

Jacob, Rachel, Leah & Laban (Theft by Deception - The 14 Year Itch)

You're going to love this! Here's a story that was made for "Scandal". In fact it could easily be made into a double-episode; there's Part 1 about how Jacob tricked his brother Esau (both sons of Isaac; son of Abraham) into surrendering his "birthright" (his entitlement to their father's wealth) for a silly bowl of stew, and then there's Part 2 about how Jacob was "bamboozled" into marrying a woman named Leah when he really wanted to marry her younger sister Rachel.

Let's jump to Part 2 for today!

Jacob was such a scoundrel it's a wonder he was even featured in the Bible, but he was the predecessor to so many succeeding Biblical characters, and some of his antics probably illustrate how NOT to be righteous (and those antics are so unforgettable), that I guess it does make sense to feature him.

One sunny day, Jacob (the scoundrel) was hanging-out with some Shepherds at a well near a city called Ur. The well was one of the places where young men would often congregate in order to covertly & surreptitiously meet young women (sort of like "Happy Hour" nowadays). Jacob was lazy, and he was a show-off, so in order to impress a young woman he had his eye on, in a whim of bravado, he moved a gigantic stone that was covering the well all by himself (normally that feat would've taken several men working collaboratively to accomplish). The young woman was impressed.

So they began to talk, and Jacob, then I guess wanting to show his effeminate side, after letting her know how far he'd been traveling, began to cry, as if to demonstrate his overwhelming joy at having met the woman of his dreams (somebody get me a violin, quickly).

So little, sweet, naive Rachel, ran home to tell her father about this wonderful young man she'd met. But Dad was not impressed (believe me, I can relate). But Rachel's family took Jacob in for a few weeks and during that time Jacob fell madly in love with her.

So, as protocol would require, Jacob asked Rachel's father for her hand in marriage. Dad agreed, but with a few conditions, the most striking of which was that Jacob would have to go to work at the family compound for seven years before they could marry!!! And Jacob agreed to this.

So he worked the seven years, and then approached Dad (who's name btw was Laban) to collect his bride. But Laban, who if he were alive today would probably have become a New York lawyer, promptly pointed out that their original agreement was that after seven years Jacob could marry his daughter, but it didn't specify which daughter, and Rachel had an older sister, Leah.

Long story short: Jacob married Leah, but before doing so made another pact with Laban that if he worked another seven years at the family compound, he would then be able to marry Rachel. Dad agreed, and so it was that after another seven years of this arrangement, Jacob finally got to marry his dreamgirl!

I know the dreamgirl is always worth the wait, but indentured servitude + 14 years???

Moral of the story: I really have no idea. But it's one of those Biblical stories everyone seems to know, so I thought you should too! :-)

Oh but here's the scandalous part: During the entire wedding ceremony, and also the entire reception (where everyone, including Jacob got falling-down drunk, the bride, Leah, was veiled. Jacob didn't realize he'd married Leah until the morning after when they woke up together!

And if that wasn't spicy enough, Laban, both women's father, was the brother of Jacob's mother (making the young women his first cousins). That practice, which is taboo nowadays, was not at all unusual back then.

The 1980's movie had Lisa Bonet as Rachel and Whoopie Goldberg as Leah.

One day, another time, I'll tell you Part 1, about how Jacob, with the help of their mother, tricked his older brother Esau out of his birthright...to be continued...

Told ya! I bet you didn't realize the Bible could be so spicy!!

I hope you have an amazing day!!

- Jack

Genesis 29:1-30 (MSG)

¹ Jacob set out again on his way to the people of the east. ² He noticed a well out in an open field with three flocks of sheep bedded down around it. This was the common well from which the flocks were watered. The stone over the mouth of the well was huge. ³ When all the flocks were gathered, the shepherds would roll the stone from the well and water the sheep; then they would return the stone, covering the well. ⁴ Jacob said, "Hello friends. Where are you from?" They said, "We're from Haran." ⁵ Jacob asked, "Do you know Laban son of Nahor?" "We do." ⁶ "Are things well with him?" Jacob continued. "Very well," they said. "And here is his daughter Rachel coming with the flock." ⁷ Jacob said, "There's a lot of daylight still left; it isn't time to round up the sheep yet, is it? So why not water the flocks and go back to grazing?" ⁸ "We can't," they said. "Not until all the shepherds get here. It takes all of us to roll the stone from the well. Not until then can we water the flocks." ⁹ While Jacob was in conversation with them, Rachel came up with her father's sheep. She was the shepherd. ¹⁰ The moment Jacob spotted Rachel, daughter of Laban his mother's brother, saw her arriving with his uncle Laban's sheep, he went and single-handedly rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of his uncle Laban. ¹¹ Then he kissed Rachel and broke into tears. ¹² He told Rachel that he was related to her father, that he was Rebekah's son. She ran and told her father. ¹³ When Laban heard the news - Jacob, his sister's son! - he ran out to meet him, embraced and kissed him and brought him home. Jacob told Laban the story of everything that had happened. ¹⁴ Laban said, "You're family! My flesh and blood!" ¹⁵ Laban said, "Just because you're my nephew, you shouldn't work for me for nothing. Tell me what you want to be paid. What's a fair wage?" ¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters; Leah was the older and Rachel the younger. ¹⁷ Leah had nice eyes, but Rachel was stunningly beautiful. ¹⁸ And it was Rachel that Jacob loved. So Jacob answered, "I will work for you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." ¹⁹ "It is far better," said Laban, "that I give her to you than marry her to some outsider. Yes. Stay here with me." ²⁰ So Jacob worked seven years for Rachel. But it only seemed like a few days, he loved her so much. ²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife; I've completed what we agreed I'd do. I'm ready to consummate my marriage." ²² Laban invited everyone around and threw a big feast. ²³ At evening, though, he got his daughter Leah and brought her to the marriage bed, and Jacob

slept with her. ²⁴ (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her maid.) ²⁵ Morning came: There was Leah in the marriage bed! Jacob confronted Laban, "What have you done to me? Didn't I work all this time for the hand of Rachel? Why did you cheat me?" ²⁶ "We don't do it that way in our country," said Laban. "We don't marry off the younger daughter before the older. ²⁷ Enjoy your week of honeymoon, and then we'll give you the other one also. But it will cost you another seven years of work." ²⁸ Jacob agreed. When he'd completed the honeymoon week, Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. ²⁹ (Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid.) ³⁰ Jacob then slept with her. And he loved Rachel more than Leah. He worked for Laban another seven years. ³¹ When God realized that Leah was unloved, he opened her womb. But Rachel was barren. ³² Leah became pregnant and had a son. She named him Reuben (Look-It's-a-Boy!). "This is a sign," she said, "that God has seen my misery; and a sign that now my husband will love me." ³³ She became pregnant again and had another son. "God heard," she said, "that I was unloved and so he gave me this son also." She named this one Simeon (God-Heard). ³⁴ She became pregnant yet again - another son. She said, "Now maybe my husband will connect with me - I've given him three sons!" That's why she named him Levi (Connect). ³⁵ She became pregnant a final time and had a fourth son. She said, "This time I'll praise God." So she named him Judah (Praise-God). Then she stopped having children.