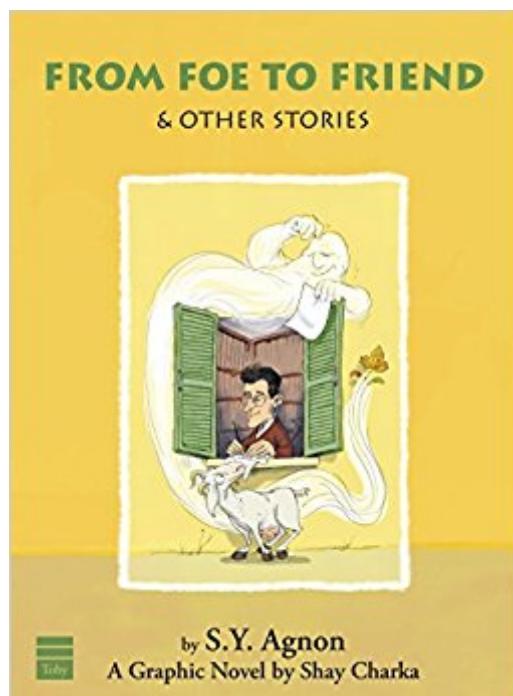


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From Foe To Friends & Other Stories: A Graphic Novel By Shay Charka



Synopsis

A new English language edition of last year's very popular Hebrew book the first time Hebrew literature's only Nobel laureate has had his stories rendered in graphic form. These three tales (which retain Agnon's original prose) rendered in comics form, are among the most beloved by Israeli children now available to the English reading world in a most engaging format. The title story, an allegory about the attempt to settle the Land of Israel in old Jerusalem and to tame its wild winds, is followed by a mystical fantasy about a delightful goat and a magical cave connecting the old world of Polish Jewry to the new world of Jewish life in the Holy Land. The volume closes with a fable of The Architect and the Emperor raising questions about the relationship between an artist and his work. Drawn in a brilliant style, Charka's illustrations are themselves a form of midrash on Agnon's prose. The keen reader will find visual echoes of Marc Chagall and Edvard Munch, alongside Bob Dylan and Rav Kook.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This important and delightful partnership between author and illustrator will introduce children (and their parents) to the magical cave of Agnon's prose. --The Jewish Review of BooksWhen I read Agnon's stories I see entire worlds drawn in my imagination. Worlds which contain images not described in Agnon's own words, but which unravel the riddles of his stories. I saw Agnon's autobiography woven into the story From Foe to Friend ; I saw what transpires in the cave connecting the Exile and the Land of Israel in The Fable of the Goat even though Agnon himself never tells us; I saw all three dimensions of an actual palace in the flat drawing of The Architect and

the Emperor . I saw all these things and wanted to share them with you so I drew them. --Shay Charka

S.Y. Agnon (1888-1970) was the central figure of modern Hebrew literature, and the 1966 Nobel Prize laureate for his body of writing. Born in the Galician town of Buczacz (in today's western Ukraine), as Shmuel Yosef Czaczkes, he arrived in 1908 in Jaffa, Ottoman Palestine, where he adopted the penname Agnon and began a meteoric rise as a young writer. Between the years 1912 and 1924 he spent an extended sojourn in Germany, where he married and had two children, and came under the patronage of Shlomo Zalman Schocken and his publishing house, allowing Agnon to dedicate himself completely to his craft. After a house fire in 1924 destroyed his library and the manuscripts of unpublished writings, he returned to Jerusalem where he lived for the remainder of his life. His works deal with the conflict between traditional Jewish life and language and the modern world, and constitute a distillation of millennia of Jewish writing from the Bible through the Rabbinic codes to Hasidic storytelling recast into the mold of modern literature. Shay Charka is one of the best known Israeli caricaturists, illustrators, and authors of comics. Among his most popular books is his Talmudic comics series, Baba. His political cartoons are featured weekly in the Israeli press, and characters he has created appear on various television networks.

Great stories

Toby Press, which is part of Koren Press, one of Israel's best publishing houses, has published twelve books in English translation by the famed Nobel Prize winning author S. Y. Agnon (1888-1970) and one graphic novel based on three of Agnon's stories by Shay Charka, which is this book. Charka is one of the best-known Israeli caricaturists. The book was originally published in Hebrew as "Shay veAgnon: Sheloshah Sippurim" (Shay and Agnon: Three Stories). The stories are delightful, thought-provoking, and humorous. The drawings are nice, charming, clever, and very funny. The stories are written on specially strong paper thicker than four pages bonded together. The first of the three tales is called "From Foe to Friend." Without telling the end of this story or of the other two, it focuses on an Israeli who wanted to move out of the old city of Jerusalem to the area called Talpiot. At that time, Talpiot was an unbuilt area; today it is a suburb in the hills to the south of the old city of Jerusalem. The man enjoyed the fresh air and smells of Talpiot and wanted to live there. Unfortunately, in those days, before Talpiot was built, the area was ruled by the king of winds who did not like the invasion of this man into his

domain. This story tells of humorous attempts by the king to rid the space of this intruder. The second, "The Fable of the Goat" is simple, yet the profoundest of the three; it is like a parable. An old man is sick and can only survive with goat's milk. He buys a goat. After a while, the goat disappears. But it returns. And when the old man tastes the goat's milk after its return, the milk is so sweet that it is like the taste of the Garden of Eden. The goat disappears and returns many times with the same tasty result. The old man tells his son that he would like to know where the goat goes when it disappears. The son suggests that they tie a rope to the goat's tale, he will hold on to the rope, and he will follow it to discover where it goes. And he does so, with a profound result. The last narrative, "The Architect and the Emperor" is about an emperor who has an architect that has built many outstanding structures for him. One day he instructed the architect to build him a splendid palace. But the architect was tired of building. When the emperor insisted, the architect painted a huge picture of a beautiful palace. When the emperor saw that all he got was an enormous painting, he bristled with anger. The architect said he did not understand why the emperor was angry. He walked up to the door in the painting, and what follows is the kind magical story for which Agnon is famous. I recommend this book as well as the other Agnon tales published by Toby Press. As the Nobel Prize committee declared, Agnon's books are superb literature.

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