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INTRODUCTION

Daughters of the Desert tells the stories of eighteen women of the ancient world who lived in the same desert homeland, some 4,000 to 1,300 years ago. Many of them were descendants of the patriarch Abraham. Instead of worshiping many gods, they were among the first to worship one God. Their stories celebrate the similarities and differences among the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions that enrich our lives even today.

Although women played key roles in all three religions from the very beginning, their stories were seldom recorded. Women in the ancient world rarely had the opportunity to learn to read and write. The men who recorded and copied the sacred Scriptures and other sacred texts included very little about how mothers passed on their experiences of God through storytelling, song, and ritual.

To discover more about these remarkable women, we used our imaginations and careful research to explore between the lines of each religion’s sacred writings. Although these stories took place long ago, you may recognize some of the same hopes and struggles that people experience today. We hope you will enjoy meeting these women and will come to know them as we have.