The Red Tent (1997)
By Anita Diamant
(Winner, Indies' Choice Book Awards: Adult Fiction)

Discussion questions taken from ReadingGroupGuides.com

1. Read Genesis 34 and discuss how THE RED TENT changes your perspective on Dinah’s story and also on the story of Joseph that follows. Does THE RED TENT raise questions about other women in the Bible? Does it make you want to re-read the Bible and imagine other untold stories that lay hidden between the lines?

2. Discuss the marital dynamics of Jacob’s family. He has four wives; compare his relationship with each woman?

3. What do you make of the relationships among the four wives?

4. Dinah is rich in "mothers." Discuss the differences or similarities in her relationship with each woman.

5. Childbearing and childbirth are central to THE RED TENT How do the fertility childbearing and birthing practices differ from contemporary life? How are they similar? How do they compare with your own experiences as a mother or father?

6. Discuss Jacob’s role as a father. Does he treat Dinah differently from his sons? Does he feel differently about her? If so, how?

7. Discuss Dinah’s twelve brothers. Discuss their relationships with each other, with Dinah, and with Jacob and his four wives. Are they a close family?

8. Female relationships figure largely in THE RED TENT Discuss the importance of Inna, Tabea, Werenro, and Meryt.

9. In the novel, Rebecca is presented as an Oracle. Goddesses are venerated along with gods. What do you think of this culture, in which the Feminine has not yet been totally divorced from the Divine? How does El, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, fit into this?

10. Dinah’s point of view is often one of an outsider, an observer. What effect does this have on the narrative? What effect does this have on the reader?

11. The book travels from Haran (contemporary Iraq/Syria), through Canaan and into Shechem (Israel), and into Egypt. What strikes you about the cultural differences Dinah encounters vis-à-vis food, clothing, work, and male-female relationships.

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12. In THE RED TENT, we see Dinah grow from childhood to old age. Discuss how she changes and matures. What lessons does she learn from life? If you had to pick a single word to describe the sum of her life, what word would you choose? How would Dinah describe her own life experience?

Author Bio:

Anita Diamant is an American author of fiction and non-fiction books. She is best known for her novel, The Red Tent, a New York Times best seller. She has also written several guides for Jewish people, including The New Jewish Wedding and Living a Jewish Life.

Diamant spent her early childhood in Newark, New Jersey, and moved to Denver, Colorado, when she was 12 years old. She attended the University of Colorado Boulder and transferred to Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Comparative Literature in 1973. She then went on to receive a master's degree in English from State University of New York at Binghamton in 1975.

Diamant began her writing career in 1975 as a freelance journalist. Her articles have been published in the Boston Globe magazine, Parenting, New England Monthly, Yankee, Self, Parents, McCall's, and Ms. She branched out into books with the release of The New Jewish Wedding, published in 1985, and has since published seven other books about contemporary Jewish practice.

Her debut as a fiction writer came in 1997 with The Red Tent, followed by the novels, Good Harbor and The Last Days of Dogtown, an account of life in a dying Cape Ann, Massachusetts village, Dogtown, in the early 19th century. Day After Night, is a novel about four women who survived the Holocaust, and find themselves detained in a British displaced persons camp. The Boston Girl, published in 2014, is the story of a young Jewish woman growing up in early 20th century Boston.

Diamant is the founding president of Mayyim Hayyim: Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center, a community-based ritual bath in Newton, Massachusetts. She lives in Newton, is married, and has one daughter. (Adapted from Wikipedia. Retrieved 12/9/2014.)

Read Alikes:

Delilah by India Edghill
Eve by Elissa Elliott
Pilate's wife by Antoinette May
The Red Tent, by Anita Diamant. (1997). "**" Her name is Dinah. In the Bible her fate is merely hinted at in a brief and violent detour within the verses of the Book of Genesis that deal with Jacob and his dozen sons. Told in Dinah's voice, "The Red Tent" reveals the traditions of ancient womanhood and family honour. PROLOGUE. WE HAVE BEEN lost to each other for so long. Â In the ruddy shade of the red tent, the menstrual tent, they ran their fingers through my curls, repeating the escapades of their youths, the sagas of their childbirths. Their stories were like offerings of hope and strength poured out before the Queen of Heaven, only these gifts were not for any god or goddess but for me. "THE RED TENT" - an exciting spectacle of Arctic exploration. 11 September 1999 | by Kirasjeri â€” See all my reviews. "The Red Tent", as it was called when released in most of the world, is a fascinating historical epic of Arctic exploration. In the 1920's, Italian General Nobile sought to be the first to fly over the North Pole in a dirigible, of all things! Much of the movie focuses on these efforts; unfortunately, the winds kick up and the air ship is ripped apart. The Red Tent is a novel by Anita Diamant, published in 1997 by Wyatt Books for St. Martin's Press. It is a first-person narrative that tells the story of Dinah, daughter of Jacob and sister of Joseph. She is a minor character in the Bible, but the author has broadened her story. The book's title refers to the tent in which women of Jacob's tribe must, according to the ancient law, take refuge while menstruating or giving birth, and in which they find mutual support and The Red Tent, Anita Diamant. The Red Tent is a novel by Anita Diamant, published in 1997 by Wyatt Books for St. Martin's Press.