



The Red Tent: A Novel

By Anita Diamant

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The Red Tent: A Novel By Anita Diamant

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 womanhood-the world of the red tent. It begins with the story of her mothers-Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah-the four wives of Jacob. They love Dinah and give her gifts that are to sustain her through a damaged 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, immediate connection.

Deeply affecting, *The Red Tent* combines rich storytelling with a valuable achievement in modern fiction: a new view of Biblical women's society.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The red tent is the place where women gathered during their cycles of birthing, menses, and even illness. Like the conversations and mysteries held within this feminine tent, this sweeping piece of fiction offers an insider's look at the daily life of a biblical sorority of mothers and wives and their one and only daughter, Dinah. Told in the voice of Jacob's daughter Dinah (who only received a glimpse of recognition in the Book of Genesis), we are privy to the fascinating feminine characters who bled within the red tent. In a confiding and poetic voice, Dinah whispers stories of her four mothers, Rachel, Leah, Zilpah, and Bilhah--all wives to Jacob, and each one embodying unique feminine traits. As she reveals these sensual and emotionally charged stories we learn of birthing miracles, slaves, artisans, household gods, and sisterhood secrets. Eventually Dinah delves into her own saga of betrayals, grief, and a call to midwifery.

"Like any sisters who live together and share a husband, my mother and aunties spun a sticky web of loyalties and grudges," Anita Diamant writes in the voice of Dinah. "They traded secrets like bracelets, and these were handed down to me the only surviving girl. They told me things I was too young to hear. They held my face between their hands and made me swear to remember." Remembering women's earthy stories and passionate history is indeed the theme of this magnificent book. In fact, it's been said that *The Red Tent* is what the Bible might have been had it been written by God's daughters, instead of her sons. --Gail Hudson

From Library Journal

Skillfully interweaving biblical tales with events and characters of her own invention, Diamant's (Living a Jewish Life, HarperCollins, 1991) sweeping first novel re-creates the life of Dinah, daughter of Leah and Jacob, from her birth and happy childhood in Mesopotamia through her years in Canaan and death in Egypt. When Dinah reaches puberty and enters the Red Tent (the place women visit to give birth or have their monthly periods), her mother and Jacob's three other wives initiate her into the religious and sexual practices of the tribe. Diamant sympathetically describes Dinah's doomed relationship with Shalem, son of a ruler of Shechem, and his brutal death at the hands of her brothers. Following the events in Canaan, a pregnant Dinah travels to Egypt, where she becomes a noted midwife. Diamant has written a thoroughly enjoyable and illuminating portrait of a fascinating woman and the life she might have lived. Recommended for all public libraries.

--Nancy Pearl, Washington Ctr. for the Book, Seattle

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From Kirkus Reviews

Cubits beyond most Woman-of-the-Bible sagas in sweep and vigor, this fictive flight based on the Genesis mention of Dinah, offspring of Jacob and Leah, disclaims her as a mere "defiled" victim and, further, celebrates the ancient continuity and unity of women. Dinah was the cherished only daughter of "four mothers," all of whom bore sons by Jacob. It is through daughters, though, that the songs, stories, and wisdom of the mothers and grandmothers are remembered. Dinah tells the mothers' tales from the time that that shaggy stranger Jacob appears in the land of his distant kin Laban. There are Jacob's marriages to the beautiful Rachel and the competent Leah, "reeking of bread and comfort." Also bedded are Zilpah, a goddess worshipper who has little use for men, and tiny, dark, and silent Bilhah. Hard-working Jacob is considerate to the equally hard-working women, who, in the "red tent"--where they're sequestered at times of monthly cycles, birthing, and illness--take comfort and courage from one another and household gods. The trek to Canaan, after Jacob outwits Laban, offers Dinah wonders, from that "time out of life" when the traveling men and women laugh and sing together, on to Dinah's first scent of a great river, "heady as

incense, heavy and dark." She observes the odd reunion of Jacob and Esau, meets her cruel and proud grandmother, and celebrates the women's rite of maturity. She also loves passionately the handsome Prince Shalem, who expects to marry her. Dinah's tale then follows the biblical account as Jacob's sons trick and then slaughter a kingdom. Diamant's Dinah, mad with grief, flees to Egypt, gives birth to a son, suffers, and eventually finds love and peace. With stirring scenery and a narrative of force and color, a readable tale marked by hortatory fulminations and voluptuous lamentations. For a liberal Bible audience with a possible spillover to the Bradley relationship. -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Linda Yohe:

Book is actually written, printed, or illustrated for everything. You can know everything you want by a guide. Book has a different type. As we know that book is important point to bring us around the world. Next to that you can your reading proficiency was fluently. A book The Red Tent: A Novel will make you to end up being smarter. You can feel more confidence if you can know about every little thing. But some of you think which open or reading a book make you bored. It isn't make you fun. Why they could be thought like that? Have you looking for best book or appropriate book with you?

Joel Faulkner:

The reason? Because this The Red Tent: A Novel is an unordinary book that the inside of the e-book waiting for you to snap this but latter it will jolt you with the secret it inside. Reading this book adjacent to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such awesome way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of gains than the other book include such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to delay having that book? If I were you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

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Catherine Gates:

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