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The Red Tent - 20th Anniversary Edition: A Novel



Synopsis

Deeply affecting, *The Red Tent* combines rich storytelling with a valuable contribution in modern fiction: a new perspective of female life in biblical society. It is a vast and stirring work described as what the Bible might have been had it been written by God's daughters instead of sons. Far beyond the traditional women-of-the-Bible sagas in both impact and vigor, *The Red Tent* is based upon a mention in Genesis of Jacob's only female offspring—his daughter, Dinah. Author Anita Diamant, in the voice of Dinah, gives an insider's look at the details of women's lives in biblical times and a chronicle of their earthy stories and long-ignored histories. The red tent of the title is the place where women were sequestered during their cycles of birthing, menses, and illness. It is here that Dinah hears the whispered stories of her four mothers—Jacob's wives Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah—and tells their tales to us in remarkable and thought-provoking oratories. Familiar passages from the Bible take on new life as Dinah fills in what the Bible has left out—the lives of women. Dinah tells us of her initiation into the religious and sexual practices of the tribe; Jacob's courtship with Rachel and Leah; the ancient world of caravans, farmers, midwives, and slaves; her ill-fated sojourn in the city of Sechem; her years in Canaan; and her half-brother Joseph's rise in Egypt. Skillfully interweaving biblical tales with characters of her own invention, the author re-creates the life of Dinah providing an illuminating portrait of a courageous woman and the life she might have lived. A new view of the panorama of life in biblical times emerges from the female perspective, and the red tent itself becomes a symbol of womanly strength, love, and wisdom. *The Red Tent* is one of those extremely rare publishing phenomenons—a little promoted, but dynamically successful book (over 250,000 copies sold) that owes its success to enthusiastic word-of-mouth endorsements. Now, for the first time, this sweeping saga, which has struck a chord with so many modern-day women, comes to life as a much-anticipated audiobook.

Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Macmillan Audio; Unabridged edition (January 5, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1559277092

ISBN-13: 978-1559277099

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 1.6 x 5.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

I would like to take a moment to address some of the complaints made in the May 19th review. I did not experience THE RED TENT as male bashing. It's intent was to take a female view of the major women of the Old Testament and to breathe life into them. It is "over endowed" with a female viewpoint as a counterbalance to the bible's male view. Women in the BIBLE were often hardly more than property, so it is not too surprising that a fictionalized female character from this period might see men somewhat differently than we do. The BIBLE does portray Laban as a pretty disagreeable character, but in this book Jacob is portrayed as a tragic figure, not a negative figure. He is not the cause of the terrible massacre, but assumes the guilt of his tribe. Until then he is a respected male figure in the book. The women have their weak points as well. Rachel is vain, and the grandmother, Rebecca is a formidable figure of both arrogance and power. Isaac's trauma as a child, being nearly slaughtered by his own father, was treated with compassion. Diamant has Dinah speak of this trauma and how it left Isaac with a stutter for the rest of his life. Some of the women are weak in a way that makes them disagreeable. The carpenter husband of Dinah, Benia, is a truly admirable and loveable male figure and her young husband, the prince Shalem, slaughtered at the hands of her brothers, is as gentle and romantic a young man as you could want. As to the continual reference to pregnancies and childbirth, I believe this had a deliberate intent. During biblical times, childbearing is what gave women power.

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