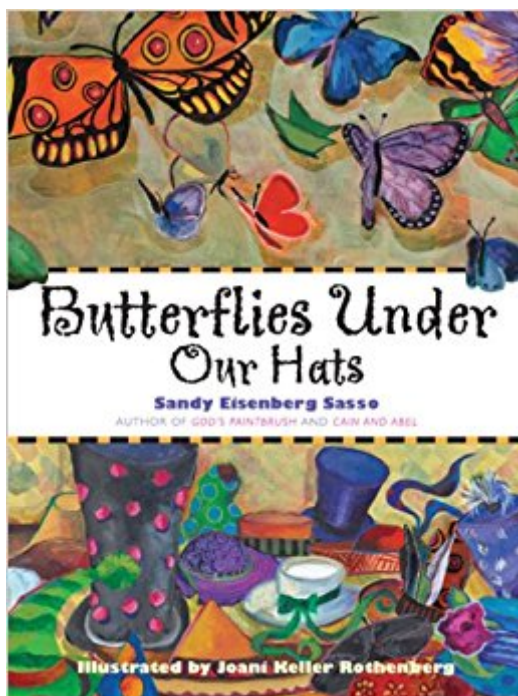


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# Butterflies Under Our Hats (Paraclete Books For Children)



## Synopsis

"Once there was a town called Chelm where there was no luck. If something could go wrong, it did. The roofs of the houses always leaked. The sidewalks were cracked. The gardens grew only weeds. Nothing was ever right." So begins best-selling children's author, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (nearly 500,000 copies of her books are in print), in this charming, original story inspired by a Jewish folktale. Through her remarkable storytelling, Sandy Sasso has brought to life the mythical town of Chelm, and created another classic for reading aloud and discussing with children. *Butterflies Under Our Hats* has been selected as a finalist for the Koret International Jewish Book Award in the Babaganewz Children's Literature category! Congratulations to the author and illustrator! ~ ~

## Book Information

Series: Paraclete Books for Children

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Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 1-4 ~ ~ The author of *God's Paintbrush* (Jewish Lights, 1992) tries her hand at a story set in the old-world town of simpletons made popular through Jewish folklore. Stripped of any of the usual Yiddish-tinged humor or sense of place, the story revolves around the human desire for luck and need for hope. The plot is simple. After searching everywhere, the people of Chelm despair of ever finding any luck. One day a strange, beautiful woman with a purple hat comes to town and tells them that there is something better than luck. She tells them to try to capture hope, in the form of butterflies, under their hats. When they find they cannot, they despair again at their bad luck. But when they look under their hats again, they find that the butterflies have left a faint powder ~ ~ a trace of hope ~ ~ and that was all they needed to be happy. The book is

clearly meant to serve as a discussion starter about what is important in life, but as a story, it falls a bit flat. The illustrations and design are lovely, especially the bright and appealing oil paintings of butterflies, but this fanciful tale has no roots in any Eastern European village. — Lisa Silverman, Sinai Temple Library, Los Angeles Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

PreS-Gr. 2. Like Ann Redisch Stampler's retelling of the traditional shtetl folktale Shlemazel and the Remarkable Spoon of Pohost, reviewed on p.78, Sasso's original story also plays with the limits of luck. This time, however, things work out--but not because of work and love. In Chelm, legendary home of the Yiddish fools, there is no luck: "If something could go wrong, it did." And so the people give up--until a stranger comes to town who says that hope is better than luck. The newcomer brings in a cloud of fluttering butterflies, and even the trace of their presence brings hope. The wry Yiddish folk idiom is not a big part of the storytelling, and the impressionistic pictures (sometimes in the style of Chagall) may be too crowded for the young audience. But double-page spreads of the fluttering butterflies are gorgeous, and they bring home the message that there is something stronger than good fortune. Hazel Rochman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This book is supposedly set in Poland, but the illustrations sure don't give that impression. This could be anywhere and any time. As a story it's okay, but I had hoped for a better connection with Poland for my many students of Polish heritage.

I used this book as a "Story for all Ages" in a church service that focused on hope. This was the book the kids remembered--not the story the RE director had told them! The colorful illustrations really make this a visual feast as well, leading all to better remember the message.

This is a great story about hope not just for children but for adults as well. I use it on adult retreats!

Poor copy not worth the total price and effort. Not much cheaper than a new copy.

The residents of Chelm still have no common sense and no luck. They have given up--no longer building houses, repairing sidewalks or planting gardens. When a strange woman comes to town, she offers something better than luck--hope. Sure enough, beautiful butterflies land in the town

square and the townspeople catch them under their hats, just as they are instructed to do. But when it begins to rain, the townspeople need their hats to keep dry. Of course, the butterflies fly away, reinforcing the lack-of-luck in Chelm. After a closer look, however, they see a trace of butterfly "powder" left behind under each hat. That seems to be all the hope they need to start rebuilding their houses, sidewalks and gardens. From then on, they focus on the traces of hope they had all along--right under their hats. As with all of Rabbi Sasso's books, the values here can be shared by people of all denominations. The gorgeous illustrations enhance the reader's experience, allowing the reader to feel the excitement and hope as it grows in Chelm, although the Chelm depicted here clearly has no roots in any Eastern European village. The book will inspire readers to look under their own "hats" when they think all is lost. Reviewed by Rachel Rosner

This is a great book for children but it's even more valuable for adults. For Easter Sunday in our Church, this book was read to the congregation and used as the Sermon topic. It's a beautifully illustrated book with a message of hope for everyone.

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