



The Classic Tales: 4,000 Years of Jewish Lore

Ellen Frankel

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Three hundred Jewish tales in this extraordinary volume span three continents and four millennia. Culled from traditional sources—the Bible, Talmud, Midrash, hasidic texts, and oral folklore—and retold in modern English by Ellen Frankel, these stories represent the brightest jewels in the vast treasure chest of Jewish lore. Beautifully clothed in contemporary language, these classic tales sparkle with the gentle and insightful humor of the Jewish folk imagination. And like so much of Jewish literature, these stories abound in allusions to classic Jewish texts. Biblical cadences, phrases from the prayer book, and ideas from Jewish proverbs and heroic legends resonate in the air when these tales are read or told aloud. In *The Classic Tales*, history sheds its dust to become as intimate as family memory. While the breadth and depth of this book make it completely unique, three special features also help distinguish it: God appears without gender (though certainly not without personality); women characters, so often nameless in the original biblical text, wear their midrashic names (e.g., Noah's wife Naamah, Abraham's mother Amitlai, Lot's wife Edith); and many tales of Sephardic origin have been included to correct the common American bias toward Eastern European sources. What's more, this volume has been uniquely designed to be of use to educators, rabbis, parents, and students. It features a chronological table of contents as well as six separate indexes—arranged by Jewish holidays, Torah and Haftarah readings, character types, symbols, topics, and proper names and places—to make the tales easily referenced in a wide variety of ways. Anyone who needs a story to inspire a child, to illustrate a point, to develop a sermon, or just to uplift his or her own thirsting soul will find just the right one in *The Classic Tales*.

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