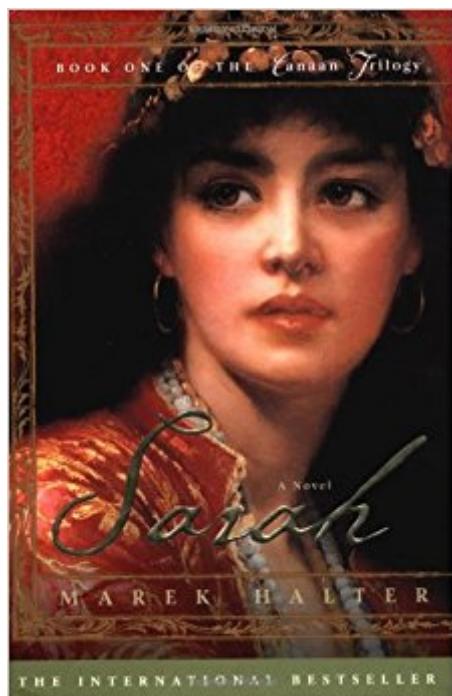


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# Sarah: A Novel (The Canaan Trilogy, Book 1)



## Synopsis

The first novel in a dazzling new trilogy about the women of the Old Testament by internationally bestselling author Marek Halter. The story of Sarah--and of history itself--begins in the cradle of civilization: the Sumerian city-state of Ur, a land of desert heat, towering gardens, and immense wealth. The daughter of a powerful lord, Sarah is raised in great luxury, but balks at the arranged marriage her father has planned for her. The groom is handsome and a nobleman, but on their wedding day, Sarah panics and impulsively flees to the vast, empty marshes outside the city walls. There she meets a young man, Abram, a member of a nomadic tribe of outsiders. Drawn to this exotic stranger, Sarah spends the night with him, but reluctantly returns to her father's house. But on her return, still desperate to avoid another wedding, she drinks a poisonous potion that will make her barren and thus unfit for marriage. Many years later, Abram's people return to Ur, and he discovers that the lost, rebellious girl from the marsh has been transformed into the most splendid and revered woman in Sumeria--the high priestess of the goddess Ishtar. But the memory of their night together has always haunted Sarah, and she gives up her exalted life to join Abram's tribe and follow the one true God, an invisible deity who speaks only to Abram. It is then that her journey truly begins--a journey that holds the key to her remarkable destiny as the mother of nations. From the great ziggurat of Ishtar and the fertile valleys of Canaan to the bedchamber of the mighty Pharaoh himself, Sarah's story reveals an ancient world full of beauty, intrigue, and miracles.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Yet another entry in the burgeoning subgenre of fictional portraits of biblical women (see, for example, Rebecca Kohn's retelling of the story of Queen Esther in *The Gilded Chamber*), Halter's novel (the first in a trilogy) adheres to a by now familiar formula: frank sexual and emotional revelations presented against a backdrop of burnished interiors. Halter's Sarah is born Sarai, the daughter of one of the most powerful lords of Ur. At the age of 12, she is pledged in marriage to a man she has never met, and despite the finery of her bridal chamber ("Everything was new.... Linen raku<sup>ts</sup> as smooth as a baby's skin"), she flees in distress. Dragged back to her father's house, she doses herself with an herbal concoction that leaves her barren and is made a priestess of Ishtar, Ur's goddess of war. Six years later, an encounter with her childhood love, the handsome Abram, furnishes her with the chance she's been waiting for: she escapes with him and joins his nomadic tribe. Her contentment is short-lived, because Abram is called by God to leave his tribe and set out for a new land, whereupon the familiar (but freely adapted) Bible story unfolds. The misery Sarah feels at being barren, the indecent love her nephew Lot expresses for her, her encounter with Pharaoh and her quarrel with Hagar, the slave woman who gives Abram a child, shape the novel's second half. Halter isn't afraid to present headstrong Sarah as bitter in her old age, and his complex portrait of the biblical matriarch gives this solid if predictable novel a dash of freshness. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Adult/High School "Halter offers a retelling of the Old Testament story of Abraham and Sarah; the birth of their son, Isaac; and the creation of the Jewish people. Before Sarai can become Sarah, she must first be a teenager. The daughter of a lord of Ur, she is frightened by her first menstrual blood and runs away from an arranged marriage and meets a nomad boy named Abram. Even though they spend only one night together, she feels an intense connection with him, but she cannot imagine a future with someone so different from herself and returns to her father's house. Still frightened of becoming a wife and mother, she purchases herbs that leave her infertile and is dedicated as a Priestess of Ishtar. Years later, the two are reunited and marry. Readers will find the story compelling, especially Sarai's decision to run away from an arranged marriage. As a newly married wife who loves her husband but is infertile, her relationships with other women in the tribe and her subsequent jealousy are believable. This is a good choice for readers who enjoyed Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent* (St. Martin's, 1997) or who are interested in historical fiction from a feminist

This past year I have been reading a several biographies on old testament characters. I like to read those that presents a woman’s point of view. This was good in that I was able to learn what life may have been like at the time that Sarah (Sarai) lived. I felt that a little too much liberty was taken in the story line. It paralleled the Biblical story, but seemed to develop a background that for her that seemed a bit unlikely. Still, I did enjoy the read and felt like I did learn from it.

I loved this book. I’m fascinated by women in the Bible, and this fictional account of Sarah’s life is vivid and very interesting.

If you are looking for something that follows the Biblical account exactly, then this is not going to please you. This is a fictional novel that generally aligns with the story of Abraham and Sarah. In the Genesis account there is minimal background revealed about Sarah. We are told she is Abram’s wife, she is barren and she was beautiful. I felt Halter provided a creative work to weave those points into a thoughtful novel. The interaction of the characters to each other and circumstances was the interesting aspect of the book. That’s because we know how things ended!

Kinda short, could have used more character development.

The Story is well written but very explicit about the sexual requirement of the young girl. Sarah is a beautiful woman and is frightened to have to submit to the men of her time. She was really a child. I love the story of Abram and Sari ,it is truly a love story. It follows pretty well the events written in the Old Testament but much more explicit than I think would be appropriate for a young girl to read.

This was an interesting story. If it was true, it’d be enlightening. I always have wondered where these women the men of God came from and what their lives were like. This is an optional view. I don’t recall the Bible telling us much about where Sarai/Sarah came from or what her life was like before Abraham so this is an interesting concept. It’s a good story. I liked it. Give it a try. You might to.

This allowed me to see Sarah as a real, living, breathing woman with the same trials and doubts as

all women. She's not just a dry, stick figure. It allowed me to see Abraham in a different light as well. A good read. It kept me interested to the very end and left me wanting more stories on the men and women in the Bible.

Interesting approach to Sarah's life. Encourages you to think more deeply about the characters in the Bible.

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