

Title: Outgrowing the Bed Trick: From the Bible's Tamar to MeToo
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Considering the patriarchal origins of the Old Testament, it is hardly surprising to find that most women in the Bible are written without a voice. Even in stories famed for their dominant female characters, the women's potency has been presented by male authors, so this study asks whether any biblical women can demonstrate a truly feminine strength. In response to their impotence, the women of the Old Testament resort to manipulation through sensual appeal. The story of Tamar in Genesis provides an example of this strategy. Tamar is a childless widow who has been cast aside. In order to resuscitate her lost existence, she plays a classic bed trick on her father-in-law, disguising herself as a prostitute so that he impregnates her, thereby making herself relevant to society once again. Tamar's lack of options forces her into a position of exploitive ingenuity. She gains power over her male relative, but she does it by prostituting herself. Some scholars claim that widespread biblical indoctrination, what Phyllis Trible calls "scripture with sexism," has inspired strategies like Tamar's to be repeated throughout the history of western culture; from the courtesans of Venice to the women of the MeToo Movement, western women have exploited their sex in order to assert themselves in a male dominated world. Building on the theories of feminist biblical scholars and theologians, this study investigates connections between one of the Bible's most powerful women and gender prejudice.

Works Cited

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