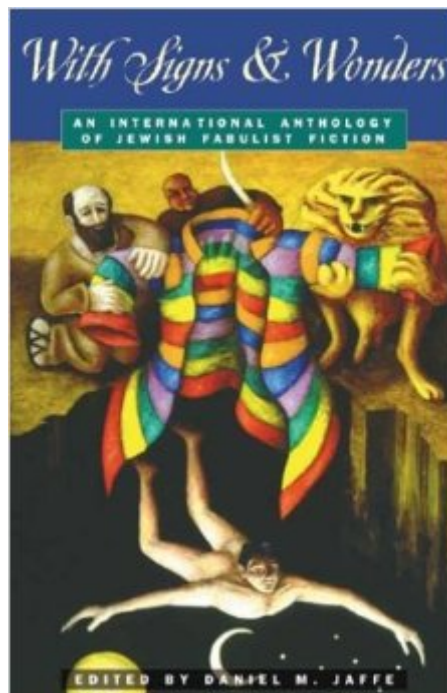


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With Signs & Wonders: An International Anthology Of Jewish Fabulist Fiction



Synopsis

Bringing together 24 contemporary writers from 19 different countries, this anthology captures the exuberant storytelling tradition of the Jewish people that which has been shaped by centuries of legends, folklore, and mysticism. These writers-from Central Asia, Iran, Morocco, Russia, Siberia, Israel, Latin America, Europe, and the United States-show the diverse strains of the Jewish fabulist imagination. Teeming with passion and humor and rooted in the triumphant and tragic history of a people, these stories illustrate the Jewish fascination with the mysteries of the imagination and the endless possibilities of life. Steve Stern, winner of the National Jewish Book Award, tells the humorous tale of a flying rabbi in Memphis, Tennessee. Dina Rubina, twice nominated for the Russian Booker Prize, evokes a heightened state of spiritual consciousness in her story "Apples from Shlitzbutter's Garden." Moacyr Scliar explores the struggle of a modern man who has been chosen to give living voice to the ancient prophets. Iranian-born Avi Shmuelian, whose work has been compared to that of Gabriel Garc a - a M rquez, relates the adventures of an Iranian Jew wandering in a magical landscape that could come out of A Thousand and One Nights.

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Customer Reviews

This is a delightful anthology with an intriguing title. As it appears, "fabulist" has to do with imagination, in this case Jewish, which raises each story to the level of a mystical adventure. For example, Tehila Lieberman's "Anya's Angel" with wistfulness and delicacy evokes a touching love story with many links to the infinite; Daniel Jaffe's own "Sarrushka and her Daughter" is a highly

intriguing folk legend exploring extra-sensory powers in individuals. And here are, to my mind, the best six: Mark Apelman's "A Visitor's Guide to Berlin" is an amazingly powerful evocation of Holocaust memories and an utterly convincing artistic emplotment of those memories, in their intensity and brutal reality, as inhabiting modern-day Berlin and claiming a reality that is more than real. Yakov Shechter's "Midday," a story about the search for meaning and about shaping one's own destiny, has a strong atmosphere of the numinous - the clouds keep darkening, the mystical intent comes more and more into focus - towards the resolution, still mysterious yet imaginatively satisfying. Joan Leegant's "The Tenth" is a powerfully imagined story of a rabbi whose faith, learning, tolerance, whose intellectual and spiritual endurance are challenged and tested by the appearance of an unusual candidate to complete a minyan. (A similar case of a rabbi who is tested by a rebellious pupil is treated flatly and unimaginatively by Steven Sher in "Tsuris," which only shows that what matters and what makes a story fabulous (excuse the pun!) is not the fabula but the quality of imagination and a way with language.) Ruth Knafo Setton's "The Cat Garden" is electrifying, memorable, descriptively evocative.

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