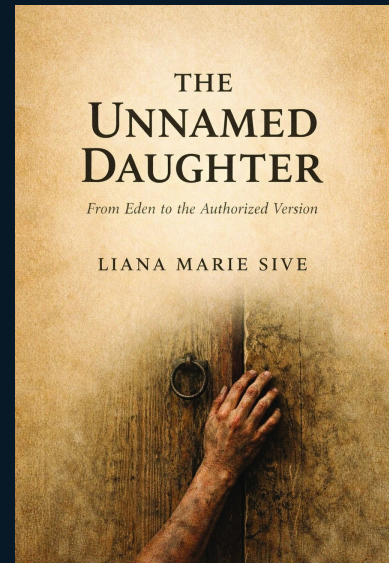


# THE UNNAMED DAUGHTER

PUBLIC SAMPLE  
FROM EDEN TO THE AUTHORIZED VERSION



## THE HUMAN ENTRY

*The book stops where the authorized story moves on—and stays with the figure the story has required, used, or refused to name.*

### FORM

Book-length literary and cultural nonfiction

### STATUS

Agent-ready substantive revision

### LENGTH

Approximately 90,000 words

### SAMPLE

Title page and ten pages from Introduction:  
The Kiss

## USE OF THIS SAMPLE

This controlled public sample is provided for reading and professional evaluation. The complete work, synopsis, proposal, series map, screenplay, or supporting apparatus is supplied directly upon an appropriate request.

# THE UNNAMED DAUGHTER

*From Eden to the Authorized Version*

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## INTRODUCTION

# The Kiss

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Why did Judas need to kiss him?

The question is so obvious that it disappears. Two thousand years of paintings, passion plays, hymns, sermons, novels, films, operas, and Sunday school lessons have made the kiss so familiar that no one pauses to ask why it happened. Of course Judas kissed Jesus. That is what Judas does. He is the betrayer, and the kiss is the betrayal's instrument, and the instrument is so deeply embedded in the Western imagination—the treacherous kiss, the Judas kiss, the kiss that kills—that asking why it was necessary feels almost rude, like asking why Hamlet soliloquizes or why Ahab chases the whale. The kiss is the story. You do not question the story. You receive it.

But the question has an answer, and the answer is strange.

The kiss was not necessary.

Jesus was not in hiding. He was not a fugitive. He had been teaching publicly in the Temple courts for days—in full view of the chief priests, the teachers of the law, the Temple guards, and anyone else who cared to watch. He was the most talked-about figure in Jerusalem during Passover week. He had entered the city on a donkey to the shouts of crowds. He had overturned the tables of the money changers in the Temple—a public disturbance, witnessed by hundreds if not thousands. He had debated the Pharisees and Sadducees openly, in front of audiences. He was not anonymous. He was not unknown. He was, in the language of our own time, one of the most recognizable people in the country.

The arresting party knew where to find him. The garden of Gethsemane was, according to the Gospels, a place Jesus went regularly —“as was his custom,” Luke says. The chief priests and elders knew where he would be. They sent a detachment—soldiers, Temple guards, servants of the high priest, a crowd with swords and clubs. They came at night, with lanterns and torches. They came in force.

They did not need Judas to tell them where Jesus was. They knew. And they did not need Judas to identify Jesus once they arrived. The man they were looking for had been standing in their Temple for a week.

John's Gospel, in fact, dispenses with the kiss entirely. In John's account, Jesus steps forward and identifies himself: "Who is it you want?" They say "Jesus of Nazareth." He says "I am he." He identifies himself. No kiss. No signal. No intermediary. The arrest proceeds on the basis of Jesus's own self-identification. John saw no narrative need for the kiss—and John was writing the latest of the four Gospels, the one most thoroughly shaped by theological reflection, the one most willing to depart from the Synoptic tradition when the theology required it. John dropped the kiss because the kiss was not, in John's judgment, theologically or practically necessary.

The Synoptic Gospels keep it. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all preserve the kiss—and Matthew and Mark specify that it was a prearranged signal: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." Judas approaches. He says "Rabbi"—teacher, master, the word of respect and intimacy that a disciple uses for the one he follows. And he kisses him.

The Greek word in Mark is *katephilēsen*—not merely *ephilēsen*, "he kissed," but *katephilēsen*, "he kissed fervently," "he kissed warmly," "he kissed repeatedly." The prefix *kata-* intensifies. This is not a perfunctory greeting. It is an emphatic, demonstrative, prolonged kiss—the kind of kiss that communicates affection, not merely identification. The signal is not a nod, a point, a hand on the shoulder. It is the most intimate form of greeting available between two men in first-century Jewish culture. The betrayal is performed through the language of love.

Why?

If the kiss is not practically necessary—if Jesus could have been identified without it, as John's Gospel demonstrates—then the kiss is narratively necessary. It is there not because the arrest requires it but because the story requires it. The story needs the betrayal to be intimate. The story needs the mechanism of destruction to be the mechanism of love. The story needs the expendable figure—the betrayer, the one the

system will condemn—to perform his function through the most personal, most trusting, most human gesture available. The kiss makes the betrayal not merely a political act (handing a man over to the authorities) but a relational catastrophe (the beloved disciple destroying the beloved teacher through the language of love itself).

The narrative intensifies suffering. This is a recurring tendency the book will trace—not a universal law, and not a claim that unlike injuries can be ranked on a single scale. In the cases examined here, the received or institutionally dominant version repeatedly preserves or heightens the mechanism that makes an expendable figure's suffering useful while directing the reader's attention toward what that suffering enables. The kiss is not for the soldiers. It is for the reader. It ensures that the reader experiences the betrayal as intimate—as a wound between friends—and therefore experiences the betrayer as monstrous. A man who hands over his teacher to the authorities is a collaborator. A man who does it with a kiss is something worse. He is a Judas. His name becomes the word for what he did.

And once the name becomes the word—once “Judas” means “betrayer” in every language the Gospels have touched—the person disappears behind the function. Judas the man—the disciple who traveled with Jesus for years, who shared meals and conversations and the daily intimacy of a small itinerant community, who heard the parables and witnessed the healings and was trusted with the group's money—that person ceases to exist in the tradition's imagination. He is replaced by Judas the betrayer, Judas the function, Judas the necessary instrument of a salvation narrative that required someone to deliver Jesus to the cross and that selected, for the role, a man whose name would become synonymous with the worst thing a human being can do to another.

This book is about the person behind the function. Not only Judas—though the book will return to Judas, with the full weight of every intervening chapter pressing on the question of what it means to be necessary and damned for your necessity. The book is about every figure in the biblical narrative who serves a function the story requires and

whose personhood is consumed in the service. The figures who are present enough to be useful and absent enough to be forgotten. The figures the story needs and does not see.

There is a parable that haunts this book. It appears in Luke 15, and it is usually called the Parable of the Prodigal Son, though a more accurate title would be the Parable of the Two Sons, or the Parable of the Father's Love, or—for the purposes of this book—the Parable That Breaks Open Everything.

A man has two sons. The younger son demands his share of the inheritance—an extraordinary act of disrespect in the ancient Near East, effectively saying to his father: I wish you were dead, because I want now what I would get when you die. The father gives it. The son leaves. He squanders everything in a far country—the text says “wild living,” and the tradition has filled in the details with relish across two millennia. He hits bottom. He is feeding pigs—the lowest possible state for a Jewish man, handling unclean animals in an unclean occupation. He is hungry enough to envy the pigs their food. He comes to his senses. He decides to return home and beg to be taken back as a servant—not a son, just a servant. He rehearses his speech: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”

He goes home. And here the parable detonates.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”

The father runs. In the social world of the parable, a patriarch does not run. Running requires lifting the robe, exposing the legs, abandoning the posture of authority and dignity that defines a patriarch's public presence. A patriarch stands. A patriarch receives. A patriarch waits, and the supplicant approaches. The father in the parable violates every expectation. He sees the son at a distance—he has been watching, looking down the road, waiting—and he runs. He throws his arms around the filthy, pig-smelling, squandering, disrespectful son, and he kisses him.

The son begins his rehearsed speech: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son —”

The father interrupts. He does not let the son finish. He does not let the son demote himself to servant. He calls for the best robe, a ring for the son’s hand, sandals for his feet. He orders the fattened calf killed. He announces a feast. “For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

The forgiveness is immediate, total, unconditional, and—this matters for everything the book will argue—non-sacrificial. The father does not demand atonement. He does not require the son to earn his way back. He does not extract a price. He does not say: first, you must suffer for what you did. First, you must pay what you owe. First, blood must be shed. No. The father runs. The father embraces. The father feasts. The love is expressed through abundance, through celebration, through the father’s willingness to abandon his own dignity in order to welcome the undeserving. The Prodigal Son is the Bible’s most beautiful vision of what divine love looks like when it is uncontaminated by the transactional logic of sacrifice.

And there is a second son.

The older brother has been in the field—working, as he always works. He comes home. He hears music and dancing. He asks a servant what is happening. The servant tells him: your brother has returned, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.

The older brother is angry. He refuses to go in to the feast. The father comes out to him—again, the father goes to the son, not the other way around—and the older brother speaks:

“Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!”

The anger is righteous. The complaint is legitimate. The older brother has done everything right. He has stayed. He has worked. He has obeyed. He has been faithful for years—without recognition, without celebration, without a goat, let alone a fatted calf. And the brother who did everything wrong—who demanded his inheritance, who left, who squandered, who lived with pigs—gets the feast. The party is for the failure, not for the faithfulness. The music is for the one who left, not for the one who stayed.

The father's response: "My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

The parable ends there. Luke does not tell us whether the older brother went in to the feast. The question is left open—suspended, unresolved, the older brother standing in the doorway between the field and the feast, hearing the music, nursing the grievance, deciding.

Jesus told this parable. He told it as a picture of God's love—the father's reckless, undignified, unconditional welcome of the lost. The tradition has read it this way for two thousand years, and the reading is correct. The parable is about grace. It is about a love that does not calculate, does not keep score, does not demand payment. It is one of the most beautiful stories ever told.

But this book reads from the doorway. This book reads from the older brother's position—the one who stayed, who served, who obeyed, who was never given a goat, who stands outside the feast hearing the music. Because the older brother's question—"all these years I've been slaving for you, and you never gave me even a young goat"—is the question this book will ask in every chapter, about every expendable figure, from Genesis to the Gospels:

What about the one who did everything right and was not seen?

What about the faithful servant who was consumed by the system he served? What about the figure who performed the function the narrative required—who stayed, who obeyed, who prepared the way, who carried

the money, who came out of the house dancing—and who was discarded when the function was complete?

The older brother is John the Baptist, standing in a dungeon, asking “are you the one, or should we expect someone else?”—the forerunner who performed his role flawlessly and was rewarded with a prison cell and a platter. The older brother is Esau, begging his father for a blessing that has already been given away—“bless me too, my father!”—the faithful son who did what he was told and returned from the hunt to find that his brother and mother had stolen everything while he was in the field. The older brother is Jephthah’s daughter, who came out of the house celebrating her father’s victory and was consumed by his vow—who danced to the feast and became the feast’s cost.

The older brother is every expendable figure in this book. And the parable—Jesus’s own parable, the story he told about how the father loves—does not resolve the older brother’s question. It leaves him in the doorway. It leaves the question open. The father says “you are always with me,” and the tradition reads this as comfort, as assurance, as the declaration that the older brother’s faithfulness has been seen and valued all along. But from the doorway—from the position of the one who was not given a goat—the words can also be read as what they are: the system’s acknowledgment that the faithful are taken for granted. You are always with me. You are the constant. You are the background against which the dramatic story—the prodigal’s departure, the prodigal’s return, the feast—is foregrounded. Your faithfulness is assumed. Your labor is invisible. Your reward is the assurance that you are never going anywhere.

The parable will return in Part Two because it supplies an internal Christian counter-voice to sacrificial logic. Its father restores relationship by running, embracing, and feasting rather than by demanding blood. When later Christian traditions describe the Father as giving or not sparing the Son, the contrast becomes difficult to ignore. The book returns to that contrast not as privileged access to Jesus’s

complete theology, but as evidence that Christian scripture preserves more than one grammar of reconciliation.

But that is later. For now, the parable opens the method. This book reads from the doorway. It reads from the position of the older brother, the expendable figure, the person the narrative needs and does not see. It reads the Bible laterally—not from the center, where the named figures act and speak and are theologized about, but from the margin, where the unnamed figures exist and suffer and are consumed by the story’s requirements.

The method has a name and a history, and the book owes its debts openly.

Lateral reading—staying with the person the narrative leaves behind, asking whose experience the text records and whose it suppresses, attending to the silences and the subordinate clauses and the unnamed women and the background populations—is not an invention of this book. It is a practice developed over decades by feminist biblical scholars, womanist theologians, liberation theologians, and postcolonial interpreters who recognized that the Bible’s meaning depends, in part, on the position from which you read it.

Phyllis Trible read Hagar, Tamar, Jephthah’s daughter, and the Levite’s concubine as “texts of terror”—passages in which the violence against women is so extreme and so poorly addressed by the tradition that the texts themselves become sites of theological crisis. Delores Williams read Hagar as a figure for the experience of Black women—used, discarded, surviving in the wilderness on resources the system never intended her to have. Renita Weems read the unnamed women of the Hebrew Bible from the perspective of African American women’s lived experience of marginalization. Gustavo Gutiérrez read the Exodus from the perspective of the Latin American poor and argued that God’s “preferential option” is always for the oppressed. Musa Dube read the conquest narratives from the perspective of the colonized and asked what it means for indigenous peoples to encounter a sacred text that authorizes their displacement.

This book inherits their method. Its contribution is to apply lateral reading systematically across a sequence of biblical narratives and then to ask how institutions authorize particular readings of those narratives. The stories distribute attention and cost. Editors, teachers, councils, courts, states, and markets later influence which of the library's competing voices become dominant. The contemporary commercial object examined near the end binds scripture to a curated constitutional text with Amendments 11 through 27 omitted from that object.

The pattern appears both in narrative form and in the institutions that authorize particular readings. Both the stories and the institutions that transmit them must be read laterally—must be examined from the perspective of the people they require and do not see—if the full pattern is to become visible.

A word about what this book is and what it is not.

It is not a prosecution of the Bible. The Bible is not on trial. The Bible is a library—a vast, internally contradictory, centuries-spanning collection of texts that contains some of the most profound moral insight, the most devastating social criticism, the most beautiful poetry, and the most honest confrontation with the problem of suffering that any civilization has produced. The prophets who raged against the sacrificial system—Hosea, Amos, Micah, Isaiah—are in the Bible. The psalms that scream at God—“how long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?”—are in the Bible. The book of Job, which demolishes the idea that suffering is deserved, is in the Bible. The Prodigal Son, which envisions a love that operates through mercy rather than blood, is in the Bible. The counter-voices are in the canon. The tradition's self-critique is preserved within the tradition's own sacred text.

This book does not argue that the Bible is evil, or that the God of the Bible is a monster, or that the tradition built on the Bible has produced nothing but suffering. These claims would be false, and making them would require ignoring the very evidence the book relies on—the prophetic counter-voice, the rabbinic culture of argument, the four-day commemoration that the daughters of Israel performed for Jephthah's

daughter. The tradition that produces expendable figures also produces the voices that protest their expendability. Both are real. Both are in the text. The tension between them is not a flaw in the tradition. It is the tradition—the real tradition, the living tradition, the tradition that is not a monolith but an argument conducted across three thousand years about the deepest questions human beings face.

This book enters the argument. It takes a side—the side of the expendable figure, the side of the unnamed daughter, the side of “mercy, not sacrifice.” But it takes the side honestly, giving the strongest available version of every traditional reading before asking the question the tradition has not sufficiently asked. It steelmans before it critiques. It honors before it challenges. It reads with love—even when it reads with anger.

This is an interdisciplinary work of trade criticism, not a specialist monograph in biblical studies, patristics, constitutional history, or the other fields it crosses. It relies on specialist scholarship and marks the points at which the argument moves from established evidence to historical reconstruction or structural hypothesis. The author brings a different training: game theory, strategic systems, and the habit of asking who benefits, who pays, which rules are stated, which are assumed, and how an institution converts a contested interpretation into ordinary procedure.

The Notes on Claims and Sources identify the principal evidence and the limits of the highest-risk claims. The Akedah-to-Trinity-to-*flioque* connection is presented as a structural hypothesis rather than an established causal history. Contemporary events, policies, disclosures, and institutional actions are described through August 31, 2026.

## TERMS AND LEVELS OF CLAIM

An expendable figure is not simply a minor character. The term names a narrative economy: a person supplies the suffering, labor, betrayal, death, population, or exclusion that allows another figure, institution, or idea to acquire meaning. The category does not presume innocence, passivity,