

Who Is Dinah?

Contributed by [JUF Chicago / DePaul - Research Training Internship](#)

Source: Revenge of Dinah: A Feminist Seder on Rape Culture in the Jewish Community

Rape culture isn't new. One of the most prominent examples of a culture of permissiveness around sexual violence is in the Torah: the Rape of Dinah. Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, went out one day in search for the daughters of the land of Shechem. While she was walking, the prince of Shechem saw her, took and **lay with her by force**. He later asked his father to take the girl as his wife. When Jacob was told of his daughter being raped he kept silent until his son came in from the field. When Jacob's sons heard the news of what happened to their sister they were distressed and outraged.

The story goes on to explain that the king offered a deal with Jacob and his sons. They ultimately came to the deal that in exchange for Dinah, Jacob's people may take *(or, in other words, non-consensually have sex with)* the daughters of Shechem for themselves if all the men in Shechem become circumcised. Yet, on the third day of systematic rape, two of Dinah's brothers killed every male in Shechem along with the king and his son. They took Dinah from Shechem's home and left, they exclaimed **"Should our sister be treated like a whore?"**

The ancient story of Dinah is representative of rape culture today. Dinah was not given a voice, her pain as a rape survivor was muddled by the notion that she soiled her family's name. Her father and brothers took control of her, and **she had no autonomy**. Her suffering, like the suffering of many victims and survivors of rape, is rarely shared. In an attempt at reclaiming Jewish ritual space for ourselves, a group of young, Jewish women, **we have decided to give Dinah a voice** and the most prominent seat at our Seder table. If you look to the head of the table, you will see there is an extra place setting. This is Dinah's place setting.

Additionally, all of you have been given a piece of duct tape with a name at your place setting. **The duct tape signifies the silencing that victims of rape and rape culture often face**, for fear of not being taken seriously, for fear of being ostracized or shamed, and for fear of retaliation by perpetrators. Later on in this haggadah, we will be using this duct tape in a Jewish feminist ritual.

We hope that this ritual helps to give a voice to those affected by rape. A voice that Dinah did not have the privilege to use, and a voice that was **overlooked** by the authors of her story.

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Download the full haggadah here: <https://jufwebfiles.org/pdf/teens/RTI-Haggadah-Final.pdf>