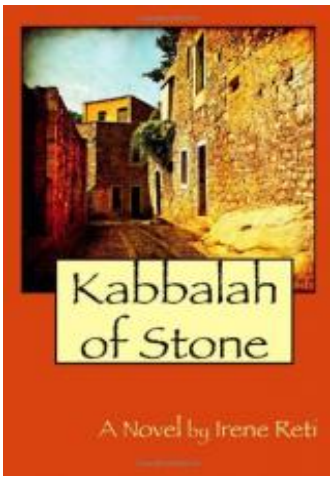
Kabbalah of Stone

by Irene Reti



About the Book

Girona, Spain, 1492-Rabbi Raphael Halevi seeks to save his community from the Inquisition. Help comes in the unexpected form of the spirit of the biblical prophet, Huldah, and a Christian scribe who has discovered his hidden Jewish identity. This lyrical and suspenseful novel of Jewish history, magic, and Kabbalah offers a feminist reinterpretation of an intriguing Hebrew prophet.

Discussion Guide

1. What character do you most identify with and why? Is there a main character in this book? Why might the author have chosen to present the narrative from three different points of view?

2. How is the theme of secrecy relevant and important in this story?

3. What do you think of Fernando and Caterina?s decision not to tell Domingo he is Jewish and how they respond once he discovers the truth?

4. The novel has several converso characters. How do each of them relate to their identity as Jews or Christians?

5. Why was Huldah attracted to Raphael and Amos as recipients of her prophecy?

6. How do Amos and Raphael view prophecy? What do you make of the differences between their perspectives?

7. How did you respond to the choices Amos makes once he leaves Girona?

8. How do Raphael, Amos, and Huldah grow or change by the time of the novel?s conclusion? How might they each

describe what has happened to them?

9. Ultimately, does Amos benefit by being in relationship with Huldah? Does Raphael benefit by having Huldah as his Ibbur?

10. Discuss Amos, Raphael, and Huldah?s relationships with their bodies. What do you see as the roots of these relationships and the differences among them?

11. How are Miriam?s strengths and weaknesses as a community leader and healer shaped by roles for women in both Jewish culture and the larger society?

12. What is the significance of the novel?s title? What role do the stones play in the novel?

13. What significance do books and writing have in this novel?

14. What factors would motivate the people of Girona to support the Inquisition?

15. What conflicting motives does Pau struggle with?

16. What roles do the Cathedral and the synagogue play as characters in the novel?

17. Compare the Inquisition and the Expulsion with other events in Jewish history.

18. What parallels do you draw between the destruction of Asherah and the Inquisition?

19. What are some of the challenges the Girona Jewish community might face in exile?

20. Is Huldah ultimately successful in delivering her prophecy?

21. How might Huldah?s prophecy be helpful in the 21st century?

22. How do the themes in the book such as wrestling with different kinds of identity, relationships with God, and experiences of persecution and exile resonate with your own life?

Author Bio

Irene Reti is also the author of **The Keeper of Memory** a memoir about growing up as a child of Holocaust refugees who kept their Jewish heritage a secret. She directs the oral history program at the University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz, and has a BA in environmental studies and an MA in history from UC Santa Cruz. Irene is a member of Chadeish Yameinu, the Jewish Renewal Community of Santa Cruz, California.

Kabbalah of Stone

by Irene Reti

Publication Date: December 24, 2009
Paperback: 292 pages
Publisher: Juniper Lake Press
ISBN-10: 0984319603
ISBN-13: 9780984319602