



Shush! Growing Up Jewish under Stalin: A Memoir

Emil Draitser

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Many years after making his way to America from Odessa in Soviet Ukraine, Emil Draitser made a startling discovery: every time he uttered the word "Jewish"—even in casual conversation—he lowered his voice. This behavior was a natural by-product, he realized, of growing up in the anti-Semitic, post-Holocaust Soviet Union, when "Shush!" was the most frequent word he heard: "Don't use your Jewish name in public. Don't speak a word of Yiddish. And don't cry over your murdered relatives." This compelling memoir conveys the reader back to Draitser's childhood and provides a unique account of midtwentieth-century life in Russia as the young Draitser struggles to reconcile the harsh values of Soviet society with the values of his working-class Jewish family. Lively, evocative, and rich with humor, this unforgettable story ends with the death of Stalin and, through life stories of the author's ancestors, presents a sweeping panorama of two centuries of Jewish history in Russia.

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