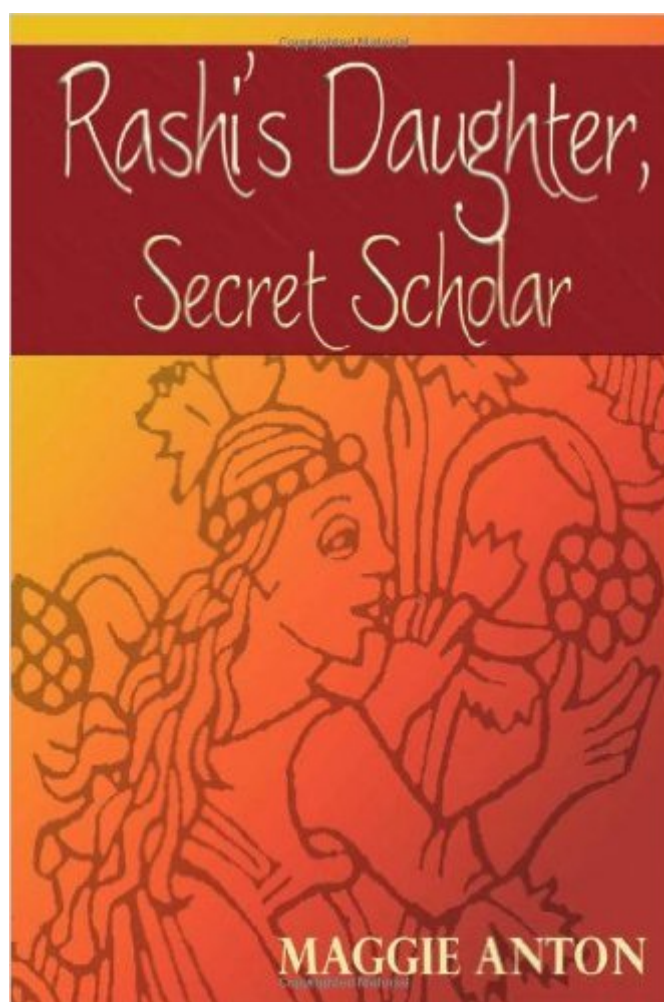


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Rashi's Daughter, Secret Scholar



Synopsis

Rashi's Daughter, Secret Scholar was adapted from the first book in this series, Volume 1: Joheved. The tale of a young girl who challenges conventions to engage in Jewish learning; Set in 11th-century Troyes, France, Rashi's Daughter, Secret Scholar tells the story of Joheved, eldest daughter of Salomon ben Isaac (known as Rashi), one of the great medieval Jewish Bible commentators. At a time when women traditionally were barred from studying Jewish texts, Rashi secretly teaches first Joheved, then her sister Miriam. By day, Joheved helps in running the household and the family winemaking business, and by night she studies Talmud with her father. As she nears marriageable age, Joheved finds her mind and spirit awakened by religious study, but she must keep her passion for learning and prayer hidden. When she becomes betrothed to Meir ben Samuel, she is forced to choose between marital happiness and being true to her love of the Talmud. Will she fulfill the expected role of a Jewish woman or pursue a path of Jewish learning?

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (20 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Having read the first two volumes of Rashi's Daughter's I ordered this immediately upon making it available, March 28, 2008. I didn't know it was for readers "ten and up." I assumed (always a bad idea) that it would be about the third daughter, Rachel. Silly me. It is a re-telling of the story of Joheved for younger readers...unless they have read the first two volumes. I will give the book to a young girl, a friend's daughter. I am sure she will find it fascinating. My disappointment is more than likely my own fault.

I bought Rashi's Secret Scholar for my grand daughter. Although she is an excellent reader she would prefer to do anything else but read. This book however, caught her attention and she couldn't put it down. She really enjoyed talking with me about how people lived so long ago.... Discussing the differences between today and the past.

Overall a nice read. I really liked the way this book portrayed the period that it was written in. It also has a nice feminist bent. The book shows that with determination and knowledge, a girl can make a place for herself in a man's world. Here's how the plot went: Joheved's father, the future Rashi, is a Jewish scholar, who teaches her Talmud even though girls aren't supposed to study this and her mother thinks no man will marry her if she's too educated. But she and her sister study anyway and in the end, Joheved marries one of her father's students who likes that she a learned woman. I liked her other novels, and even though this includes some stuff from Joheved, it starts earlier and is more tame than the adult version.

Recently, I read The Chosen and after I found it quite interesting, I decided to read this book because I wanted to learn more about the Jewish faith. I was intrigued with this book, and it was a good add on to reading The Chosen. It helped clarify a few topics that I was confused about.

The popular adult novel, Rashi's Daughter has been adapted by the author into an engaging book for young adults. The setting is Troyes, France of the 11th century, and the focus is the family of Rashi, the famous scholar. In addition to developing the plot, Anton spends a great deal of time familiarizing the reader with both Jewish and non-Jewish customs during that time and educating us about what it was like to live in this period. Because Rashi's family were wine growers, the author provides a lot of information about how grapes are grown, harvested, and eventually made into wine. Additionally, we repeatedly read of the many superstitions surrounding all aspects of daily living. The characters are well developed, and we learn a great deal about the main character, Joheved. The author also devotes a large part of the book to descriptions of other characters who are close to Joheved, such as her sister Miriam, the girls' suitors, her father Salomon, her mother Rifka, and her grandmother Leah. Seen through the eyes of Joheved, the book establishes her subordinate role as a woman and the many problems this creates. However, even though her lifestyle is restricted, Joheved is a very intelligent and resourceful person. For example, she can skillfully do women's work, negotiate wine sales, and study Talmud. It is this last attribute that creates special issues for her. Despite opposition from her mother, Joheved's father decides to

oppose custom and teach that skill to Joheved and her sister. The book addresses all aspects of the family's lifestyle -- work, study, betrothal, marriage, birth, illness and death. The author successfully depicts these life stages through the multiple characters, which engages and involves the reader in very intimate ways. Sometimes the descriptions of Jewish customs are too frequent and detailed, but that is balanced by the other significant and rewarding elements of the story. Ages 11-15.

Reviewed by Marge Kaplan

I'm buying this to put in our family library. I read the original version of this book, which was more for adults. I think when my daughter is older, it will make an excellent addition to her Judaic education.

Just a collection of thoughts copied from the important trilogy. Nothing new in it. Don't waste your time or money. But, do read the trilogy of the three daughters.

I really enjoyed the book and went on to finish the series. I was impressed at how much research was done into the time.

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