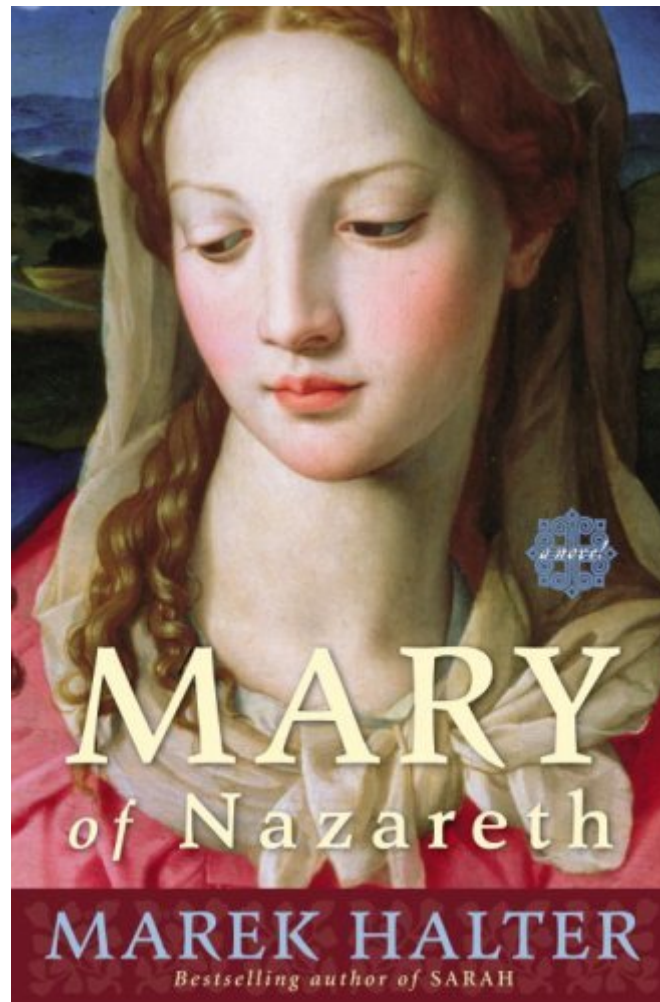


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Mary Of Nazareth: A Novel



Synopsis

The ancient world and its politics come to life through the eyes of a young Jewish woman, Mary of Nazareth. Miriam—also known as Mary—was born into a Palestine oppressed by Herod the Great; she is accustomed to living with uncertainty and unrest. But when her beloved father is wrongly imprisoned by the Romans, she takes action. She calls upon a well-known rebel by the name of Barabbas, and together they set out to save her father. A daring escape is accomplished and, against staggering odds, Miriam's father is saved from crucifixion. Barabbas, flush with the success of the rescue, is intent on leading a full-scale rebellion against Herod and the Romans. Along with Mary and her father, he speaks before Jewish leaders who have gathered from various communities. Miriam feels great frustration as the men endlessly debate morality, the wisdom of rebellion, and the nature of God's will. Having almost lost her father, and knowing she will be ostracized, she nevertheless speaks out against the use of violence. And to her surprise, one man, Joseph, listens. He offers to take her to Magdala, where she will be allowed to study in the company of intelligent, well-read women. This rare opportunity sets into motion a series of events that will change Miriam's life—and the history of the Jewish people—forever. Based on extensive historical and biblical scholarship, *Mary of Nazareth* is a revealing, utterly captivating portrait of a woman whose story we only thought we knew. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was disappointed and frustrated by this book. In the end, I am not sure what story the author is trying to tell. On the positive side, the story is well written and compelling, and keeps you engaged to the end of the book. But I was left wondering, who is the Mary he is telling the story of? Is it Mary the Mother of Jesus? Some version of Mary with the character of a modern-day Jewish mother? or the Mary he met in Poland, who had rescued Jews from the Holocaust. In historical terms, the story is contrived. The author brings together disparate actors from the gospels in a way that it lacks credibility. The story is clearly set up to demonstrate the possibility that Jesus survived the crucifixion. First, Mary rescues her father from the cross and then heals a boy with a spear wound. This is an unnecessary assault of Christian beliefs, when considering that the story focuses on Mary's preparation for the birth of Jesus. At the same time, the author goes to extraordinary lengths to preserve Mary's perpetual virginity (a belief that is hotly debated amongst Christians). The so-called Gospel of Mary appended to the book is clearly made up and lacks any resonance with other writings of the time. Mostly notably it is written in the first person, which would have been considered a supremely arrogant form of speech in first century Palestine. It is disappointing that the author didn't use the real Gospel of Mary, which provides some wonderful support for aspects of the character he developed. The view of Palestine seems out of sync with the Gospels. The Romans, and the tax collectors are just too oppressive. There is no hint of the uneasy accommodations that come through the Gospel accounts. Meanwhile, the Jewish society seems a little too perfect.

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