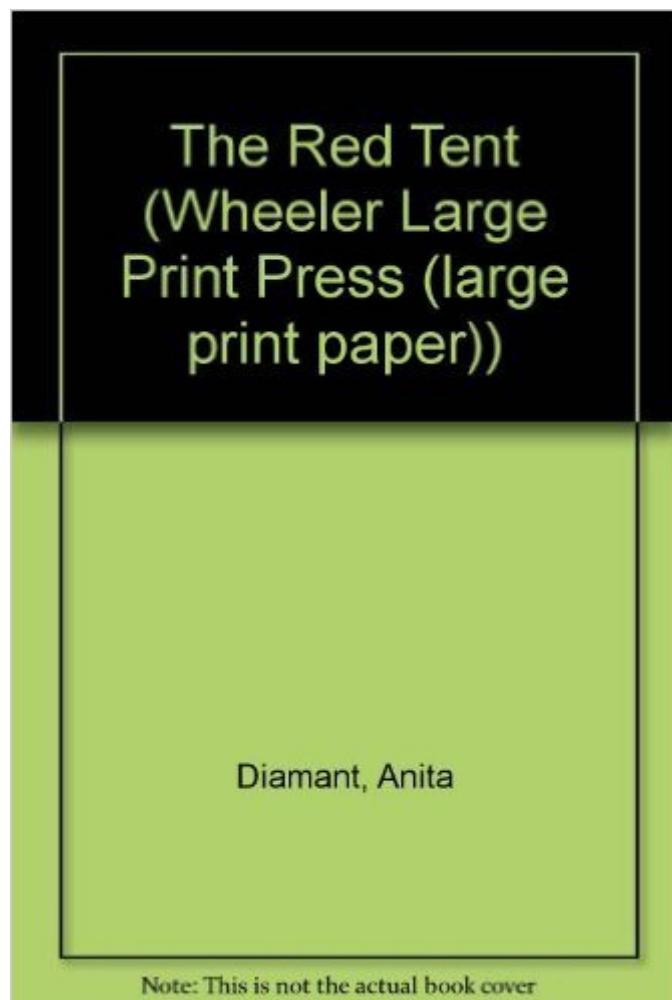


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# The Red Tent (Wheeler Large Print Press (large Print Paper))



## **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. In *The Red Tent*, Anita Diamant brings this fascinating biblical character to vivid life. Told in Dinah's voice, the novel reveals the traditions and turmoils of ancient womanhood—the world of the red tent. It begins with the story of Dinah's mothers—Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah—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. With over 3.3 million copies sold, *The Red Tent* is a modern classic loved throughout the world, and the basis of the A&E/Lifetime mini-series. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

## **Book Information**

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Paperback

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (2,998 customer reviews)

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## **Customer Reviews**

It would appear that any book about interesting and perhaps unusual women generates much controversy among its readership ("Bitter Grounds" and "The Poisonwood Bible" come to mind). This book is no different. The Red Tent is loosely based on the Biblical story of Dinah, but it is a novel, not fact, even though it may be based in fact. Diamant even takes liberties with the Dinah story as it appears in Genesis in the Bible. However, it does appear to be thoroughly researched -- I found myself equally fascinated by descriptions of life during Biblical times as by the lives of the

characters in the book. Unlike some of the other reviewers I didn't find this book to be anti-male. I and many women I know lead very different lives from our men and we too see them in a completely different light than they see themselves. We often laugh at them or paint them in an unflattering light, despite the fact that we love them. We are not, however, anti-male, just human and female. I suspect men amongst themselves discuss women in much the same way. I personally found this book full of thoughts and ideas that touched me deeply, especially since I am 40 years old, have had several children and have lived in foreign countries. Perhaps much younger people would have trouble identifying some of the "human condition" scenarios in the book -- I don't know. Regardless, I have wholeheartedly recommended this book to several people and recommend it to you.

This is, by far, one of the best books I have read in a long time, leaving me sorry that it was over. The writing is beautiful in its depiction of life, from the women's point of view, about 4000 years ago. It was so incredibly moving that I found myself in tears at several times -- something that does not happen often! This tale is a possible story of the life of Jacob's daughter, Dinah, who barely is mentioned in the Old Testament. It starts with a recounting of Jacob's marriages to Dinah's mother, and her mother's three sisters, the births of the resulting children, and Dinah's youth, learning at her "mothers'" sides. It continues with Jacob's departure with his family and flocks from the lands of his father-in-law, and follows Dinah through her death. I don't want to say any more, because it would ruin the story. The author does not suggest that this is the "real" story, or a "supplement" to the Bible. It is not a religious book, per se, but does discuss the God of Jacob's father and, in contrast, the multitude of gods worshipped by other cultures of the time. The story is meant to provide a possible tale of an otherwise minor character, and affords a glimpse into the women's world of that time, not usually covered in the Bible. I cannot recommend this book more highly.

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. It is natural to assume that women of that period would indeed be obsessed with their own ability to bring children into the world - especially women of strength who would be able determine ways to use that ability to some advantage. The very nature of the Red Tent, was that it bonded women in a way that as a group gave them more leverage. Their "mysterious" ways were kept from the men who were somewhat fearful of their rituals and knowledge of childbearing. This was a woman's main source of power in a life that was in many ways powerless. Being a mid wife was as close to a career as a woman could have and it commanded respect from everyone. You have to remember that men and women did lead very separate lives at that time. Another source of power, still "mysterious" to men, was the role of a priestess and ordainer. Rebecca had this role down to a science in order to insure her place of distinction in the ancient world. I present these ideas as a difference of opinion to the previous reviewer, who is of course entitled to her opinion. I had my book group meeting last night and our book of discussion was THE RED TENT, so these themes were very much on my mind and I felt compelled to respond.

First of all let me say that I absolutely loved The Red Tent. It's based on a character, Dinah, who is mentioned in passing in the old testament. Diamant has created a wonderful story about the women of biblical times, our fore-mothers Rebecca, Sarah, Rachel, and Leah, from Dinah's point of view. You do not have to be familiar with the bible to enjoy this novel, although if you are, you'll certainly recognize stories and characters. It's about the strength of women, their roles in a male dominated religious society, and their all important relationships. Although I was eager to read this book, I didn't expect it to have such an impact on me, nor did I expect to love it as much as I did. Highly recommended.

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