A corrective of sorts to the Old Testament's predominantly patriarchal view of marital events and everyday tribal life, Lifetime's emotional-adaptation of The Red Tent fulfills one's modest expectations for a primetime soap opera in period garb.

Anita Diamant's best-selling saga of female self-actualization and familial tribulation, centered on Jacob's daughter Dinah, is rendered here as an aspirational fable informed more by Harold's romance than hackable reality.

Viewed as harmless entertainment and a desert respite from winter, The Red Tent provides acceptable escapism. But if you're looking for an earthy, accurate sense of how people actually lived in those days, or spiritual experience (on television), those prayers won't be answered.

The Red Tent airs Dec. 7 and 8 at 9 p.m. Eastern and Pacific (8 p.m. Central). When you do the DVR and skip the commercials, the two-part mini-series comprises three hours of actual couch time.

The titular scarlet structure serves as a community center and haven for Jacob's four wives and their daughters. In this comfy, cozy enclave, the seeing firsthand the essential role of women in the family.

Their most cherished skill is midwifery, partially for its autonomy (the men assuredly want no part of assisting births) and because it's closely linked to females' unique function. As one woman puts it, "We are the lucky ones, for we alone are the ones who can give life."

The actual experience of childbirth in Biblical times was presumably more primitive than New Age--say you'll be rolling your eyes at the midwives' insistence on holding someone without bringing you down by actually showing it. (My biggest peeve about the show's portrayal is that everyone has perfect teeth and nobody ages, despite the skin-wrecking effects of sun, wind, and sand.)

The Red Tent's greatest challenge, however, is plausibly reconciling a 21st-century feminist point of view (embodied by Dinah) with the societal limitations placed on women in those days. It's jarringly anachronistic, for example, when Dinah shacks her distant sibling Joseph, by announcing she'll choose her own husband at such time as she determines.

But it does provide the foundation several ways, but The Red Tent presents their sexual relationship as mutually consensual and an expression of love.

That doesn't soothe Jacob's pride in the least when he's informed that Dinah and Shechem have married, and things go south in a hurry. Whatever sins the menfolk proceed to commit, the second half of The Red Tent -- spotlighting Dinah's life in exile -- takes pains to show that women are as capable as men of inflicting cruelty.

Part 2 of the mini-series embraces such reliably eye-watering themes as separation from, rejection by and reconciliation with one's children. They may comprise the meat and potatoes of the plot, but the heart of Dinah's

Rebecca Ferguson stars as Dinah and Lain Glen stars as Jacob in the all-new Lifetime mini-series, The Red Tent, based on the novel of the same name by Anita Diamant. Part one premieres Sunday, Dec. 7, followed by part two on Monday, Dec. 8 (check local listings).

JCC gallery mounts two exhibits

The Tychman Shapiro Gallery at the Sabes JCC has announced two upcoming exhibits. Both will open Dec. 14 at the JCC, 4330 Cedar Lake Rd. S., St. Louis Park.

3rd Generation Project: The Art of Business will feature four local Jewish family-owned businesses spanning three or more generations, including American Drapery Systems, Inc., Cedar Box Company, Ernest J. Fink Agency, and Ribnick Fur and Leather.

Ribnick Fur and Leather is one of the Jewish family-owned businesses featured in 3rd Generation Project: The Art of Business, which will open Dec. 14.

An exhibit reception will take place 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 15.

Store Hours:

Sun.: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Mon. - Sat.: 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Thurs: 8:00 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.
Fri: 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

4214 Minnetonka Blvd.
St. Louis Park, 55416
(952) 217-4356

Documented through photography by Steven Cohen and written interviews by Josh Awend, this exhibit captures the generations at work. Each family has its unique story to share.

On concurrent display in the Sabes JCC's Shared Walls Exhibition Areas will be works by Israeli Illustrator Hanoosh Piven. Piven will lead a workshop for all ages and offer a lecture on Sunday, Jan. 18 at the JCC.

Planned in conjunction with the 2015 Twin Cities Jewish Humor Festival, the exhibit will feature Piven's colorful mixed media and witty celebrity caricatures. Piven's illustrated compositions are assembled from common objects and scraps of materials.

For information and tickets to the Piven events, call 952-381-3499, e-mail: tickets@sabesjcc.org or visit: www.sabesjcc.org.