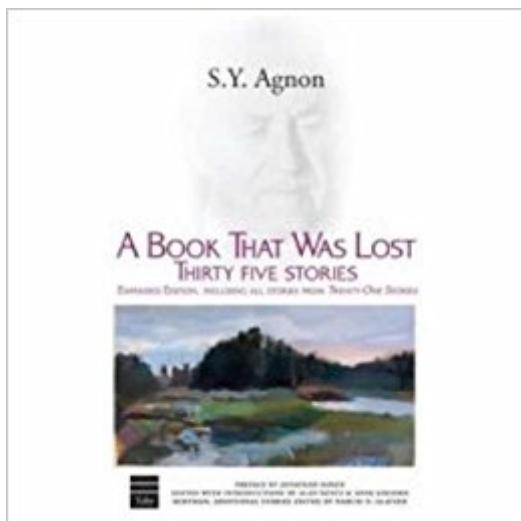


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A Book That Was Lost: Thirty Five Stories (Hebrew Classics)



Synopsis

This broad selection of Agnon's fiction introduces the full sweep of the writer's panoramic vision as chronicler of the lost world of Eastern European Jewry and the emerging society of modern Israel. Expanded Edition, Including all stories from Twenty-One Stories.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Born in Buczaz, Poland, S.Y. Agnon (1888-1970) was a Hebrew writer and Nobel Laureate in Literature. He is the author of *Shira*, *The Bridal Canopy*, *A Guest for the Night*, and other novels.

I am in the middle of this book but I wanted to pause and review it now. I am not a lover of short stories, but this book is an exception. Here, using snapshots, Agnon portrays times and places that are long gone. This is something that any Agnon fan knows. But what is truly extraordinary is the manner in which Agnon portrays spirituality. Today in the USA we live a largely material rather than spiritual existence. It can also be argued that true spirituality is something that rarely has been found throughout human history. Yet, Agnon in his writings has captured the essence of man's connection to the divine. This edition contains commentary by various editors, which I found immensely helpful in gaining a deeper understanding of Agnon. To paraphrase, they explain the difference between Agnon and his contemporaries "he was a modern man whose Modernity could not be expunged, but the world of classical Jewish culture, in all its dimensions and manifestations, remained for him

animated and animating in a way that it did not for other modern Jewish writers....For Agnon, the past exists for the sake of the present, and its stories and symbols exist for the sake of what they offer to the construction of a fuller Jewish self-understanding in the modern world." p.34 Yet this is the tip of the iceberg. Read this book and understand for yourself.

Beautiful writing and prose by the Nobel Prize winner for literature.

Israel's Nobel Laureate in Literature, S. Y. AGNON the old world to life with tales who messages apply to the world of today. Excellently written, excellent translation.

This is an excellent collection of Agnon's short stories. I found them fascinating. They give insight into Agnon's world. The included commentaries add to the value of the text.

It is wonderfully written and has great stories of Jewish culture in another age. It is a historic picture of Eastern European Jewry.

The order was treated well and I received the book amazingly fast! Many thanks!Unfortunately the quality of the book production is rather low - the book is not pleasant to hold in hand - when reading the sharp cuts of the margins of the printed block are harsh.

Very interesting

Toby Press's 2008 volume of "A Book That Was lost" contains ten more short stories than Schocken Press's 1995 version, and thereby includes all the stories that are published in Agnon's book entitled "Twenty-One Stories." The stories show how great a writer Agnon (1888-1970) was and why he was given the Nobel Prize for Literature. Some of the stories, such as "To the Father's House," contain what some call "magical realism," such as candles suspended in the air and a twentieth-century man meeting an eighteenth-century scholar. Also "The Letter," where a man draws a synagogue in the sand, knocks on its door and walks in. Others, such as "Friendship," are dream-like, Kafkaish; a man disliking his visit with a neighbor decides to go home, but he cannot find his way back and has even forgotten his address, a blind friend he hasn't seen for many years helps him, and he discovers he is standing right

beside his home. Still others show how life changes, as in *Metamorphosis*, where a married couple become distant to one another and divorce, but once the divorce is consummated they become attracted to each other. Most of the stories have many interpretations, layers of them, one deeper than the next, as in *Fable of the Goat*, where a goat leads a boy from Europe to Israel through a cave. Unfortunately, not seeing the note the boy sent his grandfather to follow the goat, the grandfather butchers the goat and loses his opportunity to go to Israel. This is a magical tale with a message that Jews are missing an opportunity to emigrate to Israel. But it also teaches that we fail to see all kinds of opportunities before us and butcher them. It is my favorite Agnon parable. Many, such as the fourteen-page *Fernheim*, are realistic, even strikingly so. Fernheim returns to see his wife Inge, whom he loves dearly. He has been in a prisoner of war camp, imprisoned for some time. Inge had been engaged with Karl Neiss when Fernheim met her, but Fernheim saw a landslide bury him during the war, and all presumed he was dead, so he and Inge were married. Now he returns from the prison camp to discover that Karl Neiss is alive and has been courting his wife who is in love with him. Inge is not even curious about Fernheim's terrible experiences in the camp. It is a very moving, pathetic story. The notes that explain the stories, which are in the end of the book, uncover the meaning of many tales, the deeper meaning we may miss. One example is *The First Kiss*, which seems to be a dream-like experience with the number three being repeated twice and being told it is one, referring to the Christian view of the trinity and the Jewish understanding that God is one; and that the kiss refers to apostates returning to the Jewish fold. Both the simple meaning and the deeper one are beautiful. The Toby Press book also includes a very interesting eight-page Preface written in 2008, notes on the ten stories that are added in this book that is absent from Schocken's book, and a two-dozen page introduction, a biographic note, and a glossary of Jewish terms that are also in the Schocken volume.

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