

Name: _____

The Best Chicken Soup in the World

By Neal Levin

Hershel Mershel had a dream. His dream was to make the best chicken soup in the world, like Grandma always did.

That meant it had to be homemade. And it had to be made well. So well that people from far and wide would say, "Hershel, you make the best chicken soup in the world." And Hershel would smile and say, "My dream has come true."

But before Hershel could make his dream come true, first he would have to make the soup. So he filled a pot with water. Then he said, "I can't use everyday tap water. If my soup is homemade, I will need fresh rainwater from my backyard."

So he emptied the pot and set it on his patio. While he waited for it to rain, he thought about how delicious the soup would taste. He thought about



its soft carrots and onions. He thought about its thick, floppy noodles.

"I need vegetables," Hershel said. "But not everyday vegetables. If my soup is homemade, I will need to grow them myself."

So Hershel dashed off to the farmers market. He bought seeds for all the vegetables and herbs he would need. He also bought seeds to grow wheat to make noodles. When he finished planting them in his garden, he took a deep breath and smiled.

But something was missing.

"I need a chicken," Hershel said. "But not an everyday chicken. If my soup is homemade, I will need to raise the chicken myself."

So Hershel bought an egg at the

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farmers market and tucked it in an empty bird's nest in his backyard. "Now I will have everything I need to make the best chicken soup in the world," he said.

Hershel slept well that night, dreaming of his homemade soup. But when he checked outside in the morning, the egg hadn't hatched. And the vegetables weren't growing. And it hadn't even rained.

Hershel felt like growling. So did his stomach.

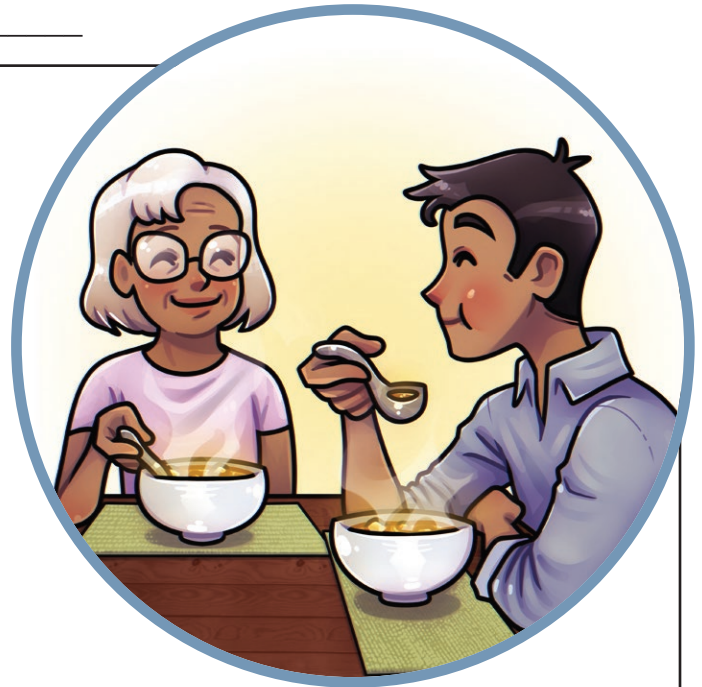
Grrrrrrrr!

"I need some food," he said. And where could he find better food than at Grandma's? She always had chicken soup.

When he got to her apartment, Grandma served Hershel the biggest bowl of chicken soup he had ever seen. It had just the right amount of spice to make his nose tingle. He scooped up a spoonful of chicken and parsley and let it melt in his mouth. The piping broth almost burned the tip of his tongue.

"This is the best chicken soup in the world," Hershel said.

"That's because it's homemade." Grandma smiled.



"But how do you collect rainwater?" Hershel said. "And where do you grow your vegetables? And hatch your chickens?"

Grandma gave him a funny look. "I get water from the sink. I buy vegetables and chicken at the grocery store," she told him.

"Then what makes your soup homemade?" Hershel asked.

"It's homemade because I put it together in my own special way, and I love every minute of it."

Hershel suddenly realized how to make his dream of chicken soup come true. He didn't have to collect rainwater or grow his own vegetables or even hatch a chicken by himself.

As long as the recipe came straight from the heart.

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1. To Hershel's grandma, *homemade* doesn't just mean *made at home*. It also means...
 - a. made with special kinds of food
 - b. made with love
 - c. made in the same way others make it
 - d. took a long time to make
2. Which one does Hershel *not* think about having in his soup?
 - a. fresh tomatoes
 - b. onions
 - c. wheat noodles
 - d. carrots

3. Reread the following sentence from the story.

Grandma gave him a funny look.

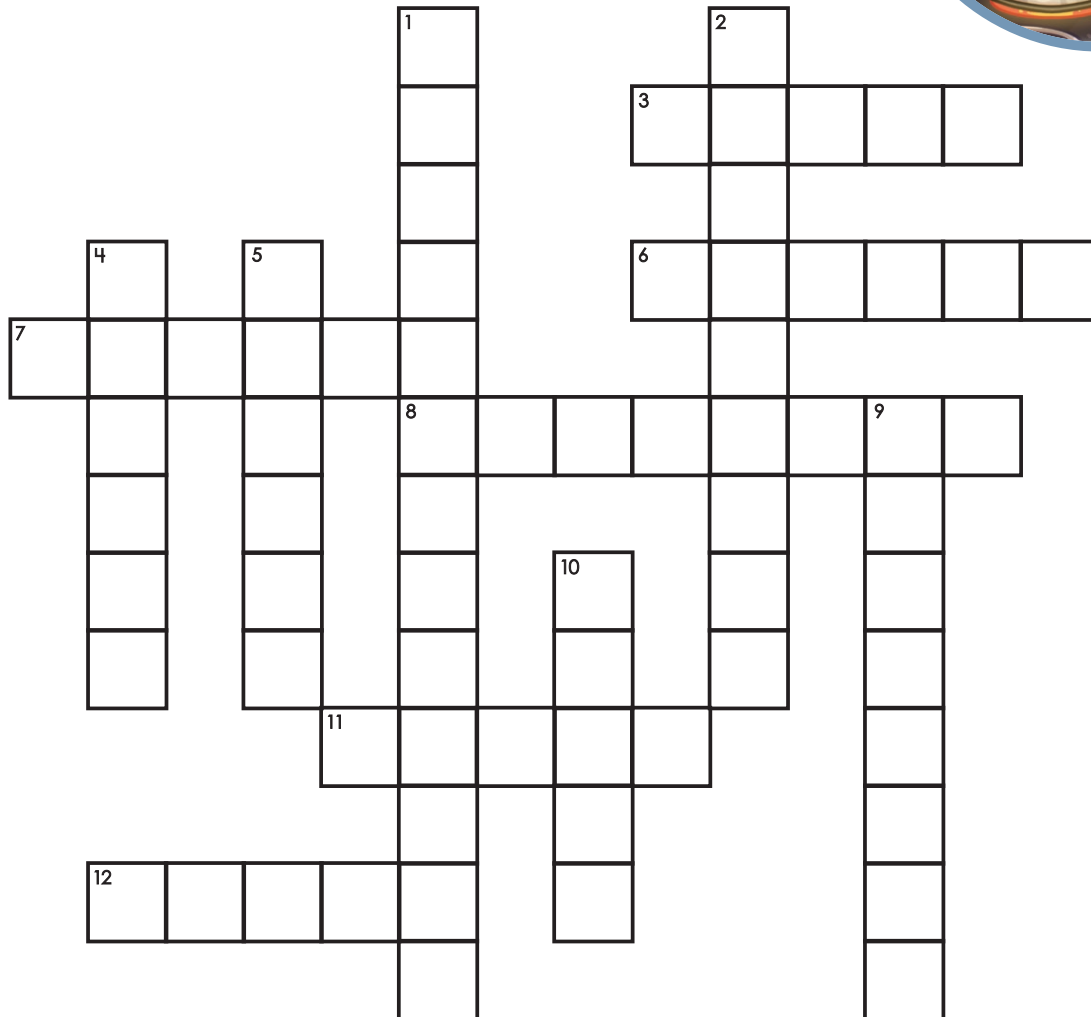
In the sentence above, what does the word funny mean?

- a. laughing
 - b. tricky
 - c. strange
 - d. loving
4. *Ingredients* are used to make something. Why do you think Hershel thought he needed special ingredients for his soup?

5. What is this story mostly about?
 - a. a boy planting his own vegetables for soup
 - b. a grandma passing on a secret recipe to her grandson
 - c. a boy learning that love and care make any food taste better
 - d. a grandma explaining why chicken soup is the best food

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Down:

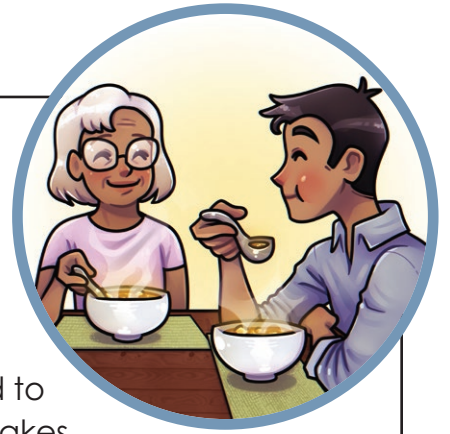
1. place to buy homegrown foods
2. very tasty
4. gave as a meal
5. to feel a tickle or ringing
9. common; not special
10. space right outside a house without a roof

Across:

3. leafy plants used in some foods, like parsley or mint
6. very hot
7. steps to follow to make a certain food
8. came to understand
11. watery part of soup
12. special plant part that tastes very strong

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In the story, "The Best Chicken Soup in the World," Hershel wanted to make a delicious chicken soup. He loves the soup his grandma makes.

Think of a food you love that someone you know makes. What is it?
How does it taste or make you feel? Do you know what is needed to make it?
Tell about it on the lines below.

[illegible]

ANSWER KEY

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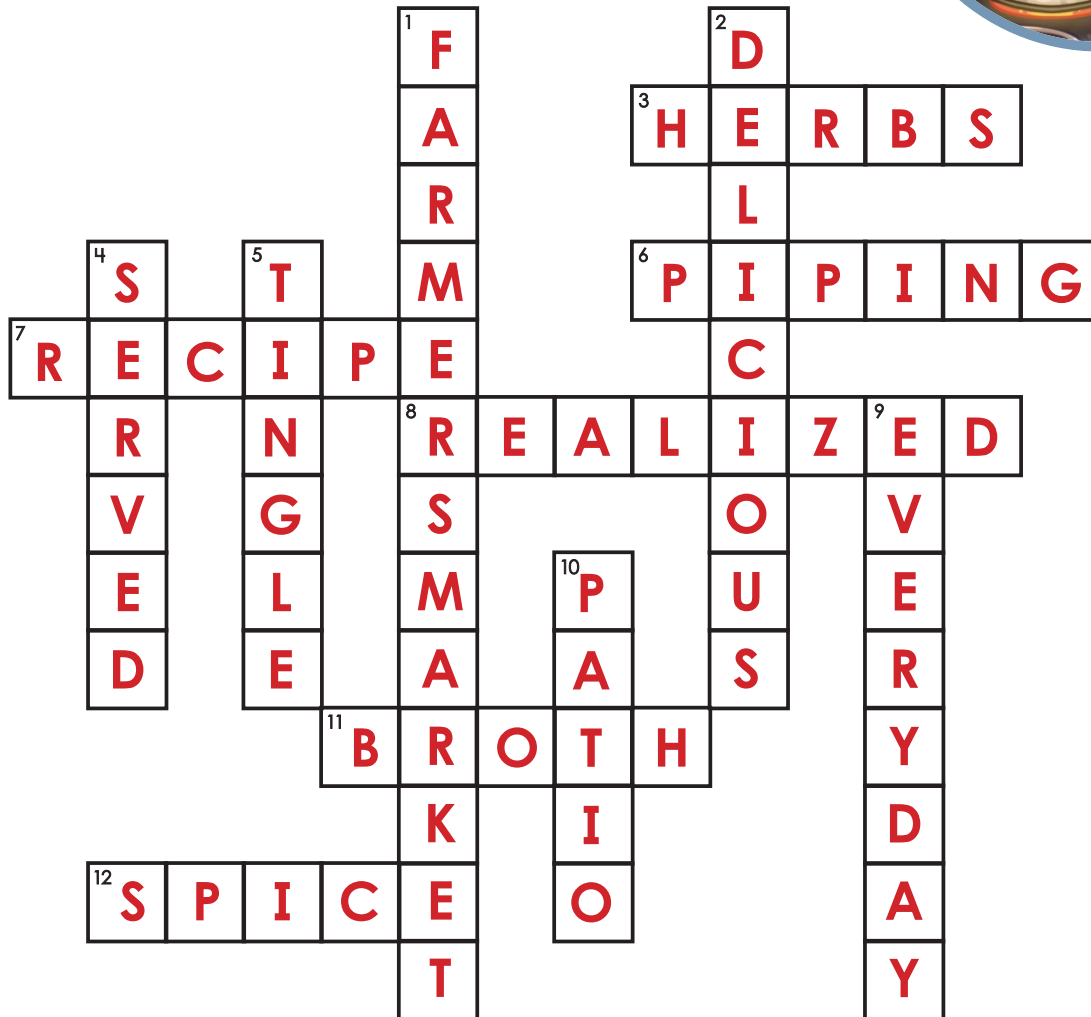
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Answers will vary.

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