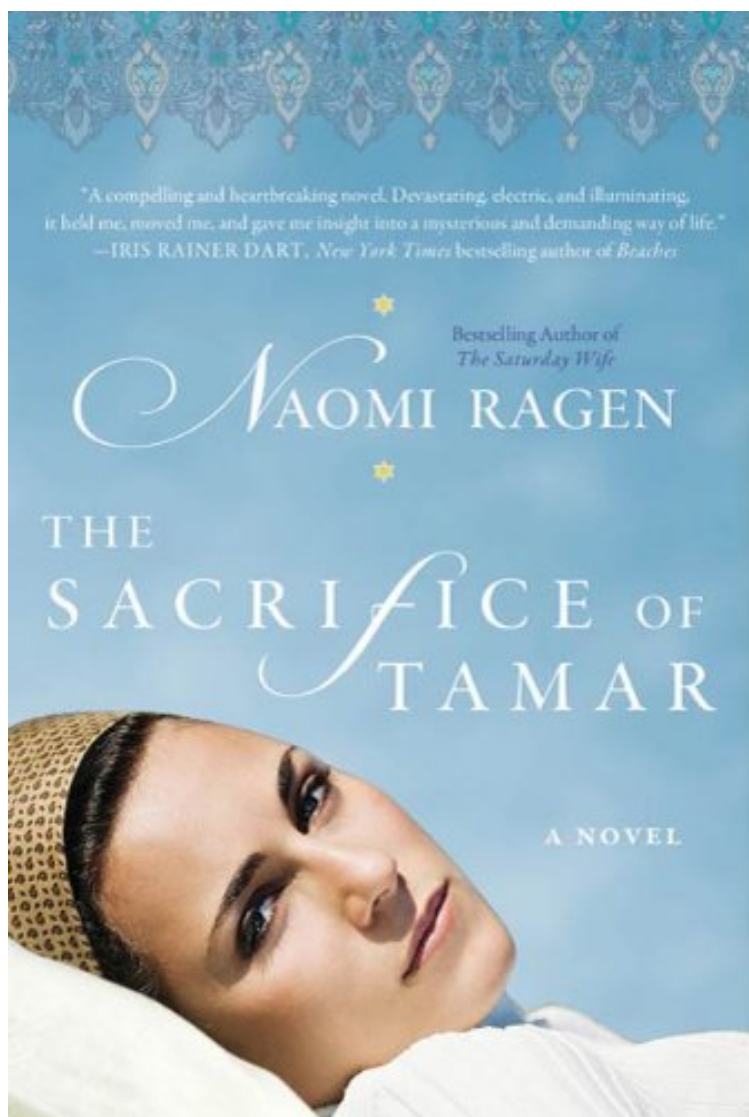


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# The Sacrifice of Tamar: A Novel



*Par Naomi Ragen*  
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**Description :** Description du produitTamar Feingold's life is haunted by the painful, yet unspoken memories of her parents time in a Nazi concentration camp. Battling between her feelings and her religion, the secrets of her past threaten to explode and destroy everything she has.

Prsentation de l'diteurTamar Finegold is twenty-one years old, the happy, beautiful bride of a rising young Rabbi in one of Brooklyn's insulated, ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities. Having married the man of her dreams and taken her place as a wifeand hopefully soon-to-be motherin her community, Tamar feels as though the world is at her feet. But her secure, predictable existence is brought to an abrupt end when she is raped by an intruder. Fearing the unbearable stigma and threat to her marriage that could result from telling the truth, Tamar makes a fateful decision that changes her life forever. Her feeling that she did the only thing she could under the circumstances explodes when years later a shocking, undreamed of turn of events finally

forces her to confront her past, once and for all. From Publishers Weekly: Returning to familiar terrain in her third novel (after *Jephte's Daughter* and *Sotah*), Ragen again examines the lives of ultra-orthodox Jews and the severe consequences that can befall even the most faithful when they take a serious, albeit human misstep. Most of the story takes place in a Brooklyn neighborhood resembling Borough Park, although, as in her previous books, dramatic fanfare occurs in Israel, too. Pious Tamar both adores and is in awe of her warm and brilliant husband, Josh. She is looking forward to an intimate evening after her ritual visit to the mikvah (here Ragen offers a tediously detailed description about Jewish conjugal laws), but that evening she is raped by a black man. She does not tell her husband about the attack, and when she discovers she is pregnant, she does not abort the fetus, because she is not sure whether the rapist or Josh is the father. In trying to make the reader understand why Tamar would choose silence and sustain the pregnancy, Ragen flashes back to Tamar's youth, particularly her relationship with two friends who play pivotal roles throughout her life: Hadassah, the beautiful, rebellious daughter of the neighborhood's primary religious leader, and Jenny, who comes from a secular background but easily adapts to Orthodox observance. The interplay between the girls as they take tentative steps into the secular world of the late 1960s provides some charming scenes, and the final chapters prove moving and dramatic when later consequences of Tamar's deceptive silence shatter her family's life. While Ragen is an able storyteller and handles dialogue deftly, her plots are becoming hackneyed. It's an insular and provincial world that she has chosen to portray, and here she adds little that is new or eye-opening to the reader. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal*: Ragen (*Jephte's Daughter*, LJ 12/88) continues to describe life in the ultra-orthodox Jewish communities of the United States and Israel. After being raped, Tamar, the young wife of a brilliant rabbi, chooses to conceal the crime. Soon, she discovers that she is pregnant and wrestles with a moral decision she is ill equipped to make. "What's not nice we don't show" is the modus operandi of Tamar's world, a creed to which she adheres until 20 years later when she must step forward or see innocent lives destroyed. The author paints a picture of a rigid, unyielding people for whom true tolerance and understanding is a luxury only the most saintly can afford, and she juxtaposes the more worldly modern orthodox as a positive alternative. Although Tamar is not a truly lovable heroine, and her transformation is difficult to accept, the author's fluid writing and fascinating descriptions of an exotic community will make this an attractive title for public libraries.--Andrea Caron Kempf, Johnson Cty. Community Coll. Lib., Overland Park, Kan. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.