

*Reumah:
Daughters of Terah –
Part IV*

By Mesu Andrews

Note to Reader

In the opening chapters of *The Daughters of Terah*, we learned that Terah lived in the region of Sumer, a land thought to be nearest the Garden of Creation. He'd married twice. His first wife gave him three sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran. His second wife—an ethereal beauty who he rescued from pagan worship in the Tower of Babel—gave Terah his only daughter, Sarai.

The Seven Sages—descendants of Shem imbued by Elohim with divinely long lives—banish Terah to Ur because of his marriage to the ex-pagan priestess, he and his four children build a respectable life as worshipers of Elohim in Ur. But Terah's youngest son, Haran, deceived his family for more than seventeen years by secretly teaching his three children—Milkah, Iskah, and Lot—to worship the pagan gods of Sumer. It cost both Haran and his lovely daughter, Iskah, their lives.

When Terah witnessed the gruesome murder scene, he heard Elohim's command to leave Ur and go to Canaan. Pagan tensions flared against Elohim's faithful, so Terah arranged for his sons to marry the only faithful worshipers in Ur—their own family members. (Though the solution may present a hurdle for us in Western Culture three thousand years later, it was quite acceptable when so few clans populated the earth.) Abram married his half-sister, Sarai, and Nahor married his niece, Milkah. Poor Lot was left without a bride, but he had some growing up to do. (Don't worry—there's a family tree and a glossary on the next page!)

The Bible doesn't tell us why, but in *Milkah: Daughters of Terah—Part II*, we ponder the reasons Nahor and Milkah might have remained in Ur while Abram, Sarai, and Lot go with Terah to obey God's command and set out for Canaan. In *Sarai - Daughters of Terah: Part III*, we met Noah's son, Shem—the oldest Sage on earth—and traveled to ancient Babylon to see

what remained of the Tower of Babel. Shem asked Terah and family to amend their journey and set up a “House of Shem” in Harran—a school of sorts—to teach the clans of Shem all the stories of Elohim. This idea wasn’t my own. It was based on Jewish history (though not biblical Truth). The Bible *does* say that they set out for Canaan, but when they arrived in Harran, “they *settled* there” (Gen. 11:31).

In today’s story, you’ll meet Reumah. She’s a biblical character you might have missed. She’s mentioned only once in Genesis 22:24. A concubine. A “throw-away” character. None of her sons amounted to much. No nations sprang from their loins. No great cities were named after them. So, why did God want her name recorded in His Book? I don’t know the answer. But He did. So, I wanted to tell her story. There are no historical records about her. Nothing to tell us who she was or where she came from. It’s all fiction and prayer and—I hope—a little wisdom from the biblical Truth swirling around her...

Glossary

Abba (Canaanite/Hebrew) — Father

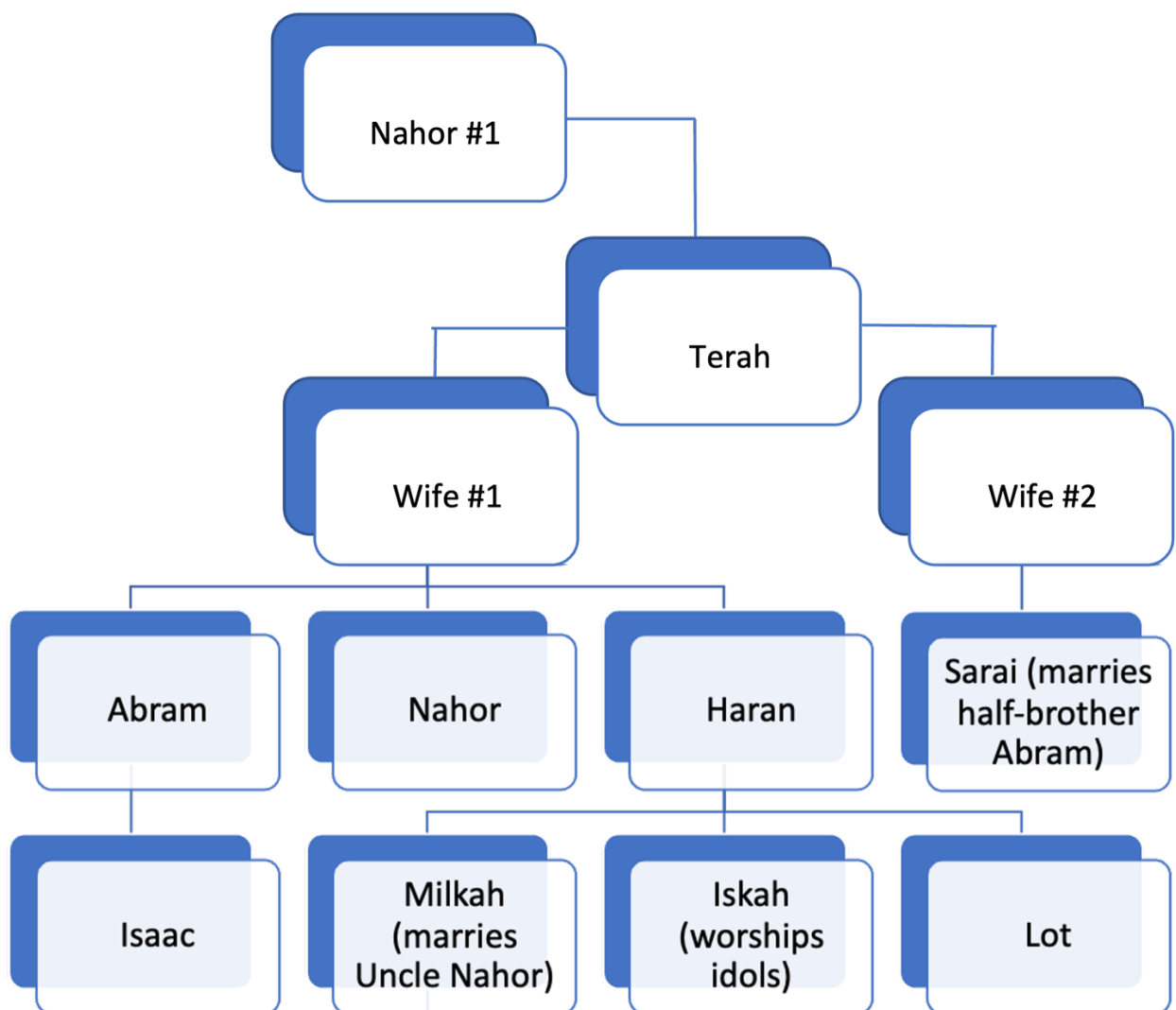
Adda (Sumerian/Akkadian) — Father

Ama (Sumerian/Akkadian) — Mother

Ima (Canaanite/Hebrew) — Mother

Glyptic — the cutting or carving of images on precious or semi-precious stones or cylinder seals.

Sage — a person of advanced age in ancient Sumerian culture, sometimes thought to be semi-divine, who possessed great wisdom and authority.



Chapter One

*“Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran,
and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram,
and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan.*

But when they came to Harran, they settled there.”

Genesis 11:31

Reumah

I hated waiting in our private chamber while Ima served in Anat’s temple every night. “Soon, I’ll serve too,” I whispered to my reflection in the polished bronze hand mirror. Though the wispy curls framing my face resembled Ima’s, I’d never be as lovely as Anat’s most coveted priestess.

“Reumah. Let me in.” Ima’s voice launched me from the low stool to unbolt the door. My fingers fumbled against the heavy wooden bar. Lifting. Sliding.

Finally, I flung open the heavy cedar panel. “Next week I’ll join you—”

Ima stumbled past me, leaving a smear of blood on my arm as she crumpled onto her mat. “Close the door.” She cradled her ribs. “Hurry,” she gasped, curling onto her side.

I did as she instructed and quickly retrieved the herb basket, skidding to my knees beside her. “Where do I start? What’s the worst this time?” Reaching for bandages and the pot of honey, I sat them beside the mat.

When I grabbed the turmeric powder, Ima stilled my hands. “Listen to me first, Love.” One of her eyes was bruised and already swelling. A cut above the eyebrow trickled blood.

I pressed a wad of bandages against the cut. “You must let me dress your wounds first.”

She rolled onto her back and pushed my hand away. “I don’t want this life for you,

Reumah. I don't want you to take your vows next week."

My heart nearly stopped. "Ima, You're upset. I'll be fine." What else could I do? To become a street prostitute was even more dangerous. "Anat's worshipers are only violent occasionally, and the high priestess always stops them when you call for her."

She scoffed. "We serve the war goddesses, Anat and Astarte. No matter which you choose as your patron, Reumah, violence is part of the ritual." She clutched her ribs, struggling to sit up. I supported her elbow, afraid to touch her, not knowing the extent of tonight's injuries.

"Ima, you should rest. We can talk of my future tomorrow."

She slapped away my hands and leaned against the wall, slumped and in obvious pain. "I want you to know the kindness of a man," she whispered, "not the violent desires that drive him."

The only man I truly wanted to know about was my abba, but every time I asked, she said, *The man responsible for her pregnancy held great influence in Harran and wanted nothing to do with a priestess and his illegitimate child.* I knew better than to mention him while she was hurting and raw. "Surely, some men come to worship Anat for love and not for war."

She lifted her lovely, hazel eyes but stared through me. "Love is a vague memory, Daughter. Like a whisper from a dream, it's too faint to be real." Any other woman might have shed a tear. Not Ima.

"I believe love is real," I pressed, "You once told me the love *we* share is the only real thing in this world."

She blinked as if waking from sleep and looked at me, her gaze softening. "The love between an ima and child *is* real but very different than the passion between men and women. The men who come to worship Anat and Astarte are predators, Reumah, looking for prey. I

won't allow you to be ensnared as I have been."

"But Ima, I—"

She placed her fingers against my lips. "Get some sleep. I'll tend my own wounds. You must be well-rested when I present you to Mistress Sarai at the House of Shem."

"Mistress Sarai?" We'd met the stunningly beautiful woman several times while laundering our robes at the river. "Why would she help me? We're Canaanites worshiping Canaanite gods among Semite clans. She's blessed by the Sages and devoted to their god."

Ima reached for the honey and winced. "Sarai is kind."

"But she owes us nothing." I handed her a rolled bandage, and she slathered honey on it while unrolling the cloth.

I dressed her wounds while she talked. "Last week, Sarai mentioned needing help with household chores since the number of their students had increased to twenty."

"I'm not a servant, Ima." I'd rather take a hundred beatings.

When I'd bandaged the nasty gash on her upper arm, I found Ima glaring at me. "You've been *my* servant since the day you could walk, and you'll be someone's servant until the day you die." Softening, she placed her hand against my cheek. "I want to make sure those you serve don't beat you to death someday."

"Ima! Stop." She was just trying to scare me. "The high priestess would never allow a patron to beat one of her priestesses like tha—"

"It happens, Love. More than you know." Moisture gathered on her lashes. "If I can find a way out for you, we must try."

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