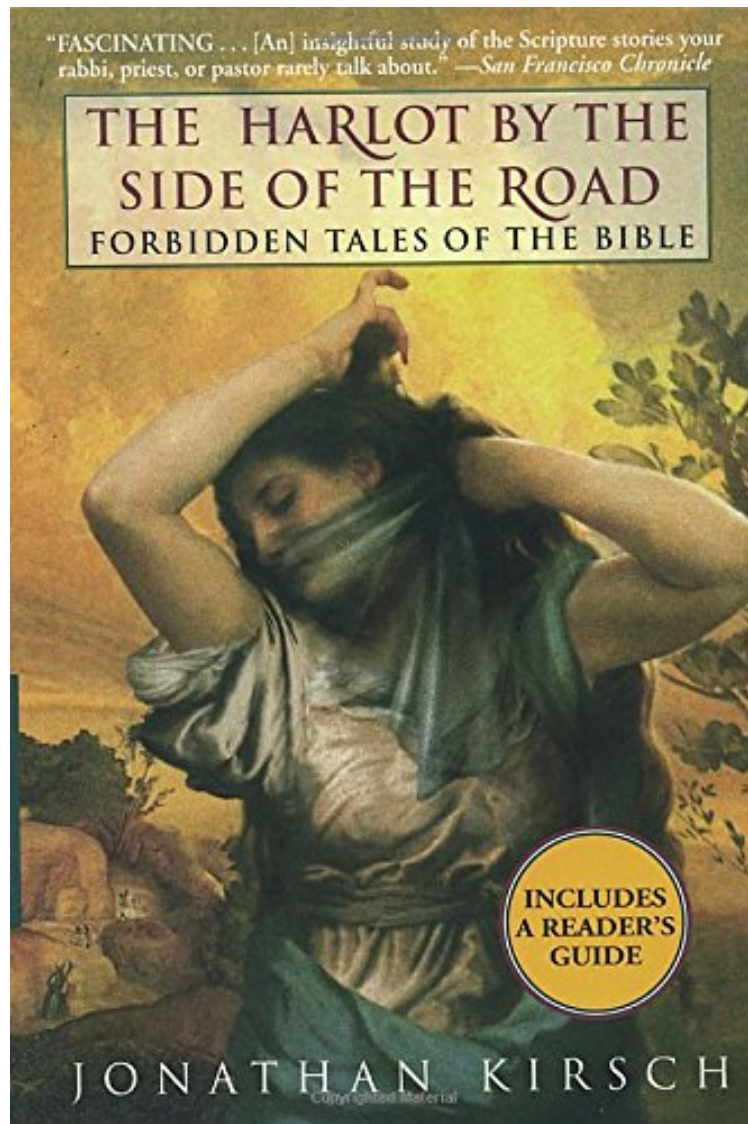


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The Harlot by the Side of the Road: Forbidden Tales of the Bible

Jonathan Kirsch

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#250237 in Books Jonathan Kirsch 1998-03-03 1998-03-03 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.20 x .90 x 5.501, .65 #File Name: 0345418824378 pages The Harlot by the Side of the Road | File size: 41.Mb

Jonathan Kirsch : The Harlot by the Side of the Road: Forbidden Tales of the Bible before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Harlot by the Side of the Road: Forbidden Tales of the Bible:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The idioms were different then By Marianne Davis I have not read the whole book yet, but it is at least as gritty as advertised. I am surprised at how much of the material I have some familiarity with (when did I get that far into reading the Bible? It's a mystery) but there is still a lot that is new. Some of

the comments about idiom and language tricks being used to conceal these stories from the unpriestly masses has intrigued me as well. I would not be surprised to learn that some of the ideas that I had while reading (starting with a Ruth story) have been covered in some of the source material. The trick will be to locate the source material to see. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read. By The Blackwolf Everything You didn't know that was in the Bible. I have read the Bible a couple of times and never put two and two together. Yes, I did have to read it when I was younger with My Mother. The second time was when I was in Vietnam. After coming home I never picked the Bible up again. It was good reading this book, now I'll pick up the Bible again to read it again. 11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Stimulating By Howard R First, let me say that I am an atheist who has never really sat down to read the bible at any great length, and yet I was familiar with several of the "forbidden tales". I found the book to be an entertaining and somewhat thought provoking read. Reading Kirsch's book has actually made me want to explore further the field of biblical analysis and scholarship. So, I suppose that you could say in that respect, the book is good. What, after all, should a book do if not make you want to know more about its subject matter.

"The stories you are about to read are some of the most violent and sexually explicit in all of Western literature. They are tales of human passion in all of its infinite variety: adultery, seduction, incest, rape, mutilation, assassination, torture, sacrifice, and murder. . . ." Sex. Violence. Scandal. These are words we rarely associate with the sacred text of the Bible. Yet in this brilliant book, Jonathan Kirsch recounts shocking tales that have been suppressed by religious authorities throughout history. Kirsch places each story within the political and social context of its time, delves into the latest biblical scholarship to explain why each one was originally censored, and shows how these ancient narratives hold valuable lessons for all of us.

From Library Journal Kirsch, an attorney and book critic, retells some of the juicier stories of the Bible in contemporary language. He expands upon the original biblical text to make the stories highly readable and includes with each the original text in modern translation and a brief sketch of the scholarly research and the speculation surrounding it. For those to whom Bible stories suggest "Disneyesque animals and simple uplifting moral lessons," this book may be a bit of a shock. Kirsch shows that the Bible is not a children's book. Then, as now, rape, incest, prostitution, murder, and strange religious cults were a part of life. As Kirsch says, "The Bible is a map of the human heart, and no secret chamber or hidden passage is left out." Kirsch contends that returning to the Bible can offer insight into modern issues. Mostly, however, he offers an irresistible popularization of some unfamiliar stories. Some readers will enjoy it; others will be highly offended. Recommended for public libraries. ?C. Robert Nixon, MLS, Lafayette, Ind. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Although some of these biblical tales are not as "forbidden" as Kirsch makes out--both David's and Lot's stories have been on TV's Mysteries of the Bible they do contain far more sex and violence than most readers would expect to find in a holy book. Demonstrating meticulous research and an enticing style, Kirsch recounts the rape of Dinah, in which the seducer of Jacob's daughter, along with 300 of his men, are circumcised and then murdered when they are too weak from their surgery to run; the seduction of Judah by his daughter-in-law Tamar; and the murder of Uriah by David, in order that David may have Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. Along the way, Kirsch comments perceptively on the implications of numerous instances of what he calls the "gyno-sadism" of the Bible--women being raped, gang-raped, and murdered. Along with excerpts from the Holy Scriptures according to Maoretic Text, Kirsch retells the stories, places them in the context of the time, and thoroughly addresses levels of meaning for both the ancient and modern readers. Fascinating reading. Ilene Cooper From Kirkus s An amateur Bible student's attempt to deal with the complexities of biblical sexuality. The oxymoronic subtitle says it all. Biblical episodes used for millennia for moral instruction are far from forbidden. And yet, in the unmistakable cadence of the tabloid TV narrator, L.A. Times book critic, novelist, and lawyer Kirsch guides us with wide eyes toward several biblical episodes containing incest or rape: "You mean that's in the Bible? Yes, dear reader, that's in the Bible. But wait--it gets worse." And so does Kirsch's retelling of these stories. Whether the typically sparse, clinical Hebrew Bible text is about Lot and his daughters, the rape of Dinah, or Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar (the harlot of the title), Kirsch's novelistic retellings have all the subtlety of a tabloid tale. In treating the title episode from Genesis 38, for example, in which the childless and widowed Tamar poses as a harlot to trick her father-in-law into impregnating her, the author calls it "an erotic fairy tale," even though all the details of Tamar's swaying breasts and "strange hunger" are his own invention. Kirsch pens in a description of Tamar's veil falling off, then speculates about how Judah's fervor might have been affected by the discovery that the harlot by the side of the road was his neglected daughter-in-law. While such fictionalizations surely eroticize the original texts, they purposefully cleanse them of any supernatural qualities. Lot's angels with blinding light become mere hunks with house lanterns. While Kirsch displays some familiarity with classical Bible critics, he appears perplexed by the concept that the Hebrew Bible's theology isn't Canaanite: "Another curious feature of the Hebrew Bible is the absence of a female counterpart to God." A retelling for those so unfamiliar with the sex and violence in the Bible that they think it merits a PG rating. (Author tour) -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.