



*RUTH: A
woman reaching
across time*

Charlotte Naylor Davis

A woman's story?
Ruth's Story?

- Moves from male to male progeny
- Naomi is the one redeemed: ' Call me Mara, bitter' to happy with a son
- Marriage Laws
- King David's ancestors

*'In the time of
Judges....'*

- A folk tale
- A tale of boundary crossing
- A tale of transgression
- a tale of private spaces

A small overview

Threats:

- Famine
- Foreigners
- Displaced people
- A Moabites.....

The wrong type of refugee

- “This isn’t Iraq or Afghanistan [...] This is a relatively civilised, relatively European city” - Charlie D’Agata, CBS
- “War is no longer something visited upon impoverished and remote populations” - Daniel Hannan, The Telegraph
- “What’s compelling is looking at them, the way they are dressed. These are prosperous, middle-class people. These are not obviously refugees trying to get away from the Middle East [...] or North Africa. They look like any European family that you’d live next door to” – Peter Dobbie, Al Jazeera

*What sort of
Redemption are
we talking about?*

Familial - the story of Tamar

- What a woman needs is connection. A child brings connection and protection
- In law, if a husband dies, she is OWED a child

*What sort of
Redemption are
we talking about?*

- Tamar is refused what she is owed, to be redeemed to the family

- She dresses up, she uses the position she can to gain a child and therefore protection

*To Whom Does
She Belong?*

- Ruth is accepted because she is connected to Naomi

- Without connection she is the 'wrong type' but also she is fair game for assault.

*To Whom Does
She Belong?*

- It is still the case that men will turn away from harassing a woman quicker if we tell them we are possessed by a man than if we simply say 'no' for our own sake.

- Ruth is in danger until she belongs to others.

*Act 3 – What
did happen on the
Threshing floor?*

THE THREAT

- Winter - Starvation and Vulnerability

THE ANSWER

- Redemptive marriage – protection and a homeland

THE SCANDAL

- Sex! A plan to make protection a sure thing

Naomi's Plan

Like Tamar

- Find the place where a woman can guarantee to get her redemptive path
- Perform the action necessary to get that path moving
- Put oneself at risk for what is right, and what is necessary

Naomi's Plan

THE THRESHING FLOOR

- the men sleep there, those who rape and assault
- Ruth is offered up as a bride – make me your bride
- The risk – What if Boaz is not a good man?

refugees, acting either individually or in gangs, and self-appointed leaders may thwart attempts to punish the offenders. In certain camp situations, unaccompanied women and girls have been known to enter what are called 'protection marriages' in order to avoid sexual assault. The frustration of camp life can also lead to violence, including sexual abuse, within the family."

Alarming, this abuse is not only perpetrated by male residents of the camp but can come at the hands of national migration administration or humanitarian staff. A 2002 report showed that girls were sexually exploited by humanitarian agency staff and security forces in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, yet this problem has still not



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“We could not protect her, so we had to marry her”: Child marriage and Syrian refugees

The desperation of the displaced

- UNHCR report: “In many refugee situations, particularly those involving the confinement of refugees in closed camps, traditional behavioural norms and restraints break down. In such circumstances refugee women and girls may be raped by other refugees, acting either individually or in gangs, and self-appointed leaders may thwart attempts to punish the offenders. In certain camp situations, unaccompanied women and girls have been known to enter what are called ‘protection marriages’ in order to avoid sexual assault ”

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*The scandal is
only a scandal for
us*

The moves Boaz makes only really make sense if its sex in some way. The dialogue is of giving and receiving.

The covering of her, he does what she asks – which is to marry her, as she presents herself as a bride.

But its only a scandal if we have our view of marriage.

From where Ruth, Naomi and Tamar live, they are claiming protection and his marrying her is the good outcome.

Uncover his feet?

Feet and Covering

- Noah and Ezekiel – covering of nakedness implies sexual intimacy
- Feet are often euphemisms for genitalia (seraphim with wings that cover their feet).

David to Uriah ‘Go home and wash your feet?’

*Ruth reaches
across time to
challenge us*

Ruth is the displaced woman who has no official connections

- what will we say to her? How will we protect her?

Ruth challenges us to think about how we disrupt a culture that abuses women without protections.

Amidst grand narratives Ruth challenges us to consider the fear of the individual that needs protecting.

- To always see the desperation of the person, not the political overtones.