

“I DO” x 2

A Biblical Musical Comedy

By Jack W. Burford

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STORY OF THE PLAY

This is the Old Testament story of Jacob's marriages to Leah and Rachel retold with a bit of "sanctified imagination."

After conning the family inheritance from his older, brutish brother, Jacob must run for his life! He escapes to live with his uncle Laban, a wily businessman and father of two daughters. Leah, the older, is frumpish and squints a lot since glasses haven't been invented. But, ah, Rachel, the younger daughter, is a beauty, a sight to behold!

Laban insists that Jacob work for him before arranging the marriage. So, for seven long, lonely years Jacob deals with dusty sheep and dim-witted herders while dreaming of his wedding night. But what is this? In a comically confusing scene Jacob discovers the woman under the veil was not the ravishing Rachel but Leah. When confronted, Laban feigns surprise at the "slight misunderstanding." He then cons Jacob into more servitude to gain Rachel as well.

Years later Jacob and his wives are the parents of 12 children (at last count!).

The music includes a variety of styles, from the straight up rock and roll of "Pagan Shuffle," to the country-flavored "Sheep Dip Song," and "Leah's Lament." Jacob, given his unique situation, tends to sing the blues a lot, as in "Abstinence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder."

About 90 minutes.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 5 w with doubling, or as many as 7 m, 7 w, dancers and children. See next page for doubling suggestions.)

REBEKAH: Jacob and Esau's mother, a bossy planner.

JACOB: Son of Isaac and Rebekah.

ISAAC: Jacob and Esau's father, on his last legs.

ESAU: Jacob's twin brother, an earthy hunter-type.

JUDITH: One of Esau's wives, earthy.

BASEMATH: Another one of Esau's wives, earthy.

HITTITE EVANGELIST: Fast talker.

EVANGELIST ASSISTANT: His assistant.

LABAN: Jacob's uncle on Rebekah's side, a self-centered, rough-talking, no-nonsense businessman whose life work has been the raising of sheep.

LEAH: Older daughter of Laban with poor eyesight. Dresses frumpily, has bad posture, and her face is distorted because she has to squint constantly to be able to see. She has a whiny voice and is generally the direct opposite of Rachel.

RACHEL: Laban's younger daughter, a beauty who is greatly desired by Jacob and she drives him to distraction. She is conscious of her beauty and takes advantage of it.

NADAR: Shepherd, streetwise straight man for Raca.

RACA: Shepherd, big and slow-witted.

ZILPAH: Leah's maid, hard of hearing.

BILHAH: Rachel's maid, neatness freak.

ANGEL: Strong-armed messenger. *(Costumed as some bizarre wrestling character.)*

CHILDREN: Twelve children may be used as sheep for the Sheep Dip song and as the children of Jacob for Act II, Scene 3.

CHORUS: *(Optional)* Extras may be used as dancers for some songs.

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For doubling, the roles could be broken down as follows:

1. *Hittite Evangelist, Laban, Wrestling Angel*
2. *Rebekah, Bilhah*
3. *Leah*
4. *Basemath, Zilpah*
5. *Rachel, Evangelist Assistant*
6. *Jacob*
7. *Isaac, Nadar*
8. *Esau, Raca*
9. *Judith*

SETTINGS

Settings are Old Testament and very minimal.

Scene 1: A tent, the home of Isaac's family. At one side is the bedroom area with cushions, pillows and mats, and on the other side of the stage is the kitchen area with several food items arranged on tables.

Scene 2: The tent of Laban. His tent is more ornate than Isaac's. There are colored draperies, and several small sheep can be seen just outside the entrance of the tent to the far side of the stage.

Scene 3: A campfire. There are a few bushes and trees, a small tent at one side and a few sheep at the other side.

Scene 4: The tent of Jacob. The bedchamber is separate from the other half of the tent. The bed is elaborately decorated with colored curtains and colorful pillows.

SONGS

1. "Pagan Shuffle"
2. "Laban's Song"
3. "Sheep Dip Song"
4. "Rachel's Song"
5. "Abstinence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder"
6. "Walk Away or Stay"
7. "Leah's Lament"
8. "I Got the Too Many Women Blues"
9. "Angel Wrestling Music"
10. "Jehovah Praise Song"

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ACT I Scene 1

(AT RISE: Inside a large tent, the home of Isaac's family, Old ISAAC, nearly blind, is at death's door, reclining on a bed/cluster of pillows in the bedroom portion of the tent. On the other side of the stage, by the food items, REBEKAH is counseling JACOB.)

REBEKAH: *(Secretively.)* Jacob, listen. Isaac does not have very much longer to live. I overheard him tell Esau to go out and hunt some game because he wants to eat some of his favorite dish before he dies.

JACOB: Yes, Dad does seem to be getting weaker.

REBEKAH: Well, the thing is, Isaac is getting ready to pronounce his final blessing, which means Esau will be going to inherit most everything we own and be head of the family as well. Now, if we handle things right, that blessing can be yours.

JACOB: It can? Mine? You mean ... all this stuff ... mine? But what about Esau? He's supposed to—

REBEKAH: Now listen to me for a minute. I've got it all figured out. I have already cooked up your father's favorite dish. Now, you take it in to him, and after he eats, he will speak the words of Esau's blessing upon you.

JACOB: But, Esau is the firstborn and his favorite son. Dad's expecting him, not me! There's no way that can happen. You expect me to go in there and ... and ... I can't pass for Esau! *(A bit upset.)* I ... I ... I mean ... Esau's a hairy guy and I'm not. You know that as well as I do. We might be twins, but there's nothing about us that's alike. And when Dad finds out he'll pronounce a curse on me, not a blessing.

REBEKAH: If it's a curse, let it be upon me. Now do what I tell you. Isaac's eyes are bad and, with a little help, you can make him think you are Esau. Here, put Esau's clothes on. *(SHE hands HIM some garments.)* Take this in to your father before Esau gets back.

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JACOB: *(Reluctantly takes the clothes and puts them on.)*

Do you really think this will work? Ooo, this thing stinks. I don't know, Mom. I really appreciate what you're trying to do, but I think this could be dangerous. You know how Esau is, and even if I can convince Dad that I'm not me, Esau is going to kill me. You know how he is when he gets mad. You know me ... I'm a peace-loving kind of guy. I don't want a quarrel with Esau. I can't handle that kind of stress. There'll be no living with him. And ... and ... Esau takes great joy in killing living things. Now, what if he suddenly decides that I'm one of the things that he wants to kill! I-I-I mean, holy cow!

REBEKAH: Now watch your mouth, young man. You know how I feel about profanity. First, Esau decides to marry those Hittite girls, even though I warned him against mixed marriages, and now you start calling on strange deities. Now stop it!

JACOB: I'm sorry, Mom.

REBEKAH: Isn't it enough that your brother has married a couple of pagans ... are you going to call on strange deities as well?

JACOB: It slipped out. It'll never happen again.

REBEKAH: You let a couple of outsiders into the family and pretty soon they start to poison everyone's mind. I should have known when he told me how religious they were.

JACOB: They do spend a lot of time in devotions.

REBEKAH: How were we to know they were into temple prostitution! Now, do what I tell you. *(SHE helps HIM prepare himself for his presentation to Isaac.)* There, he'll never know the difference. Now take this *(Hands him some food.)* and get in there.

JACOB: Wow! All that stuff ... well, I suppose I could have been firstborn just as easily as Esau.

REBEKAH: That's right!

JACOB: After all, it's only a matter of a few seconds between us. I could make better use of all that ... Oh, all right. *(Mumbles to himself.)* I don't know how I get into these things. I'm probably going to wind up kicked out of the family, then what am I going to do?

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