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The Red Tent



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Synopsis

Her name is Dinah. In the Bible, her life is only hinted at in a brief and violent detour within the more familiar chapters of the Book of Genesis that are about her father, Jacob, and his dozen sons. Told in Dinah's voice, this novel reveals the traditions and turmoils of ancient womanhoodÃ¢â ¬â •the world of the red tent. It begins with the story of her mothersÃ¢â ¬â •Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and BilhahÃ¢â ¬â •the four wives of Jacob. They love Dinah and give her gifts that sustain her through a hard-working youth, a calling to midwifery, and a new home in a foreign land. Dinah's story reaches out from a remarkable period of early history and creates an intimate connection with the past. Deeply affecting, The Red Tent combines rich storytelling with a valuable achievement in modern fiction: a new view of biblical women's society.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I watched the mini series before I read this book mostly because I didn't know it was a book first. I had always been captivated by the women that the Bible mentions but doesn't elaborate on, Dinah being one of them. Biblically accurate, not entirely but that's to be expected and didn't shock or offended me. As a woman and mother to a daughter, this makes me want to teach her well of herself and myself and her holy calling. This book is beautiful and devastating in all the grief and betrayal. But still, all the birth. All the life. God is between the lines, even if His nine was rarely mentioned.

Compelling and lovingly drawn story of the life of Dinah, who was the daughter of Jacob and Leah in

Genesis, and whose story is unknown. Rich in historical context and detail, the author imagines the roles of women in this time and the power and influence that they may have had in their families and larger society. I found it to be a true affirmation of me as a woman. As in our current times, the power of an individual woman or man varies according to circumstances, personal qualities, and possibly fate. This is a much -loved and acclaimed book since it's publication in 1997. It had been on my to read it for years, but I only recently read it. So glad I did, as it is a story that will provide ongoing inspiration to me.

This book made me think of a well known Bible story in a different perspective. It made me think of the Bible characters as people. The book made me cherish my relationships with other women deeper. Anytime a book can cause you to think, is a good book. The book was slow reading for the first half and I wondered what it could possibly go into for so many pages on such a short Bible story, but I soon found out.

I decided to read the book after catching the 2-part show on Lifetime. I was intrigued with their teaser of her having 1 line in the bible while this told "the rest of the story". I started by opening my bible and finding the reference to Dinah. I found she didn't even have a line of speech, only a paragraph of text. What happened to Dinah is so far-reaching, causing Jacob to change his name to Israel in shame over his sons response. I ended up reading the rest of Genesis and most of Exodus. But then I wondered what liberties the screenplay had taken from the book. And while there are some differences, I enjoyed both immensely.

Extraordinary story, and a very unique one, which enhanced my enjoyment. Even before I finished, I wanted to go back to the Book of Genesis and refresh my memory about the characters and their lineage. The bible, in most instances, gives little history of its women, and it was truly refreshing to read a fictional first-person narrative from a barely-mentioned woman of that time period, telling us her version of her life. I was particularly drawn into the sisterhood of the red tent--the practices of the time, and how women survived primitive conditions, especially primitive births. But I also wanted to know more about the men in Dinah's family, and what happened to them. Fascinating book and stellar accomplishment, taking me into the ancient world for several pleasant hours.

I had first heard about this book a decade ago, when I was still having my babies, which I enjoyed so much I considering becoming a doula or midwife. But I didn't get around to reading it until now.

And I hesitated upon reading reviews because so many seemed disappointed. I guess many of those disappointed reviewers were looking for a religious story. I was not. I found this a fascinating look into the past, with very engaging storytelling. It was slow to get started and very confusing with so many names but soon I figured out what was going on and I was hooked. I think I'd like to read it again someday.

I'm not sure why some people think that using biblical characters means the book should include god or be based on stories in the bible. It was a story that held my attention, at times was fascinating, and at other times, left me a bit wondering how we got to a particular part. I wish I could give it 4.5 stars.

This is the first novel I have read from this author, but it won't be the last! The story of Dinah is a lesson in the realities of life, and Dinah does not give up. There were moments in the novel when I laughed at her childish ways, and moments when I wished that I could have had the closeness that women shared in that time. But I do not think I could have survived the horror that Dinah experienced, and certainly most would have gone mad. I love this book. I love how it made me laugh, long, wonder, and hope. I even love how it brought tears to my eyes, both in happiness and sadness. It is a beautiful story...read it. Share it with your daughters and granddaughters.

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