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The Worlds of Sholem Aleichem: The Remarkable Life and Afterlife of the Man Who Created Tevye (Jewish Encounters Series)

Jeremy Dauber

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Part of the Jewish Encounters series

The first comprehensive biography of one of the most beloved authors of all time: the creator of *Tevye the Dairyman*, the collection of stories that inspired *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Novelist, playwright, journalist, essayist, and editor, Sholem Aleichem was one of the founding giants of modern Yiddish literature. The creator of a pantheon of characters who have been immortalized in books and plays, he provided readers throughout the world with a fascinating window into the world of Eastern European Jews as they began to confront the forces of cultural, political, and religious modernity that tore through the Russian Empire in the final decades of the nineteenth century.

But just as compelling as the fictional lives of Tevye, Golde, Menakhem-Mendl, and Motl was Sholem Aleichem's own life story. Born Sholem Rabinovich in Ukraine in 1859, he endured an impoverished childhood, married into fabulous wealth, and then lost it all through bad luck and worse business sense. Turning to his pen to support himself, he switched from writing in Russian and Hebrew to Yiddish, in order to create a living body of literature for the Jewish masses. He enjoyed spectacular success as both a writer and a performer of his work throughout Europe and the United States, and his death in 1916 was front-page news around the world; a *New York Times* editorial mourned the loss of "the Jewish Mark Twain." But his greatest fame lay ahead of him, as the English-speaking world began to discover his work in translation and to introduce his characters to an audience that would extend beyond his wildest dreams. In Jeremy Dauber's magnificent biography, we encounter a Sholem Aleichem for the ages.

(With 16 pages of black-and-white illustrations)

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