

REMEMBER US, THE WOMEN

by Betsy Warren & Aline Speer



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

NARRATOR — a woman	VOICE OF SAMUEL — a man
MRS. NOAH	BAILIFF — a woman
SARAH	DEBORAH
REBEKAH	DELILAH
RACHEL	HERALD — a woman
LEAH	QUEEN OF SHEBA
WOMAN OF ENDOR	MIRIAM

PROPERTIES

Ten chairs	Multi-colored coat
Loud speaker system — microphone	Lantern
Piano bench	Hand mirror
Umbrella	3 long, sheer scarves
Ram's horn (if possible)	Drum or trumpet for fanfare
Walking cane	Casket of jewels
Timbrel — tambourine	Long, sheer black scarf or veil
Banner with scales of justice on it, or gavel	

SETTING: On stage are 10 chairs in a straight line, parallel to the back wall or backdrop. They are Upstage, facing the backdrop. At right Centerstage is a piano bench. The production begins as the NARRATOR speaks from Backstage, using a microphone.

1 NARRATOR: Winds of the desert . . . waters from the
 2 skies . . . have swept away our footprints in the
 3 valleys of Israel. Yet, we are still walking . . .
 4 walking across the pages of our Holy Book . . .
 5 telling our stories over and over and over. Once
 6 again, come closer now. Draw near to us. Come
 7 listen to our stories and remember . . . remember
 8 . . . remember. (*Voice fades out.*)

9 MRS. NOAH: (*As NARRATOR'S voice fades, she comes*
 10 *down center aisle with umbrella up, peering anxiously*
 11 *at sky and muttering.*) Oh, no. Oh, no. Looks like a
 12 dark cloud over there. Black clouds make me mighty
 13 nervous. Always will, too. (*Puts umbrella down on*
 14 *piano bench.*) I don't ever again want to be crowded
 15 on a smelly old ark with two of every animal in the
 16 world, plus our three sons and their messy wives and
 17 screaming kids. (*Shakes her head.*) For a whole year
 18 the wash never dried! Can you imagine mildew
 19 hanging like ribbons from the rafters? And the
 20 mosquitoes . . . what a field day they had. And, oh,
 21 the smell . . . it's no wonder my husband, Noah,
 22 took to the bottle. Embarrassed his sons because of
 23 it, too. But then their father always caused them
 24 shame. The neighbors made fun of him for building
 25 that leaky old ark in the first place. "Spans and
 26 cubits. Cubits and spans. That's all he ever talks
 27 about, " they complained. Well, maybe so. But he
 28 built it just like Yahweh told him to . . . and he
 29 saved all his family. And don't forget he kept all the
 30 families of animals from a watery grave, too. That's
 31 why people and animals are on the earth today. (*A*
 32 *clap of thunder is heard. MRS. NOAH frowns and*
 33 *grabs umbrella.*) I hear thunder. Oh, merciful heaven!
 34 (*Yells*) Here comes those dark clouds again. Get your
 35 boots! Man the houseboats! Brush up on your spans
 36 and cubits. (*Becomes quiet. Looks at sky and smiles.*
 37 *Puts down umbrella.*) There's that rainbow again.

1 Not to worry. How do you suppose that God thought
 2 up such a lovely way to help us remember his
 3 promise? A rainbow says that the earth won't ever
 4 again be covered with water. Not to worry. Not to
 5 worry. (*Goes Upstage and sits in first chair with*
 6 *back to the audience.*)

7 SARAH: (*Walks down aisle leaning on cane, chuckling.*
 8 *In her other hand she carries a ram's horn, putting*
 9 *it on the bench before she speaks.*) Sometimes laughs
 10 are hard to come by. But I laughed a lot in my time.
 11 Wouldn't you laugh if three strangers came to visit
 12 your tent and told you that you'd bear a son after
 13 more than sixty years of a childless marriage? Mind
 14 you, I, Sarah, was eighty years old at the time! And
 15 Abraham, my husband, was one hundred! Even when
 16 the men said "Nothing is impossible for God" . . .
 17 I still laughed . . . a whole lot. Impossible.
 18 Unbelievable. (*Sits on bench.*) But Abraham and I
 19 found out that Yahweh meant what he said. He had
 20 promised Abraham that he would be the father of
 21 many nations if he were faithful, and that he would
 22 be with him always. Sure enough. Our son, Isaac, was
 23 born to us in our old age and we laughed for joy. We
 24 watched him grow into a gentle loving boy. Then
 25 Yahweh did a terrible thing. It still makes my knees
 26 weak to think of it. He asked Abraham to prove his
 27 obedience by sacrificing our beloved Isaac as if he
 28 were a lamb. All my laughter dried up. Tears took
 29 its place. (*Stands up.*) But I learned to laugh again
 30 . . . because of this. (*Holds up ram's horn.*) Do you
 31 know what this is? It's a ram's horn . . . a reminder
 32 to all Jewish people that Yahweh was gracious. He
 33 sent a ram to be caught in the bushes and told
 34 Abraham to sacrifice it in place of our son. Yahweh
 35 had found that Abraham would obey him. (*Shakes*

1 *head in wonder*) It seems that Abraham and I lived
2 our lives suspended on a promise, a covenant. I
3 laugh with joy again now because my life was lived
4 as the wife of the faithful Abraham, and mother of
5 Isaac — child of the promise. (*Goes Upstage and sits*
6 *in second chair.*)

7 REBEKAH: (*Enters down aisle carrying water urn on*
8 *shoulder. Sets urn down on bench.*) Have you ever
9 given water to one thirsty camel? I, Rebekah, gave
10 water to ten of them at one time. But it got me a
11 fine husband . . . Isaac, son of Abraham and Sarah.
12 We had a good marriage for twenty years. (*Sighs*)
13 And then came the twins. I'll never know how
14 Isaac could prefer Esau — the hairy one. He spent
15 all his time out hunting — for wild animals and
16 wild women. I don't understand it. My favorite was
17 Jacob who stayed at home and tended to business.
18 Besides, he was a fabulous cook. The ladies were
19 forever asking for his recipe for lentil soup — we
20 called it "Pottage." It was obvious to me that Esau
21 would come to no good. I knew he'd squander the
22 family fortune. Because he was the firstborn, he'd
23 get the inheritance. So I did what any self-respecting
24 mother would do . . . I pushed and pushed for
25 Jacob to get the birthright blessing instead of Esau.
26 Besides, Esau didn't deserve it anyway. He gave his
27 inheritance away to Jacob one day after his hunt,
28 just because he was hungry. He said Jacob could
29 have the whole birthright if he'd just give him a
30 bowl of lentil soup to eat. Dear Isaac grew old, and
31 he was blind. He knew he was dying, so he called
32 Esau to come receive the birthright blessing. I
33 thought Jacob could pretend to be hairy Esau, so
34 I made a sleeve from goat skins for him to wear.
35 Jacob didn't like the idea . . . he said his father

1 and brother would never forgive him and would curse
 2 him forever. But I said, "Upon me be the curse, my
 3 son." When Jacob went to his father to receive the
 4 blessing, Isaac was suspicious. He said "The voice is
 5 Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."
 6 Even so, he gave the birthright to Jacob. Esau found
 7 out and he was furious. He planned to kill his twin
 8 brother. For Jacob's safety, I had to send him away.
 9 My brother in Mesopotamia took care of him and I
 10 never saw my beloved son again. As for Esau, he
 11 married wives we didn't approve of and gave us much
 12 grief just like I knew he would. I told Isaac that I
 13 felt old and weary. Seems like life had held out so
 14 much for us . . . land, great flocks and herds, sons
 15 . . . I still don't know why the children we had
 16 longed for caused us so much unhappiness. Did I do
 17 right? How can I know for sure? (*Picks up urn and*
 18 *puts it on shoulder. Starts to exit, then turns to*
 19 *audience.*) Maybe I should never have given any
 20 water to those camels after all! (*Goes Upstage and*
 21 *sits in third chair.*)
 22 (*The sisters, RACHEL and LEAH, enter together.*
 23 *LEAH walks behind RACHEL. LEAH'S eyes are*
 24 *veiled. RACHEL carries Joseph's coat of colors.*
 25 *LEAH'S stage position is subordinate to RACHEL'S.*
 26 *RACHEL puts coat down on bench.*)

PART 1

30 RACHEL: How could you do it? My own sister! Leah
 31 . . . why did you fool Jacob into thinking he was
 32 marrying me?

33 LEAH: It was not my idea. Our father insisted it
 34 be done. Besides, you know very well, Rachel, that
 35 it is the custom for the older sister to marry before

1 the younger one.

2 RACHEL: That's true. But Jacob had worked seven years
3 for me. You could have found someone else.

4 LEAH: Not so easily as you seem to think, my dear
5 sister. You know that I have these hideous allergies
6 from the winds and sands which blow so constantly.

7 *(Raises veil to show red eyes.)* No one has been
8 exactly smitten with my red-eyed looks. And, you'll
9 see, Rachel, it will be a good marriage. I can bring
10 Jacob many fine sons. It will be a good marriage.

11 RACHEL: But you shouldn't have done it. Now Jacob
12 will have to work another seven years for my dowry.
13 And, besides, Jacob loves me.

14 LEAH: (Sadly) Yes. I know, Rachel. Jacob loves you.
15 (The sisters walk away from each other to indicate
16 the end of part 1 and to reposition for part 2.)

17

18 *PART 2*

19

20 (They come back to the bench. RACHEL picks up
21 coat and sits on bench. LEAH kneels lovingly beside
22 RACHEL. RACHEL'S voice is weak as she holds out
23 coat to LEAH.)

24 **RACHEL:** The coat. Leah . . . the coat of many colors.
25 Will you keep it always in memory of my son,
26 Joseph? It is all that is left of the coat Jacob made
27 for him. This is what your sons found in the
28 wilderness where Joseph was slain by wild beasts.
29 Jacob has never stopped mourning for him. And now
30 my death will be soon. Comfort him when I go.
31 Please, sister?

32 LEAH: You know that I will try, dear Rachel.

33 RACHEL: And Leah . . . my newborn son — so tiny,
34 so helpless. I want him to be called Ben-oni . . .
35 Child of Sorrow.

1 LEAH: My sister, Jacob has already declared that he is
2 to be called Benjamin — Son of Happiness.

3 RACHEL: (*Sighs deeply*) Dear, dear Jacob. He has lost
4 Joseph and now . . . but he does love me, does he
5 not?

6 LEAH: (*Gently*) Yes, Rachel. Jacob loves you. He always
7 has. (*RACHEL walks Upstage and sits in fourth chair.*)
8

9 PART 3

10
11 LEAH: (*LEAH picks up coat from bench and walks*
12 *Downstage, Center, holding it.*) Rachel did not live
13 to suffer as we did in the great famine. The famine
14 was the reason we all went down into Egypt. I am
15 glad she did not see my shame when we found that
16 our benefactor . . . the man in Egypt who saved us
17 all from starving . . . was her son, Joseph, still
18 alive! My sons had sold him into slavery those long
19 years ago. They had lied to us about the coat. Joseph
20 had survived and become next to the Pharaoh in
21 importance. I wish, though, that Rachel could see the
22 joy in Jacob's face . . . and the change in my sons.
23 They were like new men. When they found that
24 Joseph had forgiven them, they were like new men.
25 (*Pauses to reflect on the past.*) Perhaps she knows . . .
26 perhaps she knows. (*LEAH walks Upstage and sits*
27 *in fifth chair.*)

28 WOMAN OF ENDOR: (*Enters holding lantern, wearing*
29 *head scarf, muttering to self as she comes down*
30 *aisle.*) Wizards . . . mediums . . . fortunetellers . . .
31 all were banished from the land of Israel by the king
32 of my day — King Saul. Everyone said that I was a
33 witch, so I had to flee for my life and live in a cave
34 near Endor. They called me "The Witch of Endor."
35 (*Puts lantern down on bench*) Yes, it is true . . . I

1 could see and talk to spirits of the dead. People
 2 traveled many miles to see me — to ask me to call
 3 up familiar spirits of them. I remember one very
 4 dark night when three men came over to my cave.
 5 I couldn't see their faces, but I feared for my life
 6 when the tallest of the men asked me to bring up
 7 a familiar spirit. And I reminded him that King Saul
 8 had banished all mediums and witches from the
 9 kingdom. "Are you laying a snare for me?" I asked
 10 the men. "Are you trying to kill me?" I said. "As
 11 the Lord liveth," said the tall man, "I promise that
 12 no punishment shall happen to thee for this thing."
 13 "Very well then. Whom shall I bring up to thee?"
 14 I asked. "Bring me up Samuel," he said. "When I
 15 brought up Samuel I suddenly knew who the tall
 16 man was. "Saul!" I screamed. "You are King Saul!
 17 Why did you deceive me?" "Be not afraid," he
 18 replied. "Tell me what sawest thou?" When I became
 19 calm, I told him of my vision . . . in which gods
 20 ascended out of the earth, and one was a man
 21 wrapped in a robe. Saul knew then that it was the
 22 spirit of Samuel, the dead prophet. He bowed
 23 and put his face to the ground.
 24 VOICE OF SAMUEL: (*Offstage with microphone.*
 25 *Irritated.*) Saul, Saul, why hast thou disturbed me to
 26 bring me up?
 27 WOMAN OF ENDOR: Saul answered, "I am deeply
 28 distressed. I am in danger of losing my kingdom in
 29 wars with the Philistines. I called to God but he will
 30 not answer me . . . neither do the prophets or dreams
 31 give me any rest. Tell me, I beg you . . . tell me
 32 what to do.
 33 SAMUEL: Why ask me? The Lord has departed from
 34 thee and become thine enemy. He has done what he
 35 said he would do. The Lord has taken your kingdom

1 and given it unto David. You disobeyed the Lord.
 2 Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee
 3 unto the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow shalt
 4 thou and thy sons be with me.

5 WOMAN OF ENDOR: Oh, the king could bear no more.
 6 His body stretched full length on the floor and he
 7 was half-paralyzed with fear. Poor Saul. I felt so
 8 sorry for him. "My King, let me give you something
 9 to eat," I said. Only with the help of his two friends
 10 could I persuade him to rest on the bed. I hurried
 11 to kill my fatted calf and make some bread for him
 12 to eat. Ah, the food smelled good as it baked. King
 13 Saul and his men ate the meal. It was their last. They
 14 got up and went into the night. The next day,
 15 everything happened just as Samuel had said. Perhaps
 16 that is why people remember me . . . the Woman of
 17 Endor. Even in your time, the writer Rudyard
 18 Kipling composed a poem about me. *(She picks up*
 19 *lantern and walks Upstage to sit in the sixth chair.)*

20 NARRATOR: *(Offstage, using microphone. Starts reading*
 21 *the poem when woman turns to walk Upstage.)*
 22

23 "Oh, the road to Endor is the oldest road
 24 And the craziest road of all.
 25 Straight it runs to the witch's abode
 26 As it did in the day of Saul.
 27 And nothing has changed of the sorrow
 28 in store
 29 For such as go down the road to En-dor."
 30

31 BAILIFF: *(She is seated in the audience on the front row*
 32 *center aisle. Rises and faces the audience as DEBOR.*
 33 *enters.) Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! All rise. Here comes the*
 34 *Judge. Deborah, the Judge. (DEBORAH strides down*
 35 *aisle carrying banner with scales of justice pictured on*

1 *it. DEBORAH turns to face the audience when she*
 2 *reaches the bench.) You may be seated. (BAILIFF*
 3 *also sits down.)*

4 **DEBORAH:** *(Puts banner on bench.)* I might never have
 5 gotten into politics if I hadn't done the family
 6 mending in our front yard . . . out under a huge
 7 palm tree. Its shade was cool and inviting. While I
 8 did the mending, all the neighbors came to tell me
 9 their troubles and ask my advice. Before I knew it,
 10 Israel had elected me its chief judge . . . me . . . a
 11 woman! So I was a judge as well as a prophetess
 12 for my people . . . and then I had to be their
 13 military leader, too. It was not at all to my liking
 14 to lead armies into battles. But the King of Canaan
 15 had terrified us long enough. He ruined our cities,
 16 killed our children, and dishonored our women. And
 17 not one of our men had the courage to fight against
 18 him. That Barak, our fainthearted commander . . .
 19 he said he wouldn't go. I pushed him and said, "Up!
 20 Up! This is the day the Lord has gone out before
 21 thee." I knew the Lord would help us even though
 22 we had no chariots and few weapons. We had only
 23 a handful of soldiers compared to the Canaanites.
 24 Finally, Barak said he'd go if I went with him. What
 25 else could I do? I went. And the Lord took care of
 26 us as I knew he would. He sent sleet and cold rain
 27 into the faces of the enemy. When their chariots got
 28 stuck in the mud, our men showered them with
 29 arrows. Sisera was their leader. What a miserable
 30 coward! He tried to hide in one of our tents . . .
 31 the tent belonging to a woman named Jael. While
 32 he slept, Jael killed him. God had set us free from
 33 oppression. For the next forty years the land had
 34 rest. And I . . . I went back to catch up with the
 35 mending out under the palm tree in our front yard.

1 *(Picks up banner and walks Upstage to sit in seventh*
 2 *chair.)*

3 **DELILAH:** *(Enters in a seductive manner, spinning*
 4 *around dance-like, smiling as she looks at self in*
 5 *hand mirror. She wears long, sheer scarves around*
 6 *her wrists and head. Scarves float as she turns.)* Oh,
 7 I am beautiful and I'll be rich! All that money! But
 8 I had to nag him to death to tell me. I knew Samson
 9 couldn't resist me. Men never can. *(Smiles as she*
 10 *twirls. Scarves float.)* Soon the Philistine lords will
 11 bring me the money — one thousand one hundred
 12 pieces of silver — just for telling them the secret of
 13 his strength. Oh what a cinch. *(Laughs)* Money — I
 14 love it! *(Lounges on bench.)* Now here's the plan.
 15 Tonight when Samson sleeps, his head will be on my
 16 lap . . . I'll make sure of that. While he's asleep, one
 17 of the men will come in and shave off seven locks of
 18 his hair. . . .Do you believe his strength is in his
 19 hair? That's what he told me. He said, "When my
 20 hair is cut, my strength will leave me and I shall
 21 become weak." He believes that. It could be a trick!
 22 He has tricked me many times before, but I know
 23 this time it's for real. No one could make that up!
 24 I'll really have to be good to pull this off tonight.
 25 *(Studies her face in the mirror . . . suddenly she*
 26 *smiles devilishly and stands up.)* Maybe I should
 27 torment that good-lookin' giant a little. . . . Oh,
 28 Delilah, you're some dish! *(Laughs, twirls, then*
 29 *suddenly stops.)* Say, come to think of it, this sure
 30 is a high price to pay for a haircut! *(Turns and*
 31 *starts Upstage. Stops to look at self in mirror.)*
 32 Oh, I'm gorgeous. *(Continues walk Upstage to sit in*
 33 *eighth chair. Drum or trumpet fanfare announces*
 34 *the queen's entrance.)*

35 **HERALD:** The Queen! The Queen of Sheba! *(HERALD*



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