



The Power of Song: And Other Sephardic Tales

Rita Roth Ph.D.

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From Hanina, the daughter of a Jewish tailor who cures a sultan's only child by taming a lioness to get her milk, to Nahum Bilbas, the brave rabbi-in-training who dares to confront the great warrior El Cid in order to secure peace for the Jews of Valencia, the folktales in this delightful collection contain lessons, truths, surprises, and happy endings. To add to the reader's enjoyment and understanding, each story is accompanied by Roth's own commentary on its origin and meaning and a definition of some of the foreign words that appear in the tale. The author's introduction gives a special insight into the history of Jewish folktales and specifically those of the Sephardic Jews. When the Jews fled the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 and scattered all over Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, they took with them the folktales that had become an integral part of their unique heritage. As they settled into their new homelands, they borrowed many of the literary devices and motifs from their adopted countries and added a unique flavor to the traditional Jewish story.

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