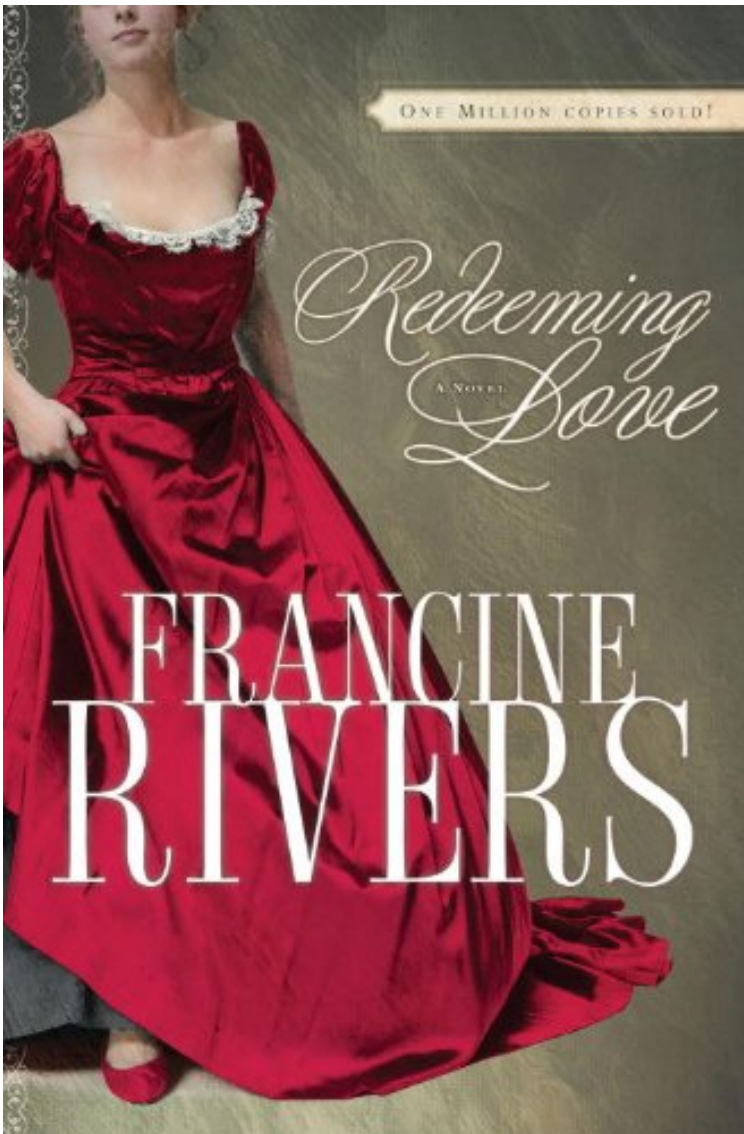


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# Redeeming Love: A Novel



Par Francine Rivers  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurA story of love that won't let go - no matter what!Californias gold country, 1850. A time when men sold their souls for a bag of gold and women sold their bodies for a place to sleep.Angel expects nothing from men but betrayal. Sold into prostitution as a child, she survives by keeping her hatred alive. And what she hates most are the men who use her, leaving her empty and dead inside.Then she meets Michael Hosea, a man who seeks his Fathers heart in everything. Michael obeys Gods call to marry Angel and to love her unconditionally. Slowly, day by day, he defies Angels every bitter expectation, until despite her resistance, her frozen heart begins to thaw.But with her unexpected softening comes overwhelming feelings of unworthiness and fear. And so Angel runs. Back to the darkness, away from her husbands pursuing love, terrified of the truth she no longer can deny: Her final healing must come from the One who

loves her even more than Michael does the One who will never let her go. A powerful retelling of the story of

Gomer and Hosea, Redeeming Love is a life-changing story of Gods unconditional, redemptive, all-consuming love. Includes a six-part reading group guide! Extrait NEW ENGLAND, 1835 Alex Stafford was just like Mama said. He was tall and dark, and Sarah had never seen anyone so beautiful. Even dressed in dusty riding clothes, his hair damp with perspiration, he was like the princes in the stories Mama read.

Sarahs heart beat with wild joy and pride. None of the other fathers she saw at Mass compared to him. He looked at her with his dark eyes, and her heart sang. She was wearing her best blue frock and white pinafore, and Mama had braided her hair with pink and blue ribbons. Did Papa like the way she looked? Mama said blue was his favorite color, but why didnt he smile? Was she fidgeting? Mama said to stand straight and still and act like a lady. She said he would like that. But he didnt look pleased at all. Isnt she beautiful, Alex?

Mama said. Her voice sounded strangetight, like she was choking. Isnt she the most beautiful little girl youve ever seen? Sarah watched Papas dark eyes frown. He didnt look happy. He looked angry. Like Mama looked sometimes when Sarah talked too much or asked too many questions. Prologue Just a few minutes, Mama said quickly. Too quickly. Was she afraid? But why? Thats all Im asking, Alex. Please. It would mean so much to her. Alex Stafford stared down at Sarah. His mouth was pressed tight, and he studied her silently. Sarah stood as still as she could. Shed stared at herself in the mirror so long this morning, she knew what he would see. She had her fathers chin and nose, and her mothers blonde hair and fair skin. Her eyes were like her mothers, too, although they were even more blue. Sarah wanted Papa to think she was pretty, and she gazed up at him hopefully. But the look in his eyes was not a nice one. Did you pick blue on purpose,

Mae? Papas words startled Sarah. They were cold and angry. Because it brings out the color of her eyes? Sarah couldnt help it, she glanced at her mother and her heart fell. Mamas face was filled with hurt. Alex glanced toward the foyer. Cleo! Shes not here, Mama said quietly, keeping her head high. I gave her the day off. Papas eyes seemed to get even darker. Did you? Well, that leaves you in a fix, doesnt it, darling? Mama stiffened, then bit her lip and glanced down at Sarah. What was wrong? Sarah wondered sadly. Wasnt Papa happy to see her? She had been so excited that she was actually going to be with him at last, even for a little while. What would you have me do? Mamas words were directed at Papa, so Sarah stayed silent, still hoping. Send her away. She knows how to find Cleo, I would imagine. Pink spots appeared on Mamas cheeks. Meaning what, Alex? That I entertain others in your absence? Sarahs smile fell in confusion. They spoke so coldly to one another. Neither looked at her. Had they forgotten she was there? What was wrong? Mama was distraught. Why was Papa so angry about Cleo not being home? Chewing her lip, Sarah looked between them. Stepping closer, she tugged on her fathers coat. Papa Dont call me that. She blinked, frightened and confused by his manner. He was her papa. Mama said so. He even brought her presents every time he came. Mama gave them to her. Maybe he was angry that she had never thanked him. I want to thank you for the presents you

Hush, Sarah, her mother said quickly. Not now, darling. Papa flashed Mama a thunderous look. Let her speak. Its what you wanted, isnt it? Why are you shushing her now, Mae? Mama stepped closer and put her hand on Sarahs shoulder. Sarah could feel Mamas fingers trembling, but Papa bent toward her now, smiling. What presents? he said. He was so handsome, just like Mama said. She was proud to have a father like him. Tell me, little one. I always like the candies you bring me, Sarah said, feeling warm and proud beneath his attention. They are very nice. But best of everything, I love the crystal swan. She smiled again, glowing with joy that Papa listened to her so carefully. He even smiled, though Sarah wasnt sure she liked his smile. It was small and tight. Indeed, he said and straightened. He looked at Mama. Im so pleased to know how much my gifts mean. Sarah looked up at her father, thrilled at his approval. I put it on my windowsill. The sun shines through it and makes colors dance on the wall.

Would you like to come and see? She took his hand. When he jerked away, she blinked, hurt, not understanding. Mama bit her lip and reached out a hand toward Papa, then stopped suddenly. She looked afraid again. Sarah looked from one parent to the other, struggling to understand. What had she done wrong? Wasnt Papa pleased that she liked his presents? So you pass on my gifts to the child, Papa said. Its good to know what they mean to you. Sarah bit her lip at the coldness in Papas voice, but before she could speak, Mama touched her shoulder gently. Darling, be a good girl and go outside and play now. Sarah looked up, distressed. Had she done something wrong? Cant I stay? Ill be very quiet. Mama couldnt seem to say more. Her eyes were moist and she looked at Papa. Alex bent down to Sarah. I want you to go outside and play, he said quietly. I want to talk to your mother alone. He smiled and patted her cheek. Sarah smiled, utterly enchanted. Papa had touched her; he wasnt angry at all. He loved her! Just as Mama said. Can I come back when youre done talking? Papa straightened stiffly. Your mother will come and get you when shes ready.

Now, run along as you've been told. Yes, Papa. Sarah wanted to stay, but she wanted to please her father more. She went out of the parlor, skipping through the kitchen to the back door. She picked a few daisies that grew in the garden patch by the door and then headed for the rose trellis. She plucked the petals. He loves me, he loves me not, he loves me, he loves me not. She hushed as she came around the corner. She didn't want to disturb Mama and Papa. She just wanted to be close to them. Sarah dreamed contentedly. Maybe Papa would put her up on his shoulders. She wondered if he would take her for a ride on his big black horse. She would have to change her dress, of course. He wouldn't want her to soil it. She wished he had let her sit on his lap while he talked to Mama. She would have liked that very much, and she would have been no bother. The parlor window was open, and she could hear voices. Mama loved the smell of roses to fill the parlor. Sarah wanted to sit and listen to her parents. That way she would know just when Papa wanted her to come back again. If she was very quiet, she wouldn't disturb them, and all Mama would have to do was lean out and call her name. What was I to do, Alex? You've never spent so much as a minute with her. What was I to tell her? That her father doesn't care? That he wishes she had never even been born? Sarah's lips parted. Deny it, Papa! Deny it! I brought that swan back from Europe for you, and you throw it away on a child who has no appreciation for its value. Did you give her the pearls as well? What about the music box? I suppose she got that, too! The daisies fluttered from Sarah's hand. She sat down on the ground, careless of her pretty dress. Her heart slowed from its wild, happy beat. Everything inside her seemed to spiral downward with each word. Alex, please. I didn't see any harm in it. It made it easier. She asked me this morning if she was old enough yet to meet you. She asks me every time she knows you're coming. How could I say no to her again? I didn't have the heart. She doesn't understand your neglect, and neither do I. You know how I feel about her. How can you say how you feel? You don't even know her. She's a beautiful child, Alex. She's quick and charming and she isn't afraid of anything. She's like you in so many ways. She's someone, Alex. You can't ignore her existence forever. She's your daughter. I have enough children by my wife. Legitimate children. I told you I didn't want another. How can you say that? How can you not love your own flesh and blood? I told you how I felt from the beginning, but you wouldn't listen. She should never have been born, Mae, but you insisted on having your own way. Do you think I wanted to get pregnant? Do you think I planned to have her? I've often wondered. Especially when I arranged a way out of the situation for you and you refused. The doctor I sent you to would have taken care of the whole mess. He would've gotten rid of it. I couldn't do it. How could you expect me to kill my unborn child? Don't you understand? It's a mortal sin. You've spent too much time in church, he said derisively. Have you ever thought that you wouldn't have the problems you do now if you had gotten rid of her the way I told you. It would've been easy. But you ran out. I wanted her! Mama said brokenly. She was part of you, Alex, and part of me. I wanted her even if you didn't. Is that the real reason? You're hurting me, Alex! Sarah flinched as something shattered. Is that the real reason, Mae? Or did you have her because you thought bearing my child would give you a hold over me you otherwise lacked? You can't believe that! Mama was crying now. You do, don't you? You're a fool, Alex. Oh, what have I done? I gave up everything for you! My family, my friends, my self-respect, everything I believed in, every hope I ever had. I bought you this cottage. I give you all the money you could possibly need. Mama's voice rose strangely. Do you know what it's like for me to walk down the street in this town? You come and go when and as you please. And they know who you are, and they know what I am. No one looks at me. No one speaks to me. Sarah feels it, too. She asked me about it once, and I told her we were different from other people. I didn't know what else to say. Her voice broke. I'll probably go to hell for what I've become. I'm sick of your guilt and I'm sick of hearing about that child. She's ruining everything between us. Do you remember how happy we were? We never argued. I couldn't wait to come to you, to be with you. Don't. And how much time do I have left with you today? Enough? You've used it up on her. I told you what would happen, didn't I? I wish she had never been born! Mama cried out a terrible name. There was a crash. Terrified, Sarah got up and ran. She raced through Mama's flowers and across the lawn and onto the pathway to the springhouse. She ran until she couldn't run anymore. Gasping, her sides burning, she dropped into the tall grass, her shoulders heaving with sobs, her face streaked with tears. She heard a horse galloping toward her. Scrambling for a better hiding place in the vines about the creek, she peered out and saw her father ride by on his great black horse. Ducking down, she huddled there, crying, and waited for Mama to come fetch her.

Revue de presse "The truth that ran through that story [Redeeming Love] absolutely took me to my knees. And I was a changed person when I finished reading that book." - Amy Grant, Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter "A splendid piece of work exploring both physical love and a love of God... There is not one false note in this wonderful novel." - Library Journal "Simply put, Redeeming Love is the most

powerful work of fiction you will ever read." - Liz Curtis Higgs, best-selling author of *Thorn in My Heart*"The timeless biblical themes...are beautifully portrayed and brought to life through her unforgettable characters." - Stephen Arterburn, best-selling author of *The Everyman Series*"My heart and soul were profoundly shaken as I realized anew the lessons portrayed through the stories of Hosea and Gomer, Michael and Angel. This may be the single most moving book you will read this year - or in your lifetime." - Angela Hunt, author of *Magdalene*