

Three Plays



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Avant-garde plays by a gifted and unconventional German Jewish writer, one of the few women among the Expressionists of the Berlin Moderns Famous for her poetry and infamous for her bohemian lifestyle, as well as her association with political radicals, Else Lasker-Schuler (1869-1945) is only now returning to just renown as one of the few women writers within the Expressionist movement of the early twentieth century. These plays-Dark River, Arthur Aronymus and His Ancestors, and I and I-in Jane Curtis's fluid translation, allow readers of English to experience the radically avant-garde style that put Lasker-Schuler on a par with Brecht in her day, as well as the passionate treatment of questions of gender, ethnicity, and sexuality that placed her well ahead of her time. Lasker-Schuler's plays reflect her unusual life among the Berlin Moderns of the 1910s and 20s. The daughter of a well-to-do Jewish banker and builder, Else Schuler gave up her bourgeois existence as a doctor's wife for the artistic, social, and political uncertainties that would characterize the rest of her life. Many of her finest poems and plays were written amidst the cafe society of Berlin, where she knew some of the great expressionist artists of the period. The death of her beloved son in 1927, which led her to intense introspection and reflection on the Jewish tradition, especially mysticism and the Kabbalah, also marked the beginning of Lasker-Schuler's years of tragedy, loss, and dislocation, culminating in her flight from Nazi Germany to

Switzerland and then Jerusalem, where she ended her days as an eccentric pauper. The plays in this volume mark Lasker-Schuler's movement away from the traditional aesthetic canon, revealing a unique formal development from naturalistic expressionist episodes in the lyrical *Dark River* to a historicizing politicization of the theater in *Arthur Aronymous* to the forms of montage and "epic" presentations in *I and I*. A short preface by Inca Molina Rumold places each play in its historical, biographical, and artistic context.

作者介绍:

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