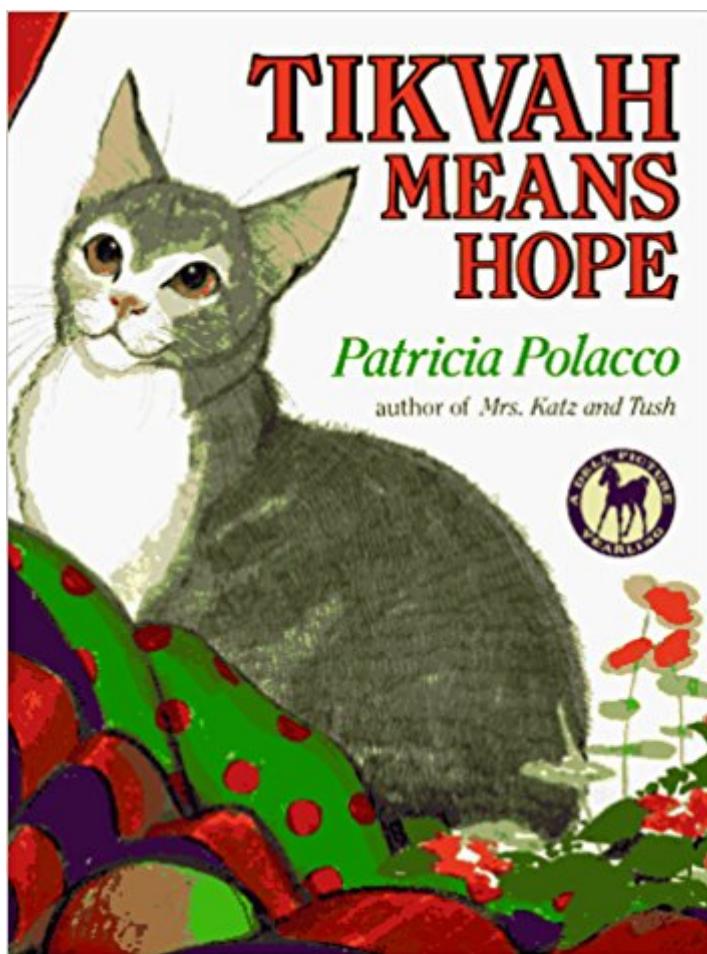


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# TIKVAH MEANS HOPE (Picture Yearling Book)



## **Synopsis**

Justine and Duane and their neighbors are happily getting ready for Sukkoth, the Jewish harvest holiday. Suddenly, catastrophe strikes as a fire sweeps through their town. Luckily for everyone, there are still miracles in this world--sometimes in the shape of a little cat. This heartfelt story is a stirring celebration of life, friendship, and--most of all--hope!

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Polacco's (Chicken Sunday) characteristically rich pencil and gouache artwork depict a neighborhood in her Oakland, Calif., hometown, showing how it weathered the devastating firestorms of 1992. Mr. Roth and his young neighbors Duane and Justine have built a Sukkah to celebrate Sukkoth, the Jewish festival of thanksgiving. But when the holiday begins, a hot wind breathes spreading brush fires into the Oakland hills. As flames engulf whole neighborhoods, hundreds of people must evacuate to nearby shelters. The Roths' pain is heightened when they cannot bring their cat, Tikvah, to safety. When the families finally return home, they find only rubble. But the Sukkah, miraculously, stands unscathed. And, in another bit of good fortune, Tikvah also turns up. Polacco's ambitious story tries hard to accomplish many objectives. The combination of varied elements results in a rushed tone and uneven pacing, so that the religious or spiritual aspect seems particularly forced. Her drawings skillfully and emotionally convey the anguish of the suffering community, as well as its resilience and hopefulness. An author's note provides more factual information about the disaster. Ages 4-8. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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PreSchool-Grade 2-Polacco recalls a terrible firestorm in Oakland, California, that consumed its hills, and describes two miracles that took place there. On the day before Sukkoth, Mr. Roth begins to build a Sukkah, which he explains to the two non-Jewish neighbor children who have come to help, is an outdoor hut built for the holiday, with a roof of open branches to recall the time the Jews wandered in the desert and lived in similar huts. That night, the children sleep in it, joined by Tikvah, the Roths' cat. The next morning something is awry. The sun is fiery orange and a strong hot wind has sprung up. The hills are on fire! Panic and confusion prevail, and families are evacuated. The fire burns for two days. Incredibly, the Sukkah was spared and Tikvah is found alive. Polacco's illustrations are dramatically expressive. She contrasts homey scenes of one day with the confusion, despair, and eventual ash gray caused by the destruction. These are followed by a night of redemption, the Sukkah standing untouched among the ashes, the neighbors illuminated in the light of a holiday candle, gathered to give thanks and to eat in the one standing structure. Polacco has provided Sukkoth with its own miracle. Marcia Posner, Federation of New York and the Jewish Book Council, New York CityCopyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Years ago, I tried to obtain a used copy of *Tikvah Means Hope* from only to find that it was outrageously priced. At that time, there was only one copy with a price tag well over \$100. I decided to wait. My patience paid off. Recently, I was able to find several copies in good condition for less than \$5.00. Many books about holidays try too hard to capture every aspect of the holiday at the expense of telling a memorable story. As a result, these books lack the vitality that keeps children engaged. Moreover, when a story primarily focuses on the holiday, the picture book may lose its appeal to a general audience. *Tikvah Means Hope* skillfully ties together multiple threads to create a charming story that is not easily forgotten. Patricia combines the disastrous Oakland, California fire with key aspects of the Festival of Sukkot and notable Jewish traditions. An additional level of interest is interjected by including a cat named Tikvah. Lovable animals will undoubtedly draw children into a story. In this case, Tikvah captured the readers' attention on the very first page even though the story is focusing on the Roth family building a sukkah. Without being too heavy handed with details, the reader gains a basic understanding of Sukkot. As the intensity of the crippling fire becomes apparent, the focus shifts to the devastating effects of an uncontrollable fire. This book has a dual agenda. In addition to showcasing the joy of Sukkot, it brings attention to the risks associated with fires. When the Roth family returned to their neighborhood after the

Oakland blaze had subsided, they were surprised to see that Tikvah (a Hebrew word for hope) had survived and that their sukkah was miraculously not destroyed by the flames that consumed everything else nearby. The end of the story reverts back to the celebration of Sukkot. This shift allows the reader to see a positive aspect of a bleak situation and also learn more about Sukkot. Isn't that the meaning of hope?

One of my favorite children's picture books. I read this to my daughter 15 years ago from a library copy. When I bought this online I read it outloud to her again and couldn't make it through the story without tears. It's such a gratifying story. Patricia Polacco is a wonderful story teller.

Depicts the sad reality of the effect of the Oakland, CA fires...but never lets go of the human capacity for hope within community! I am a devoted fan of Patricia Polacco. Bought this book for a library in San Diego...which can never overlook the possibility of fires.

having been a victim of the Firestorm, and a preschool teacher, this story is beautiful

Love this book!, No problem with the order, delivery or condition..

Great story!

A sukkah is not a permanent structure but a temporary dwelling. A wind can easily blow a sukkah down, a rain can wash it away. Patricia Polacco tells an ironic tale in *Tikvah Means Hope* about how a natural disaster destroyed material possessions that people felt were permanent while a sukkah, something built only for a short time, persevered. It is the story of Mr. and Mrs. Roth of Oakland, who build a sukkah in the backyard of their house. While they put up their ritual hut, two neighborhood children, Justine and Duane decide to help them in their task. In the process, Justine and Duane learn the meaning of the Jewish harvest festival of Sukkot, a precursor to the American holiday of Thanksgiving. "You see, we Jews have always had to move a lot," says Mr. Roth to the children. "We wandered in the desert for many years. Then at long last we found the promised Land and settled into real homes. Now we build these little huts to remind us of all the days we had no place to live, and also to give thanks for our new homes and rich harvest that our new land gave us." For their efforts, the Roths invite Justine and Duane to sleep in their sukah and celebrate a festive meal in it. Before the children can take advantage of the hospitality, they are evacuated from their homes.

A fire ravages their neighborhood burning their houses to the ground. The Roths are devastated by the event. After the fire is put out, they search frantically among the ashes to find something that would prove they had a life here. Just when the older man is about to lose all hope, Justine and Duane shout for him to come to the backyard. When Mr. Roth arrives, he sees one object still standing among the ashes: the sukkah. Mr. Roth can not believe his eyes. How could the sukkah not be damaged? How could the fire not consume it? His wife proclaims the occurrence a miracle. The fact that the sukkah survives, however, is not the only miracle. When the Roths gather with their neighbors in the sukkah to celebrate the blessing of life, they hear a noise from the barbecue pit. Mr. Roth reaches down into it and pulls out their pet cat, Tikvah. The feline creature is hungry, tired and little singed but still alive. *Tikvah* means Hope is based on a true story. In the fall of 1991, Patricia Polacco's home and those of 3,400 of her neighbors were ravaged by fire in her home of Oakland. Tragedy happens on a random basis. *Tikvah Means Hope* emphasizes that despite the obstacles one may encounter, there are still signs of hope, there are still signs that can impress upon us the importance of keeping a positive outlook on life. Polacco, in the end of the story, trumpets this message loud and clear. When he holds up his cat and sees that she is still alive, Mr. Roth proclaims the meaning of his pet's Hebrew name, that *Tikvah Means Hope!* Elliot Fein teaches Jewish religious studies at the Tarbut V'Torah School in Irvine, California.

When my children first read *Tikvah Means Hope* we needed to stop and crack open a box of tissues. Then we started talking about what in life is really important to us- which meant family before "things". *Tikvah Means Hope* is a wonderful family book and a treasure for any child to have and keep for future generations. It also is a testament the magnificent author, Patricia Polacco, who writes such timely themed books that touch children from all cultures and parts of the country. Our family loves her books and we hope that other readers will too!

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