



# Shiksa: The Gentile Woman in the Jewish World

*Christine Benvenuto*

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She is feared and desired. She is the symbol of a family's failure and a culture's dissolution. She is a courageous ally, a loyal fellow traveler, and a mother struggling for the survival of the same family and culture whose destruction she supposedly seeks.

The gentile woman has been all these things and more to the Jewish people. Her almost mythic status has its roots in the dawn of Jewish history and repercussions that extend beyond our own time to shape the Jewish future. It also entails more baggage than any woman could possibly hope to carry.

*Shiksa: The Gentile Woman in the Jewish World*, unpacks that baggage. *Shiksa* tells the stories of gentile women and women converts living in the Jewish community today, sharing insights from rabbis, Jewish feminists, educators and therapists. The book explores relationships between Jewish and gentile women, particularly Jewish mothers and their gentile daughters-in-law, as well as those between Jewish men and gentile women. And it looks at some of the fascinating Biblical figures whose stories startle with their relevance to today's most intimate issues of Jewish identity.

At a time when the Jewish community is rife with concern over intermarriage, *Shiksa* offers a fearless examination of the gentile and converted women residing within its gates, occupying embattled yet permanent places as partners, daughters, sisters, mothers, friends.

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