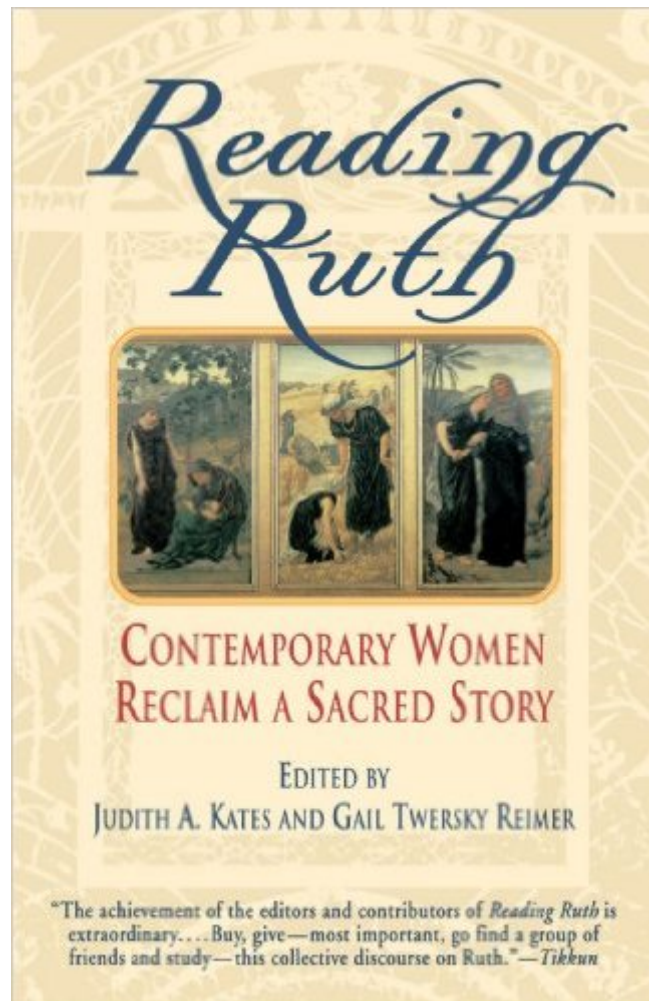


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Reading Ruth: Contemporary Women Reclaim A Sacred Story



Synopsis

"The Book of Ruth is one of Western civilization's great narratives of women's relationships. This collection of modern-day interpretations brings together the wisdom, sensitivity, and spirituality of the biblical story with the struggles and insights of contemporary women. Readers will be moved and inspired by these essays."--Susannah Heschel Editor of *On Being a Jewish Feminist*

With *Reading Ruth*, two creative scholars have brought together an amazingly eclectic group of Jewish novelists, essayists, poets, rabbis, psychologists, and scholars--including Cynthia Ozick, Marge Piercy, Francine Klagsbrun, and Nessa Rapoport--to explore one of the most beloved stories in the Bible. In lively essays, poetry, fiction, and personal narrative, the gamut of women's experience in the modern world is illuminated by this ancient story. Whether the essayists explore relationships between sisters, the complex bond between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, the place of the "other" in society, the heartache of loss, the limitations of loyalty, or the elaborate connections of family, they give voice to an exciting array of thought and interpretation that endows this sacred tale with new life. "[A] rich, diverse, and thought-provoking collection."--Judith Plaskow Author of *Standing Again at Sinai*

"Filled with passion, humor, insight, and just the right combination of irreverence and awe, *Reading Ruth* puts the Book of Ruth right where it belongs--in the hands of women. All of us are the richer for it."--Ari L. Goldman Author of *The Search for God at Harvard*

"The book of Ruth is a gem in its own right. Through *Reading Ruth* the gem becomes a multifaceted diamond that reflects and refracts a multiplicity of images....Read this book."--The Rocky Mountain News

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

No book of the Bible so clearly calls for a women's commentary than the Book of Ruth. Not only are the two central characters both women, but their relationship is the engine which drives the plot and is what accounts for much of our affection for the book. Reading Ruth, edited by Judith Kates and Gail Twersky Reimer is so successful that no one wanting modern views of this book can ignore it. It begins with the Hebrew text of Ruth, plus the JPS translation, followed by a commentary on selected verses by Ruth Sohn, which sometimes focuses on midrash or spiritual implications of the verse. Next is the heart of the book, 7 sections, each anchored to a single verse. Some are familiar ("For wherever you will go, I will go") And others puzzling ("A son is born to Naomi" --- when the son was actually born to Ruth). For each, there are 2-4 essays that deal, in some way, with that verse. These vary widely; there is no set of controlling parameters for this book. Aviva Zornberg is quite traditional, delving into midrash in a wide ranging attempt to fundamentally characterize the actions of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz. Rebecca Albert is utterly radical, presenting lesbian readings on the relationship of Ruth and Naomi and uses of the story ("less plausible midrashim have been accepted throughout the ages" she notes). Vanessa Ochs expresses her disappointment that Ruth seems to be almost erased: "Is this the Book of Ruth or is it the Book of Naomi?" Looking at the end, she decides it's neither --- the genealogy seems to obliterate all the women. Nehama Aschkenasy has a careful look at how women use language to create a form of power.

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