with its family. In the process, Warton teaches the wood rats about selflessness.



Key Themes:

Friendship; Helping others; Meeting new people; Selflessness

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Ages 6–8 years



Use these questions to preface and conclude a reading of this book with children.

Encourage them to share their observations as you read the book together, and take time to linger on pages or spreads that generate more discussion.

Before Reading

- Look at the cover and share what you think the story is going to be about.
- Who are the main characters in the story?
- Have you every traveled to someplace new? How did you feel?

Exploring Jewish themes: There are several themes and situations in the story that highlight Jewish values. As we read the story let's see if we can identify some of them. Here are a few examples of what we might find:

- Mitzvot - doing good deeds
- Derech Eretz - treating others with respect
- Bikur Holim - helping others feel better

During Reading

Chapters 1-5

- Warton and Morton are brothers. What jobs do they each perform to prepare for the winter?
- Where is Warton planning to go?
- Who came running into the tree and what animal was chasing them?
- Where do the wood rats live? What is it like in the bog?

Exploring Jewish themes:

- As soon as Warton settled in to sleep for the night in the hole in the tree, he heard screaming. What did Warton do, and was he being kind?
- Higg and Bundy are traders. What does that mean? How did they treat Warton?

Chapters 6- 10

- Look at Aunt Toolia's home on page 28. What did Warton see that upset him?
- Which neighbors did Warton talk with to help him figure out what happened to Aunt Toolia?
- Where did the whip-poor-will say Aunt Toolia was heading?

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During Reading Continued

Chapters 11-14

- Describe what it was like for Warton as he went into the Bog.
- Who did he meet in the Bog? Did he recognize her right away?
- How did the fawn get injured?

Exploring Jewish themes:

- Who is Aunt Toolia taking care of in the Bog?
- Why did Aunt Toolia go to the Bog?

Chapters 15-18

- Warton and Aunt Toolia can't carry enough food for the fawn. Can you predict who might help them?
- What clue helped Warton to find the wood rats?

Exploring Jewish themes: Higg and Bundy said they would help only if they could get a trade or something in return for helping. What did Warton say he would give them? How do you feel about that?

Chapters 19-22

- What happened while heading back to help the fawn?
- Where did Warton and the wood mice run for safety?
- Warton is thinking about a plan to save them from the wildcat. What do you think it involves?

Chapters 23-27

- What did Warton trade his plan for?
- Tell about the plan. Did it work? Why was the bugle so important in the plan?
- What happened to the wildcat?

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During Reading Continued

Chapters 28-32

- When Warton went to talk to the deer (who was looking for the fawn), what did Warton discover?
- The deer and Warton worked together to battle the wildcat. How did they help each other in the battle?
- The wood rats were shocked that Aunt Toolia didn't want anything for helping the fawn. What did the wood rats do with the umbrella at the end of the story? Why do you think they did that?

Exploring Jewish themes: The fawn was getting better. What was the deer planning to do with the fawn?

After Reading

- Can you list some of the good deeds and acts of kindness that occurred throughout the story?
- Do you think Higg and Bundy changed from the beginning to the end of the story? What events or actions make you think this?

Optional: Extension Activities

- In the story we see the Traders' Market on pages 62, 64, and 65. If you were in charge, what would the market look like? Draw a picture showing how you would set it up. Include the different items you would have in the market.
- Design the Bog that Warton had to travel through. Be creative and include anything that might be in the Bog. Use yarn, leaves and sticks to give it a 3-dimensional look.
- Create a map (using pictures and words) planning the route that the 11 wood rats followed to catch the wildcat. You may want to include some rocks, logs stumps, holes and trees.