



## SUNRISE, SUNSET

Written by Sheldon Harnick

Illustrated by Ian Schoenherr

*From the musical Fiddler on the Roof comes this illustrated version of the much-loved song about the passage of time.*

“Fiddler on the Roof” is very likely the most famous of Jewish musicals. The title of the play comes from a surrealist painting by Marc Chagall. This painting is just one of the many works by this Russian artist in which a violinist sits on the roof, symbolizing the ability to cope in an ever-changing, often perilous world. Set in a *shtetl* (small Jewish town) in tsarist Russia near the turn of the 20th century, “Fiddler” is the story of a Jewish family with five daughters trying to live a life of “tradition” in a time of transformation and danger. Though the family experiences hardship and challenge, the love they share is clear and constant. Simple in its poetic text, Sunrise, Sunset visually shows Jewish life in Eastern Europe at the time.

Take advantage of the soft words and sweet, haunting melody of this song. If you are familiar with it, sing the words or hum the tune to your little ones. Recordings are easily available on-line or in libraries and music stores. This song is one that can be played in the quiet of the evening or as a gentle song for awakening.

### SHOLEM ALEICHEM

“Fiddler on the Roof” is based on “Tevey the Milkman,” an 1894 story by the author Sholem Aleichem. One of the most well known of Yiddish writers, he was sometimes

described as “the Jewish Mark Twain” because of the nature and style of his works. He ultimately moved from his native Russia to New York, where he died in 1916.

The day after the author’s funeral, which drew 100,000 mourners, his will was published by the New York Times. In his will, he asked that friends and family gather to “select one of my stories, one of the very merry ones, and recite it in whatever language is most intelligible to you. Let my name be recalled with laughter,” Sholem Aleichem asked, “or not at all.” Pj

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