

# BARTON LIBRARY

*Dare to know*

## Jewish Fiction

*Fiction that promotes Jewish practices and customs or exemplifies Judaism.*

A sub-genre in which stories discuss Jewish themes or are written by Jewish authors. There exists a massive corpus of Jewish literature, and the Barton Library will mostly restrict its acquisitions in this area to Jewish American fiction. While some authors may resist being characterized as “Jewish voices,” literary scholars have acknowledged a distinctive body and practice of writing on Jewishness in America. This sub-genre depicts the struggles of immigrant life, the stable yet estranged middle-class existence that ensued, and the trials of cultural acceptance. Abraham Cahan’s *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), Henry Roth’s *Call It Sleep* (1934), Sholem Aleichem’s *Tevye’s Daughters* (1949), Isaac Bashevis Singer’s *The Family Moskat* (1950), Bernard Malamud’s *The Assistant* (1957), Leon Uris’s *Exodus* (1958), Philip Roth’s *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959), Saul Bellow’s *Herzog* (1964) and *Mr. Sammler’s Planet* (1969), and Chaim Potok’s *The Chosen* (1967) are classic examples.

## Common Elements

Judaism
Zionism
Jewish sensibilities
Jewish memory
Alienation
Repentance and redemption

Exile and return
Assimilation
Resurgence of tradition
Anti-Semitism
Shared sense of history
Human frailties

## Benefits of Reading

Offers readers a connection between past and present
Describes to readers the Jewish people’s history and culture

Teaches readers how the Jewish identity has been shaped by history and events
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## Modern Literary Examples

<i>4 3 2 1</i> (2017) by Paul Auster
<i>The Autobiography of God</i> (2004) by Julius Lester
<i>Bad Jews and Other Stories</i> (1999) by Gerald Shapiro
<i>Beware of God</i> (2005) by Shalom Auslander

<i>The Cannibal Galaxy</i> (1983) by Cynthia Ozick
<i>Elijah Visible</i> (1996) by Thane Rosenbaum
<i>Everything is Illuminated</i> (2002) by Jonathan Safran Foer

<i>Fabulous Small Jews</i> (2003) by Joseph Epstein
<i>Forest Dark</i> (2017) by Nicole Krauss
<i>For the Relief of Unbearable Urges</i> (1999) by Nathan Englander
<i>The German Money</i> (2003) by Lev Raphael
<i>An Hour in Paradise</i> (2003) by Joan Leegant
<i>The Illuminated Soul</i> (2020) by Aryeh Lev Stollman
<i>In the Image</i> (2002) by Dara Horn
<i>Joy Comes in the Morning</i> (2004) by Jonathan Rosen
<i>Kaaterskill Falls</i> (1998) by Allegra Goodman
<i>The Ladies Auxiliary</i> (1999) by Tova Mirvis
<i>The Matchmaker's Gift</i> (2022) by Lynda Cohen Loigman

<i>Mazel</i> (1995) by Rebecca Goldstein
<i>Nurse's Crimes</i> (2000) by Ayelet Waldman
<i>The Place Will Comfort You</i> (2004) by Naama Goldstein
<i>The Romance Reader</i> (1995) by Pearl Abraham
<i>Seven Blessings</i> (2003) by Ruchama King
<i>The Shawl</i> (1989) by Cynthia Ozick
<i>Stories of an Imaginary Childhood</i> (1992) by Melvin Bukiet
<i>There Are Jews in My House</i> (2003) by Lara Vapnyar
<i>To the End of the Land</i> (2010) by David Grossman
<i>Welcome to Heavenly Heights</i> (2003) by Risa Miller
<i>Witz</i> (2010) by Joshua Cohen