The most influential Genesis character for us today is (arguably) not Adam, or Eve, Or Cain, Abel, Moses, Abraham, or any of the well-known Genesis characters.

Instead, the most effecting character (as we will soon see) may well be a woman many of us have never heard of.... Lilith.
“Lilith” defined

As per Strong's Concordance-3917.

“lilith: a female night-demon
Transliteration: lilith
Short Definition: monster”
Lilith (1892)
by John Collier in Southport Atkinson Art Gallery
“Lilith”…Adam’s first wife??

As per Jewish folklore, the two “creation versions” dictate that Eve was NOT Adam’s first wife.

“Lilith” (the name perhaps inspired by Sumerian mythology about female vampires called “Lillu” or Mesopotamian myths about succubae (female night demons) called “lilin”) is mentioned four times in the Babylonian Talmud. It is not until the Alphabet of Ben Sira (800-900s) that Lilith is associated with the first version of Creation.
According to the Alphabet of Ben Sira, Lilith was Adam’s first wife but the couple fought constantly. Lilith ultimately decided to leave Adam. She uttered God’s name and flew away into the air, leaving Adam alone in the Garden of Eden.

God sent three angels after her and commanded them to bring her back to her husband, one way or another. When the angels found Lilith by the Red Sea they were unable to convince her to return and could not force her to obey them.

A deal is ultimately reached...Lilith vowed not to harm newborn children if they are protected by an amulet with the names of the three angels written on it...
“The Alphabet of ben Sira is the earliest form we know of the Lilith legend familiar to most people (that is, to most people who are familiar with Lilith at all). It is here that we find Lilith as Adam's first wife. Scholars tend to date the Alphabet between the 8th and 10th centuries, CE.

Whether the story itself is older, or, if so, how much older is not possible to say. Amulets like the one described in the first paragraph are, of course, much older. The author of the Zohar, R. Moses de Leon, was aware of the Alphabet's version of Lilith, at least according to Gershom Scholem (Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, p. 174), but he also knows other, probably older, Lilith traditions which do not mesh well with this one...

The idea of Eve having a predecessor is also not new to ben Sira, and can be found in Genesis Rabbah. But those traditions make no mention of Lilith, and, in fact, do not mesh well with ben Sira's version of the story.”
“At the same time Jehovah created Adam, he created a woman, Lilith, who like Adam was taken from the earth. She was given to Adam as his wife. But there was a dispute between them about a matter that when it came before the judges had to be discussed behind closed doors. She spoke the unspeakable name of Jehovah and vanished.”
“Adam complained to God who then sent three angels, Sanvi, Sansanvi and Semangelaf, to bring Lilith back to Eden. Lilith rebuffed the angels by cursing them. While by the Red Sea Lilith became a lover to demons and producing 100 babies a day. The angels said that God would take these demon children away from her unless she returned to Adam. When she did not return, she was punished accordingly. And, God also gave Adam the docile Eve.”
“Eve and the identity of women” by Christopher Witcombe.

“Despite the threat from the three angels that if she didn't return to Adam one hundred of her sons would die every day, she refused, claiming that she was created expressly to harm newborn infants. However, she did swear that she would not harm any infant wearing an amulet with the images and/or names of the three angels on it.”
Isaiah 34 and Lilith

“The creature’s Hebrew name is “ליילה (Liyliyth)” or “Lilith.” The KJV translators most likely followed Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra (1089—1164) who interpreted this word as meaning "the screech owl" (Rabbi A. J. Rosenberg, Isaiah: A New English Translation, Vol. 2, (The Judaica Press Inc. : New York, 1989), p. 281). The precise meaning of the word has been debated. The New English Translation’s footnote says, “The precise meaning of ليילה (lilit) is unclear, though in this context the word certainly refers to some type of wild animal or bird.” The ESV translates the word as “night bird,” which is compatible with the KJV reading since the screech owl is a night bird.

Over time Lilith came to be regarded as a demoness in the Hebrew demonology. However, the demonization of Lilith occurred through the Talmud and Midrash which came centuries after Isaiah referred to the name. Nonetheless, the KJV translators may have acknowledged the possibility of Lilith being a demon by suggesting “night-monster” in the margin.”

“Is the creature in Isaiah 34:14 a "screech owl"?” at www.kjvtoday.com
Lilith defined

The only appearance of “Lilith” in the entire Bible is Isaiah 34:14….thus, the Hebrew word Lilith in this verse is a hapax legomenon, meaning that the appropriate definition for the word cannot be determined by comparison to other passages.
Isaiah 34:14 and various translations

KJV: "The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest."

night-owl (Young, 1898)
night-spectre (Rotherham Emphasized Bible, 1902)
night monster (ASV, 1901; NASB, 1995)
vampires (Moffatt Translation, 1922)
night hag (RSV, 1947)
Lilith (Jerusalem Bible, 1966)
lilith (New American Bible, 1970)
Lilith (The Message, 1993)
night creature (NIV, 1978; NKJV, 1982; NLT, 1996)
nightjar (New World Translation, 1984)
night bird (English Standard Version, 2001)
Isaiah 34:14 and “screech owl”

“....the “screech-owl” is the Lilith, the she-vampire, who appears in the legends of the Talmud as having been Adam’s first wife, who left him and was turned into a demon. With the later Jews, Lilith, as sucking the blood of children, was the bugbear of the nursery. Night-vampire would, perhaps, be the best rendering.”

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers
"The screech-owl...'Night-monster.' The word לילית (from ליל layil, night) properly denotes a night-spectre - a creature of Jewish superstition. The rabbis describe it in the form of a female elegantly dressed that lay in wait for children at night - either to carry them off, or to murder them.

Barnes’ Notes on the Bible.
Isaiah 34:14 and “screech owl”

“By the name "Lilith", it appears to be a night bird, which flies and is heard in the night. The Jews call a she demon by this name, which, they say...has a human face, and has wings, and destroys children as soon as born...”.

Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible.
"The word here used, *lilith*, occurs only in this place. It may be doubted whether any bird, or other animal, is meant. Lilit was the name of a female demon, or wicked fairy, in whom the Assyrians believed - a being thought to vex and persecute her victims in their sleep.

The word is probably a derivative from *leilah*, night, and designates "the spirit of the night" - a mischievous being, who took advantage of the darkness to play fantastic tricks.

A Jewish legend made Lilith the first wife of Adam, and said that, having pronounced the Divine Name as a charm, she was changed into a devil. It was her special delight to murder young children…"

Pulpit Commentary.
According to Hebrew legend, the first woman God created as a companion for the first man Adam was a strong-willed lady named Lilith. As both had been created from dust, Lilith considered herself equal to Adam...Lilith up and left him, winding up in rabbinic tradition as a baby-killing demoness who seduces sleeping men. Lilith is mentioned in Isa. 34:14, though the KJV renders lilith as 'screech owl.' This first wife of Adam may safely be called the world's first uppity woman.
“According to the "first Eve" story Lilith was created by God from dust and placed to live in the garden with Adam until problems arose between Adam and Lilith when Adam tried to exercise dominance over Lilith. One story tells that Lilith refused to lay beneath Adam during sex. She believed they were created equal, both from the dust of the earth, thus she should not have to lay beneath him. After Adam disagreed, Lilith fled the Garden of Eden to gain her independence. Adam told God that Lilith had left and God sent three angels, Senoi, Sansenoi, and Sammangelof, to retrieve her. The three angels found Lilith in a cave bearing children but Lilith refused to come back to the garden. The angels told her they would kill 100 of her children every day for her disobedience. In revenge, she is said to rob children of life and is responsible for the deaths of still-born infants and crib deaths (SIDS). Male children are at risk of Lilith's wrath for 8 days after birth (until circumcision) and girls are at risk for 20 days. Although Lilith stole children's lives in the night, she agreed not to kill the children who had amulets of either of the three angels.

After the angels' departure, Lilith tried to return to the garden but upon her arrival she discovered that Adam already had another mate, Eve. Out of revenge, Lilith had sex with Adam while he was sleeping and "stole his seed." With his seed she bears 'lilium,' earth-bound demons to replace her children killed by the angels.”

From “Who is Lilith?” at www2.kenyon.edu.
“The three angels caught up with her in the [Red] Sea...They seized her and told her: ‘If you agree to come with us, come, and if not, we shall drown you in the sea.’ She answered: ‘Darlings, I know myself that God created me only to afflict babies with fatal disease when they are eight days old; I shall have permission to harm them from their birth to the eighth day and no longer; when it is a male baby; but when it is a female baby, I shall have permission for twelve days.’

The angels would not leave her alone, until she swore by God’s name that wherever she would see them or their names in an amulet, she would not possess the baby [bearing it]. They then left her immediately. This is [the story of] Lilith who afflicts babies with disease.”
“Lilith” from Michelangelo’s “The Temptation of Adam and Eve”.
The first mention of Lilith

- The earliest surviving mention of Lilith’s name appears in *Gilgamesh and the Huluppu-Tree*, a Sumerian epic poem found on a tablet at Ur and dating from approximately 2000 B.C.E.
- The mighty ruler Gilgamesh is the world’s first literary hero; he boldly slays monsters and vainly searches for the secret to eternal life. In one episode, “after heaven and earth had separated and man had been created,” Gilgamesh rushes to assist Inanna, goddess of erotic love and war. In her garden near the Euphrates River, Inanna lovingly tends a willow (*huluppu*) tree, the wood of which she hopes to fashion into a throne and bed for herself. Inanna’s plans are nearly thwarted, however, when a dastardly triumvirate possesses the tree. (continued)
One of the villains is Lilith: “Inanna, to her chagrin, found herself unable to realize her hopes. For in the meantime a dragon had set up its nest at the base of the tree, the Zu-bird had placed his young in its crown, and in its midst the demoness Lilith had built her house.” Wearing heavy armor, brave Gilgamesh kills the dragon, causing the Zu-bird to fly to the mountains and a terrified Lilith to flee “to the desert.”

Lilith in Isaiah

"The only possible occurrence is in the Book of Isaiah 34:13–15, describing the desolation of Edom, where the Hebrew word lilit (or lilith) appears in a list of eight unclean animals, some of which may have demonic associations."

Isaiah 34:14

“The Book of Isaiah is a compendium of Hebrew prophecy spanning many years; the book’s first 39 chapters, frequently referred to as “First Isaiah,” can be assigned to the time when the prophet lived (approximately 742–701 B.C.E.). Throughout the Book of Isaiah, the prophet encourages God’s people to avoid entanglements with foreigners who worship alien deities.

In Chapter 34, a sword-wielding Yahweh seeks vengeance on the infidel Edomites, perennial outsiders and foes of the ancient Israelites. (continued)
According to this powerful apocalyptic poem, Edom will become a chaotic, desert land where the soil is infertile and wild animals roam: “Wildcats shall meet hyenas, / Goat-demons shall greet each other; / There too the lilith shall repose / And find herself a resting place” (Isaiah 34:14). The Lilith demon was apparently so well known to Isaiah’s audience that no explanation of her identity was necessary. (continued)
The Isaiah passage lacks specifics in describing Lilith, but it locates her in desolate places. The Bible verse thus links Lilith directly to the demon of the Gilgamesh epic who flees “to the desert.” The wilderness traditionally symbolizes mental and physical barrenness; it is a place where creativity and life itself are easily extinguished. Lilith, the feminine opposite of masculine order, is banished from fertile territory and exiled to barren wasteland. (continued)
English translators of Isaiah 34:14 sometimes lack confidence in their readers’ knowledge of Babylonian demonology.

The King James Bible’s prose rendition of the poem translates “the lilith” as “the screech owl,” recalling the ominous bird-like qualities of the Babylonian she-demon. The Revised Standard Version picks up on her nocturnal habits and tags her “the night hag” instead of “the lilith,” while the 1917 Jewish Publication Society’s *Holy Scriptures* calls her “the night-monster.”

The Hebrew text and its best translations employ the word “lilith” in the Isaiah passage, but other versions are true to her ancient image as a bird, night creature and beldam (hag).”

“Lilith: Seductress, Heroine, or Murderer?” by Janet Howe Gaines
“And I, the Instructor, proclaim His glorious splendor so as to frighten and to terrify all the spirits of the destroying angels, spirits of the bastards, demons, Lilith, howlers, and desert dwellers... and those which fall upon men without warning to lead them astray from a spirit of understanding and to make their heart and their [...] desolate during the present dominion of wickedness and predetermined time of humiliations for the sons of light, by the guilt of the ages of [those] smitten by iniquity - not for eternal destruction, but for an era of humiliation for transgression.”

www.bibliotecapleyades.net.
“For 4,000 years Lilith has wandered the earth, figuring in the mythic imaginations of writers, artists and poets. Her dark origins lie in Babylonian demonology, where amulets and incantations were used to counter the sinister powers of this winged spirit who preyed on pregnant women and infants.

Lilith next migrated to the world of the ancient Hittites, Egyptians, Israelites and Greeks. She makes a solitary appearance in the Bible, as a wilderness demon shunned by the prophet Isaiah. In the Middle Ages she reappears in Jewish sources as the dreadful first wife of Adam. (continued)
In the Renaissance, Michelangelo portrayed Lilith as a half-woman, half-serpent, coiled around the Tree of Knowledge.

Later, her beauty would captivate the English poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti. "Her enchanted hair," he wrote, "was the first gold."

Irish novelist James Joyce cast her as the "patron of abortions."

Modern feminists celebrate her bold struggle for independence from Adam. Her name appears as the title of a Jewish women’s magazine and a national literacy program. An annual music festival that donates its profits to battered women’s shelters and breast cancer research institutes is called the Lilith Fair."
The Case for Lilith
23 Biblical Evidences Identifying the Serpent as Adam’s First Failed Wife in Genesis

Mark Wayne Biggs
A succubus (female demon) as a symbol for feminism?
“Unfortunately, the Alphabet’s irreverent image of Lilith as a first Eve has taken root in modern culture. Its passages are quoted by modern feminists more than any other source today in explaining their version of Lilith.

Because of the Alphabet many modern feminists promote Lilith as the proto-feminist, willing to sacrifice even the paradise of Eden as the necessary cost of freedom and equality. The series of musical concerts called Lilith Fair founded by Sarah McLachlan in the late 1990s is perhaps being the most brazen example. Some neo-pagan groups have taken up her cause as well, either accepting her dark nature as sacred or finding in her an expression for the erotic goddess within them.”
“Late in the 20th century, Lilith was adopted as a symbol of the feminist movement. For instance, Canadian singer and songwriter, Sarah McLachlan, named her all female concert tour and traveling musical festival “Lilith Fair.” Begun as a protest of male domination in the music industry, “Lilith Fair” ran from 1997-1999 in cities and towns all across North America.”
Selected excerpts

1. The first woman is made from dust at the same time as Adam. The second is created later from Adam’s side. The creation account of the second woman, Eve, comes in Ge 2:21-25. Those passages clearly indicate Eve was created from Adam’s side. The first woman’s creation is told three times, once in Ge 1:26-29, again in Ge 2:4-8, and briefly recapped in Ge 5:1-2. All three accounts imply both Adam and this woman were created at the same time using dust (and muck) from the ground.

3. In the first and third creation accounts of a man and woman in Ge 1:26-29 and Ge 5:1-2, the passages clearly states that when the male and female were created, only the male was created in God’s image. The female not being created in God’s image is consistent with Lilith. She was created by God, but not in His image, for a demonic mist arouse from the ground and animated her in it’s image instead (Ge 2:6). Note that Eve would bear God’s image, for she was taken out of Adam’s side. (continued)
4. Conflicting commands of God to the two women of the creation accounts above further indicate they must be different individuals. Ge 1:26-29 states that after the first woman and Adam were created, God gave freedom to both to eat the fruit of every tree. All trees were allowed. However, Eve could have never received permission to eat of every tree. This is because after Adam was moved to the Garden but before Eve was created in Ge 2:18-25, God warns Adam that he may no longer eat of every tree. God warns that he could not eat of the tree of knowledge and that he must “guard” the garden (Ge 2:15-17).

Thus the prohibition against eating all trees is already in place before Eve’s creation. She cannot be the woman referenced in Ge 1:26-29 whom God grants permission to eat of all trees. (continued)
5. In Ge 5:2 God gave a single name “Adam” to denote both the female and male. This single name supports a dual simultaneous creation from dust for Adam and his first mate.

It also implies that the name of Adam’s first female would be Adamah, as the feminine form of Adam comes is adamah, which means “ground” and is the root from which the name Adam is derived. This supports the word-play in Ge 2:6 which states that the face of the Adamah (i.e. Lilith) was watered by the mist. This is consistent with the legend of Lilith’s creation from muck and mud. (continued)
7. Lilith explains Adam’s lonely state in Ge 2:18. As the literal Hebrew of Ge 2:18 confirms, God did not create Adam alone, but rather Adam “became alone” after some time. Lilith explains how Adam became alone. She also explains the timing of Eve’s creation after Adam’s unsuccessful search among the beasts of the field (which includes Lilith) for a mate.

8. In Ge 2:18 the literal Hebrew states that Eve was made as a helpmate for Adam “like one shown before him”. This odd phraseology implies a woman companion was physically shown to Adam before Eve existed. It even implies that Eve was made as a replacement for this first woman. This is all consistent with Lilith. (continued)
10. The Serpent was not a snake, but rather the most cunning mammal. This is consistent with the serpent being Lilith. Ge 3:1 clearly states that the serpent was the most cunning “beast of the field”. In Genesis this term refers to higher mammals that are soulish creatures with developed minds and emotions. The term does not apply to reptiles or lower animals. Lilith best fits the unique description as the most cunning of these mammals. She is considered a beast and not human because she does not bear the spirit and image of God, but rather that of her father Lucifer. And with the mind of man and animating spirit of Lucifer, she is certainly the most cunning. (continued)
11. The Hebrew noun translated “Serpent”, nachash, is strongly suggestive of a human speaking through an indwelling demonic spirit. This is consistent with Lilith.

Nachash comes from the verb root nechash, which means ‘to divine’ or ‘divination’. The root originally meant ‘to hiss’ or ‘to whisper’. It came to mean ‘to divine’ because it was used to describe the whispers of the soothsayers, whom obtain their powers through the whispering voice of an indwelling demonic spirit.

These inhabited soothsayers were predominately women. The only creature recorded in the Bible as experiencing nechash divination is man. In the Bible the noun nachash (“serpent”) always refers to a demonically inhabited creature of cursing. If the Serpent is human, Lilith provides the only possible origin of that human. (continued)
14. The Serpent’s extreme intelligence and ability to speak is best explained by it being human. The Lilith legend provides the only real explanation for the origins of this human. The general tenor of Genesis implies that the Serpent’s intelligence and ability to speak is not supernatural or unexpected, but rather the natural created state of the being. It certainly did not surprise Adam or Eve to see the Serpent talking.

It is inconceivable that they would express no surprise over seeing an animal speaking. The Zohar (Pekudei: Passage 454) also holds that the Serpent’s ability to speak, its cunningness, and its power of seduction were all native to it. Samael (Lucifer) rode the Serpent and used these innate abilities to his advantage.
Adam protecting a child as Lilith lurks
bibliotecapleyades.net
Lilith’s pop icon impact today

“Lilith has been a misunderstood, appropriated, and redeemed woman throughout the ages. Many feminists claim her as an empowering figure in Jewish mythology, her story reclaimed by contemporary artists such as Sarah McLachlan, who created the all-women music tour, “Lilith Fair.” Others have claimed that Lilith was a demon who seduced men and strangled children in the night.

Based almost entirely on Judith Plaskow’s beautiful Midrash, “this has empowered me to reject the sexism and heterosexism that was rendering me broken. (continued)
What Plaskow’s Midrash creates, redeems, and affirms is that Lilith left what was hurting and oppressing her and lived into who she was called to be: one who empowered women.

Like many other clergywomen, I have faithfully served the church for nearly fourteen years. After eleven years of ministry, I accepted a call to become Pastor for Preaching and Worship at a Baptist church after finishing my Ph.D. Upon hiring me, we became the only Baptist church in the country with two out lesbians as head pastors. My pulpit was free. My calling to justice, inclusion, and radical hospitality affirmed.

“Until the late twentieth century the demon Lilith, Adam’s first wife, had a fearsome reputation as a kidnapper and murderer of children and seducer of men. Only with the advent of the feminist movement in the 1960s did she acquire her present high status as the model for independent women. The feminist theologian Judith Plaskow’s midrash on the story of Lilith played a key role in transforming Lilith from a demon to a role model.”
Lilith as a pop icon

(see Comicvine.com, comicbookreligion.com, game-insider.com)
According to legend Lilith's attraction for children comes from the belief that God took her demon children from her when she did not return to Adam. It was believed that she launched a reign of terror against women in childbirth and newborn infants, especially boys. However, it also was believed that the three angels who were sent to fetch her by the Red Sea forced her to swear that whenever she saw their names or images on amulets that she would leave the infants and mothers alone.

These beliefs continued for centuries. As late as the 18th century, it was a common practice in many cultures to protect new mothers and their infants with amulets against Lilith. Males were most vulnerable during the first week of life, girls during the first three weeks. Sometimes a magic circle was drawn around the lying-in-bed, with a charm inscribed with the names of the three angels, Adam and Eve and the words "barring Lilith" or "protect this newborn child from all harm." Frequently amulets were place in the four corners and throughout the bedchamber. If a child laughed while sleeping, it was taken as a sign that Lilith was present. Tapping the child on the nose, it was believed, made her go away.

"Lilith", Hefner.
As we have seen, Lilith (as per legend) preyed on young babies, and Lilith is even classified as an early vampire as per some sources.¹

In an arguably subtle nod to Lilith (both as baby-killer as well as man-seducer), the 1999 movie “Oh brother, where art thou” (based on Homer’s “Odyssey”) features George Clooney mesmerized and overcome by an irresistible (siren) woman who sings the haunting lines...

Go to sleep you little babe
Go to sleep you little babe
Your mama's gone away and your daddy's gonna stay
Didn't leave nobody but the baby
Go to sleep you little babe
Go to sleep you little babe
You and me and the Devil makes three
Don't need no other lovin' baby.²

¹-Jean Marigny, “Vampires: The world of the undead”, pp. 17–19, see also “Lilith: The original vampire”, “Lilith and Eve”, etc.
²-Emmylou Harris lyrics.
Lilith today

“The Alphabet of Ben Sira appears to combine legends of female demons with the idea of the 'first Eve.' What results is a story about Lilith, an assertive wife who rebelled against God and husband, was replaced by another woman, and was demonized in Jewish folklore as a dangerous killer of babies.”


Yet, incredibly, despite its non-Biblical basis, mixture of myth and speculation, and evil connotations, “Lilith” has become for many millions of modern women a symbol of supposed pride and strength.
Conclusions...from Howard Daniel Denham, Truth Bible Institute

“The Lilith myth is indeed quite fascinating and, without doubt, is one of the most popular today due to the interest in the supernatural, especially the subjects of vampires, werewolves, demons, succubi, incubi, zombies, and other assorted ghouls. Also, the rise of neo-Gnosticism, New Age philosophy, the current pop culture, and even radical feminism have given the Lilith myth new life, especially in the entertainment industry. (continued)
The Biblical evidence, however, is wanting. The bulk of the myth rests on Jewish mysticism and fables mostly from the early Middle Ages, rather than on the Sacred Scriptures. The radical, man-hating feminist movement has attempted to adopt Lilith as a symbol for the strong woman who rivals man's authority and even overcomes him in quest for power. The mythos is a dominant theme in the literature of the movement. That the imagery for the movement should be built on a mythological character known more for her malignity and evil speaks volumes as to the destitute nature of the movement for a symbol of real substance in history and even mythology.

Postmodernists, who include radical feminists, are fond of rewriting history as they wish it had happened. It should not then be surprising that even the mythologies passed down through the ages should also undergo some transformation to suit their perceived needs, despite how ever contrived and invented they may be. Truth means nothing to them any way. It is their agenda that is all important. The ethos that "the end justifies the means" is the criterion for their heist of the Lilith myth.”