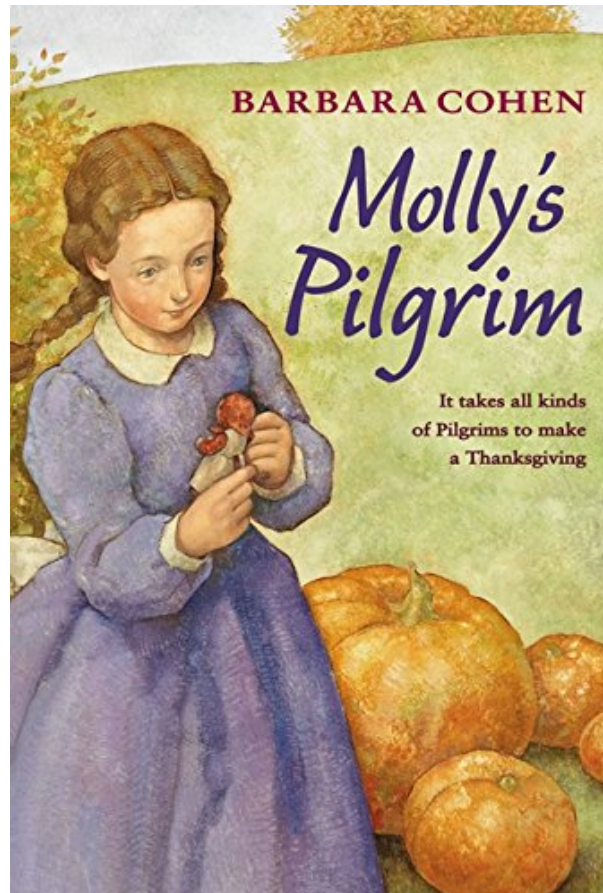
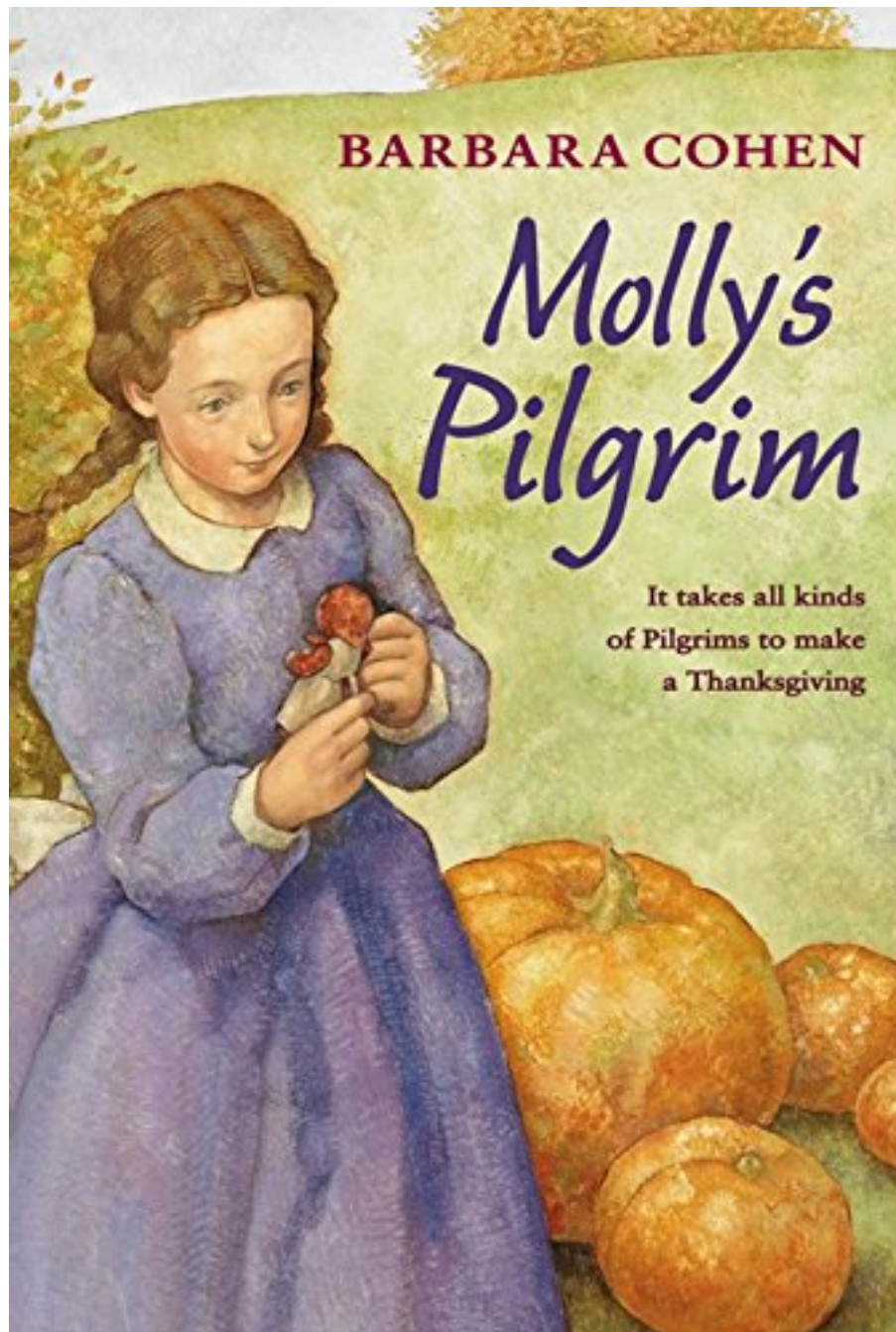


# MOLLY'S PILGRIM BY BARBARA COHEN



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From Publishers Weekly

A Russian immigrant girl adjusts to the American celebrations of Thanksgiving and birthdays, respectively. Ages 5-8; 6-10.

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From School Library Journal

Gr 1-3-Molly, a young Russian Jewish immigrant, feels that she doesn't belong and will never belong in America. Her third grade classmates make fun of her accent, her dress, her customs and mock her with a sing-song rhyme, "Jol-ly Mol-ly, Your eyes are awf'ly small. Jol-ly Mol-ly, Your nose is awf'ly tall." With the help of a loving mother and the understanding of a sensitive teacher, Molly earns class recognition and, finally, happiness. Her clothespin Pilgrim doll resembles her Russian mother more than a traditional Pilgrim, for her mother is indeed a pilgrim who came to America for religious freedom. Christina Moore's dramatic reading intensifies the emotion and evokes the pathos of this moving narrative. Young listeners will sympathize and empathize with Molly and will gain a greater appreciation for all Pilgrims in America. This story will encourage dialogue and lively discussions on numerous topics: American values, tolerance, religious freedom, Thanksgiving traditions, Jewish customs and holidays. It will captivate an attentive audience every month of the year.

Patricia Mahoney Brown, Franklin Elementary School, Kenmore, NY

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Review

"A fine read-aloud and discussion starter." (School Library Journal)

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"A thought-provoking Thanksgiving read-aloud." (ALA Booklist)

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# MOLLY'S PILGRIM BY BARBARA COHEN PDF

Sparkling new illustrations refresh this Thanksgiving classic based on the true experience of a member of Barbara Cohen's family. The touching story tells how recent immigrant Molly leads her third-grade class to discover that it takes all kinds of pilgrims to make a Thanksgiving. Originally published in 1983, Molly's Pilgrim inspired the 1986 Academy Award winning live-action short film.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 32 pages

## Features

- Great product!

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## Most helpful customer reviews

45 of 47 people found the following review helpful.

The wonderful book that brought me down low

By E. R. Bird

Ladies and gentlemen, I come before you today with a confession. I, knowingly and without malice, am a wimp. I am a wimp of the finest pedigree, forged in the wimpy steps of my wimpy forebears. This loathsome quality only cares to show itself in the oddest of moments. Normally, I feel relatively safe reading children's books and, especially, picture books. Certainly the protagonists in these tales have their trials and tribulations to endure, but they usually do so with relative good faith and their enemies are by and large trampled soundly at the end of their tales. Usually. Then there are books like, "Molly's Pilgrim". Ladies and gentlemen, if your child can read through this book in its entirety without feeling overwhelmed by a sense of misery and woe then they're a stronger man or woman than I.

In this classic tale, a little girl named Molly is having problems at school. Her classmates tease her relentlessly, usually making fun of her funny accent and supposed un-American ways. Molly, you see, immigrated to this country with her mother and father from Russia. Jewish in faith, they originally lived in New York City, but now Molly's father has found steady employment in Winter Hill. Here, Molly is the only Jewish girl around, and she suffers mightily at the hands of the other girls. One day, Molly's teacher, Miss Stickley, decides that the class is going to do something a little different for Thanksgiving this year. Each child will design a pilgrim or an Indian for a little diorama and present it to the class. Molly is assigned a pilgrim, and she eagerly tells the assignment to her mama. Her mother, however, listens to the description of what a pilgrim is (someone seeking religious freedom and a life free from persecution) and creates a doll that is a small Russian immigrant. Of course, the other kids at school deride this idea of a pilgrim, until Miss Stickley explains that Molly's doll is perhaps the most appropriate of all. After all, the very idea of Thanksgiving is based on the Jewish harvest holiday of Tabernacles, and unlike any other student in the room, Molly is the real pilgrim.

I have absolutely no problems with this story. I mean, how can you not like it? And how many adults, if you stopped them on the street today, would be able to tell you what Jewish holiday the pilgrims, that came to our land, based Thanksgiving on? Few, I suspect. Molly is an incredibly sympathetic character, and that's probably where my own problems stem from. After all, there's a significant lack of comeuppance in this tale. Molly suffers relentless teasing and problems from other children her age, but that's never really resolved. The evil Elizabeth is never reprimanded for her actions, nor even made to think twice about treating Molly like a human being. Instead, she's nasty from page one until the end and stays that way. Which, honestly, was probably the best way to go. I mean, vengeance doesn't really have a place in children's picture books, does it? But how hard would it have been for Elizabeth to get what's coming to her? Even a little?

What I had a hard time with in this story was Molly's pain. Barbara Cohen describes it beautifully, and we've plenty of gorgeous illustrations by Michael J. Deraney (if that's the version you're purchasing) showing Molly huddled in misery on a swing, running with tears in her eyes from the girls, crying on her Mama's chest, dreading entering her school building, and miserably hiding her doll when other children mock it. It's a

lovely book, but distinctly and incredibly painful for me and, I suspect, for certain types of children. For some, however, this book will be a kind of balm. They will see that they are not alone in being teased by other kids, and that Molly suffers just as they suffer.

The story is excellent. The illustrations superb. The moral, unequivocal. If you would like an excellent tale to tell around the Thanksgiving season, you really couldn't find one better. Just be aware of what you're getting yourself into ahead of time. It's a great book, but for some people a distinctly depressing one.

24 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

The spirit of Thanksgiving is always with us.

By slomamma

The only negative thing I can think of to say about this book is that when I read it aloud, I have a very hard time not crying. It is a short and simple story (longer than a picture book, but an adult can read it aloud in one sitting, and most second or third graders could read it to themselves), but one of the most moving children's books I know of.

Molly is a turn of the century Jewish immigrant girl from Russia. She lives in a small town, where no one understands her, and other children make fun of her clothes, and accent and her ignorance of American customs. In November, her classmates are appalled that she has never heard of Thanksgiving. But as we get to know Molly better, we, and eventually her classmates, realize that this child, who left her country and moved to America so that she and her family could practice their religion without fear is no different from the first pilgrims.

By the time they reach second or third grade, most children have heard the story of the first Thanksgiving many, many times. This is a wonderful way to renew the meaning of the story for them, by reminding them that people are still coming to America for the same reasons they came hundreds of years ago.

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

The True Spirit of Thanksgiving

By Erika Sorocco

Molly is a young, Jewish immigrant from Russia, who moves to Winter Hill where she is a black sheep among the rest of her classmates. They tease her, and call her names, making fun of her voice, and her eyes, and anything else that they could possibly think of to make fun of her. When Miss Stickley, Molly's third-grade teacher, begins teaching the class about Thanksgiving, Molly is lost. That is, until she finds that Thanksgiving is an American holiday where everyone is grateful for what they have. The problem? Molly doesn't feel thankful. In fact, the only thing that would make her thankful is if her family could move back to New York City, and that won't be happening anytime soon. When Miss Stickley informs the class that they must make pilgrim dolls, Molly is excited to do the project. But when she finds that her mother has made the doll look more like a Russian immigrant, rather than a pilgrim, Molly knows that her troubles at school are about to get worse. But maybe...just maybe, the little Pilgrim is exactly what Molly needs...

It is rare that a book as short as Barbara Cohen's *MOLLY'S PILGRIM* could bring out such strong emotions in the reader, but that is exactly what it did. The character of Molly is sweet, and kind, and the way she is treated at school could bring tears to anyone's eyes, even if you aren't a crier by nature. The awful songs that Molly's classmates sing about her will choke everyone up, but, at the same time, let the reader feel exactly how people who are "different" are treated. This is a wonderful story that will warm everyone's heart, and teach the whole family about the first Thanksgiving.

Erika Sorocco

Book Review Columnist for The Community Bugle Newspaper

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