

# Pomegranate Seeds



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出版者:Univ of New Mexico Pr

出版时间:2005-7

装帧:Pap

isbn:9780826323910

"Pomegranate Seeds" is the first collection of the oral tradition of Latin American Jews to be presented in English. These thirty-four tales span the 500 years of Jewish presence in Latin America and the Caribbean. The folktales and cultural oral narratives were often based on actual events, recorded not only from the Ashkenazi perspective but from the Sephardic and Oriental as well. Like dispersed pomegranate seeds, all the stories come from a common cluster, yet each is a separate kernel. The stories are short, between five and fifteen pages, and each is carefully annotated. In addition to gathering stories from eleven Latin American countries, the author found material in the United States and Israel. Regardless of their origin, several tales have to do with personal feelings, emotional insights, and interpretation of the protagonists, while others deal with happy or traumatic events that cannot be forgotten and dreams that have not been fulfilled. Not surprisingly, trauma and bigotry are common threads through some of the stories. These are tales, as Nadia Grosser Nagarajan says, "concealed by tropical greenery, encircled by vast jungles and flowing majestic rivers that echo many voices and reflect many views and visions." From "Seeking Wisdom," a tale in "Pomegranate Seeds" "Many years ago, when the forests south of the river Bio-Bio were still impenetrable, there lived in the beautiful lake district of Chile a very poor family. The father and mother had two children, a girl and a boy, who helped them to fish in the lakes and gather pine nuts in the woods, and thus they had a very simple yet happy existence. . . ."

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