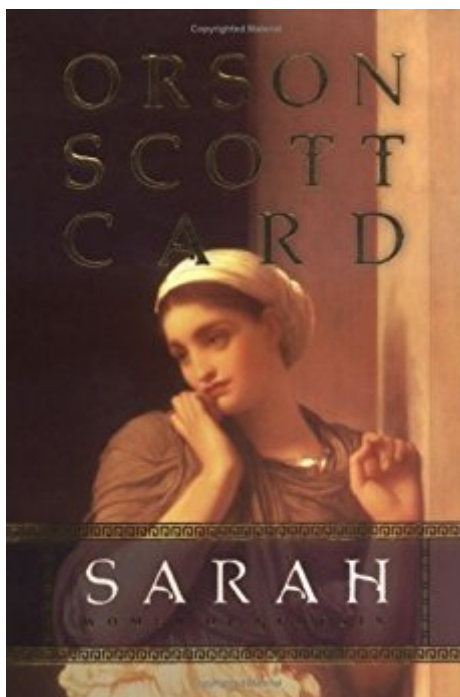


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Sarah: Women Of Genesis: 1 (Women Of Genesis (Forge))



Synopsis

In Sarah, author Orson Scott Card uses his fertile imagination and uncanny insight into human nature to flesh out a unique woman — one who is beautiful, tough, smart, and resourceful in an era when women get short shrift in life as well as in the historical record. Sarah takes on vivid reality as a woman desirable to kings, a devoted wife, and a faithful follower of the God of Abraham, chosen to experience an incomparable miracle. Set in the splendor and excess of Egypt and the starkly beautiful desert landscapes of the Sinai peninsula, Sarah is an altogether believable and provocative drama. This first novel in a trilogy on the women of Genesis illuminates the hardships and the triumphs of a woman destined for greatness.

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Customer Reviews

Unlike what one other reviewer has written here, I believe this book is very much in keeping with almost all other novels Card has written: characters of strength and integrity committed to some grand cause, sometimes misunderstanding each other, coming to equality in relationships by the end. Of course, a little politicking/social maneuvering is thrown in as well, as well as historicity of

customs and action (oooh, how racy =were= those Egyptians, anyway? One wonders if today's fashions of tight T-shirts and bun-hugging jeans, though not as translucent as the Egyptian linens, would have been found objectionable by the modest desert nomads?) While Card adds details not found in the original Biblical source (and he also admits to adding some details that are not found in the Old Testament, but are in Mormon scripture), he also edits the story to sew up some plot holes - not unreasonable, considering, as with many of the Genesis stories, there is more than one source (checking my Bible, it mentions that both the Eloist and Yahwist sources both contribute (so named because of their words for God - either Eloi or Yahweh)). One sees the repetition of the device of the man claiming his wife to be his sister in the Bible - not only twice in the case of Abraham and Sarah, but also in Isaac's story. Many of these plot changes may irritate a Biblical fundamentalist, but they are not too glaring. I had to go back to the Bible to figure out what was changed -- the story pretty much agreed with the tale I remember hearing as a child. However, the best part of this book was Sarah herself.

"Sarah" sets out to take the light sketch of Abraham's wife in the Bible and extend it into a full novel telling much of her life's story from her point of view. If "Sarah" is any clue, OS Card set out with the "Women of Genesis" series to loft a feminist retake on the biblical story of the patriarchs: What were the wives of these great prophets up to? Why do they, despite sparing reference in the Bible, get a lot more attention than almost any other women in the male-dominated scriptures? Could it be because they were as intelligent, brave, righteous, and powerful in their service to the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," just as much as their famous, credit-hogging husbands? Sarah turns out to qualify, not just as a co-equal with the revered Abraham, but his indispensable support without whom he could not have lived up to greatness. In keeping with this 20th-century revision of 4,000-year-old nomadic culture, Sarah is also outspoken and liberated, with Abraham not batting an eye, as both of them talk like modern Americans. Those easily offended at irreverent takes on revered religious figures will not appreciate Abraham teasing the aging Sarah about her saggy breasts, though those offended by religious stuffiness will have a ball with the refreshingly human portrayals. Nor will purists of the historical novel appreciate the dialog, though the author has made a genuine effort to depict an accurate milieu of nomadic life. Actually, since depicting ancient culture really accurately is ultimately an intractable challenge, substituting the audience's culture into the unknowns makes as much sense for the story as anything.

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