

# MATKA THE MENCH



BY LINDA LEVIN & AI

When Matka was a little boy, he didn't have much. He told Duchess, "My bed was in the kitchen by the stove where I dreamed of adventures." Bandit giggled, "Was it scary or fun, Matka?" "Both!" said Matka with a wink. Cupcake and Dino listened, eyes wide with wonder. "The love of his parents and aunts and uncles made it home for Matka," added Duchess, smiling.



Matka showed Boychick and Cricket his old wooden toy train. "This belonged to your cousins before me," he said. "But we made new games every day!" Dino rolled the train, making silly noises. "It's the best train ever!" Bandit cheered. Duchess nodded, "Imagination and a sense of humor is a gift."





On sunny days, Matka led all the kids—Kevin, Cricket, Cupcake, and Bandit—outside. “Let’s create a jungle in the backyard!” he laughed. Boychick tied a scarf, pretending to be an explorer. “I found treasure!” shouted Dino, holding a shiny rock. Cupcake drew a map in the dirt. Matka clapped, “What a smart crew!”



After dinner, Matka gathered everyone around. "Who can do a mitzva tomorrow?" he asked. "I can help my teacher!" said Kevin. "I'll share my crayons," promised Cricket. Duchess added, "Even small kindnesses matter." Boychick nodded, "Let's fix the world, one day at a time."





Matka spread books out on the table. "Who wants to read with me?" he invited. Cupcake grinned, "I'll teach you new words, Matka!" Bandit recited a poem, making everyone clap. Duchess smiled, "You never stop learning." Even Dino scribbled letters on a napkin. "Learning is for everyone," Matka said kindly.



Eat Well,  
**LAUGH**  
Often  
Love  
Much.



Matka showed the children his Jewish War Veterans cap for when he served in the Air Force. "Serving together makes us strong," he explained. Boychick saluted, "Like a real leader!" Matka hugged him. "We protect and help one another." Duchess adjusted his pin proudly. "You've taught us courage," whispered Cricket.





During a walk, Matka paused by a big tree. "Every tree is precious," he told Dino and Bandit. "Why, Matka?" asked Cupcake. "They give us life and shade," he replied, eyes shining. Kevin traced the bark with his fingers. "Let's plant a tree someday," said Boychick.



Matka took all the children to the Jewish War Veterans museum. "We remember, respect, and celebrate," he explained. Cricket asked, "Who are all these heroes?" "People helping others, just like us," said Duchess. Bandit waved at the old photos. Kevin whispered, "We can be heroes too."





Matka and Duchess cooked potato latkes together for Chanukah. Dino and Cricket helped peel potatoes carefully. "Cooking is teamwork!" Duchess announced. Boychick flipped a latke and cheered. They all sat to eat, stories and laughter filling the kitchen. Matka raised his fork, "Family is our greatest recipe."



During Shabbat, Matka gently placed a hand on every child's head. "Each of you is a blessing," he said softly. Cupcake whispered, "We love you, Matka." "And I love you all more," he replied. Duchess lit the candles, their faces glowing. "Together, we shine bright."





On Matka's honorary degree day, the family cheered. "He never gave up learning," Duchess told Kevin and Dino. Matka wore a big cap and grinned. "Who's next to learn something new?" he asked. Cricket promised, "I'll read extra books!" Bandit hugged him tightly.



As the sun set, Matka sat with his grandchildren. "The world is better because of your love," he said softly. Cupcake squeezed his hand. "You taught us to be mensches, Matka." Duchess smiled, "Family, faith, and kindness last forever." The children snuggled close, hearts full.





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