

Sellout

by Ruth Vaughn

Characters

Jacob: a clean cut young man who enjoys cooking

Esau: Jacob's brother

Rebecca: the mother of Jacob and Esau

Isaac: their father

Setting

If backdrops are available, a wooded area should be used. In Scene I there should be a tent at the side of the stage. Scene II is presented in the woods and there should be as much wooded scenery placed about the stage as possible. Large branches of trees may be placed upright to resemble trees by placing them in a Christmas tree stand and covering up that portion with grass and artificial flowers. In the center of the stage there should be a place for cooking.

Costuming

Jacob is dressed neatly in a tunic and belt. His hair is neatly arranged and in place. Esau is carelessly dressed with his tunic tied over only one shoulder. He wears a water pouch tied about his waist. Rebecca is dressed in Biblical style and wears her hair in braids.



Properties

A "fire" will be necessary for the should be arranged as for a fireplace. fire can be imitated by placing red cel-about the cooking vessel. A light bulb cellophane makes this more realistic. ioned black washpot or it may be ar-and a large cooking vessel hanging bowl, a wooden spoon, a twig on the vessel should be available. Esau should have a bow and arrows slung over his shoulder.



center of the stage. Chopped wood It should be blacked and smoked. The lophane "flames" over the wood and placed in the wood to shine through the The cooking vessel can be an old fash-ranged with a frame made over the fire by a wire over the fire. A large spoon, a ground and "pottage" for the cooking

SCENE I

(Jacob is sitting cross-legged by the fire, looking dreamily into space. Esau enters, looks at him askance.)

Esau: What are you doing?

Jacob (jumps a little): Oh — just thinking, Esau.

Esau: Thinking! About what?

Jacob (shrugs): Things! Going hunting?

Esau: Yeah, I'm going to see what I can find. (He pats his bow gently.) Me and this little item are the terror of the forest! (He laughs.)



Jacob: Esau! I don't see how you stand it!

Esau: You ought to try it sometime. You might discover what a wonderful sport it is — as well as mighty fine tasting when the catch has been cooked!



Jacob: I'll let you do the hunting; I'll do the cooking, thank you.

Esau: You don't know what you're missing!

Jacob: Then, please allow me to remain in my ignorance!

Esau: Have it your way! (He gestures toward the fire.) Cooking?

Jacob (laughs ruefully): I'm trying. It's beginning to bubble! I thought it would never get hot. That fire was stubborn to get started. How long will you be gone?

Esau: Oh, three or four days, I guess. And I'd better get started! So long, brother!

Jacob: Good-by, Esau!

(Esau exits. Jacob watches him go, then leans forward, picks up the spoon and stirs the "pottage." He picks up a spoonful and smells it. He wrinkles his nose.)

Jacob: It hasn't even started!

(Rebecca enters.)

Rebecca: Good morning, Jacob. Are you alone? I thought I heard voices.

Jacob: Yes, my dear brother, Esau, was here a minute ago giving me a running commentary on the thrills of hunting! I was quite relieved when he decided to go prove those thrills to himself.

Rebecca: For shame, Jacob. You shouldn't talk that way about your brother.

Jacob: Oh, Mother! You know the depth of brotherly love that exists between Esau and me!

Rebecca: Well, I don't like to be reminded!

Jacob (hesitates): Mother! I want to ask you something! What, exactly, is this birthright that is to be given to Esau because he is the oldest child?

Rebecca (sits): Jacob, I've explained that to you before. The firstborn son has a great responsibility in the family. He is entitled to what we call the "birthright." He will serve as the priest and the judge of our family.

Jacob: At the same time?

Rebecca: Yes. As the firstborn, Esau will become the chief of the Hebrew tribe after the death of your father, and in this manner he will be the heir to the covenant which was made by God with Abraham.

Jacob: I see. It's pretty important, isn't it? Heir to a covenant with God!

Rebecca: Yes, it is important, Jacob. Most important!

Jacob: And it goes to Esau!

(Rebecca sighs and arises.)

Rebecca: Yes, Jacob, it goes to Esau.

Isaac (offstage): Rebecca! Rebecca! Where are you?

Rebecca: Oh, that is your father. I must go to him. Take good care of your pottage, Jacob!

(She pauses, picks up the spoon, and stirs.)

Isaac (offstage): Rebecca! Rebecca!

Rebecca: I'm coming, dear!

(She smells of a spoonful of the soup. She lays the spoon down.)

Rebecca: It has hopes, Jacob. Yes, it smells delicious. You are becoming quite good at this, you know!

Jacob (sourly): It's nice to know that I'm good at something!



Rebecca: Jacob, don't be like that!

Jacob: And how should I be? Excited and exuberant because my older brother will inherit the birthright? He will receive the covenant of God!

Rebecca: Jacob, don't worry about it, dear.

Isaac (offstage): Rebecca!

Rebecca: Oh, I must go! Jacob, promise me that you won't worry about it. All will be well!

Jacob (sarcastically): I'm sure that it will!

Rebecca: Now promise me that you won't worry! Promise!

Jacob: All right, I promise that I won't worry!

Rebecca (pats his head): That's a good boy!

Isaac (offstage): Rebecca! Where are you?

Rebecca: I'm coming! I'm coming!

(Rebecca exits.)

Jacob: I won't worry! What good does that do? For that matter, what good does anything do?

(He rolls over on his stomach and picks up a twig from the stage.

He chews on it thoughtfully for a moment.)

Jacob: I wonder — I just wonder — if I could, somehow, take that birthright away from him! I just wonder!

(He is silent a moment, chewing on the twig.)

Jacob: But how? That is the question now — how?

(He chews on the twig thoughtfully and then, still thinking, he sits up, picks up the spoon and stirs the "pottage.")

Jacob: The covenant of God! I want that for my own! I want it at any cost! I must find a way! I simply must find a way!

(He picks up a spoonful of the soup, wiggles his nose appreciatively, and tastes it. A crafty gleam comes into his eyes.)

Jacob: Say — this might be it! It just might be —
(Curtain)

SCENE II

(Jacob is sitting by the fire with a big spoon in his hand.)

Jacob: Esau has been gone four days now on his hunting expedition and so I came out here to welcome him back to civilization. (He laughs and stirs the "pottage.") He always comes home this way and he should be along any moment. I should imagine that he will be happy about getting out of the forest — and having the opportunity to eat some good hot pottage from my most experienced hand! (He tastes a spoonful of the "pottage.") Umm! Mighty good! Even if I do say so myself, it is mighty, mighty good pottage!

(There is the sound of heavy footsteps offstage. Esau enters.)

Esau: Jacob! What are you doing out here?

Jacob: You seemed to think I might enjoy life in the woods, brother. I thought that I should see for myself!

Esau (sniffing the air hungrily): I smell something — and it smells terrific!

Jacob: Any success with your hunting?



Esau: No — some messenger had been out in the forest to warn all of the animals of the coming of the great hunter! There was nary a living form in sight! Honest! (He laughs ruefully.)

(Esau pulls off his bow and arrow and flings them to the ground. He unties the water pouch from around his waist and drops it to the ground. Jacob stirs the pottage.)

Esau (looking into the cooking vessel): Brother, your cooking is becoming quite a skill!

Jacob: Thank you, Esau. I was just complimenting myself upon my ability!

Esau (drops wearily to the ground): Well now, brother, aren't you going to offer me some of that pottage? I can hardly wait!

Jacob: And just why should I offer you some pottage? I am the one who cooked it while you have been off gallivanting around!

Esau: Come now, Jacob! You know you enjoy this kind of thing! Man, I'm starved — positively famished! Serve me quickly else I die!

(Jacob looks at Esau craftily.)

Jacob: Are you really hungry, Esau?

Esau: Really hungry? I am famished! I am not teasing you when I say that I must eat immediately or I will die of starvation! Come now, brother, don't tease with me! Give me food!

(Jacob holds up a spoonful of the "pottage" and waves it under Esau's nose. Esau sniffs hungrily.)

Esau: Cut it out now! Give me a bowl full — not a spoonful — what are you trying to do — kill me with temptation?

(Jacob stirs the pottage thoughtfully.)

Esau (impatiently): Jacob, give me some pottage! I'm famished!

Jacob: I will sell you a bowl of pottage.

Esau: Sell me a bowl? For what?

Jacob: I will sell you a bowl of this pottage — for your birthright!

Esau (incredulously): My birthright?

Jacob: That's right! Those are my terms!

Esau: Don't be ridiculous! Jacob, give me something to eat!

Jacob: You heard my proposition. You sell me your birthright for a bowl of pottage. You keep your birthright—I keep my pottage!

Esau: Jacob, really!

Jacob: Really! Which will it be? Your birthright? Or some of this delicious pottage?

(Jacob holds up a spoonful under Esau's nose.)

Esau: Oh, all right! I'm about to die of starvation! What good would the birthright be to me if I were dead?

Jacob: Good thinking, brother! Will you sell me your birthright?

Esau: Yes, all right, I said that I would. Now give me some of that pottage!

(Again Jacob holds up a spoonful of pottage under Esau's nose.)

Jacob: Swear that you will give me your birthright for a bowl of pottage!

Esau: I swear! Jacob — please!

Jacob: Then it's a deal! Pottage coming up, dear brother. Pottage coming right up!

(Jacob spoons up a bowl of pottage and hands it to Esau. Esau grabs the bowl and begins hungrily to eat the pottage. After a few moments, he pauses and looks at Jacob.)

Esau: Jacob, you didn't really mean that, did you? About the birthright, I mean! I really couldn't sell my birthright — just for a measly bowl of pottage!

Jacob: You just did!



Esau: No, Jacob, you don't mean it! Just for a bowl of pottage!

Jacob: A mighty cheap price, I must admit. But it was a deal!

Esau: But Jacob, I can't sell something eternal merely for a passing whim!

Jacob: You did!

(Esau sets the bowl down and arises in obvious agitation.)

Esau: Jacob, you can't do this!

Jacob: You just did! You sold your birthright, brother dear, for a bowl of pottage!

Esau (pacing the stage): But I didn't mean to! I didn't mean to! I just didn't think! I didn't think! Yes, that was my downfall! I just didn't think! I didn't intend to lose my covenant with the Lord. I— I was simply carried away with the desire of the moment! Now it's done! And it can't be undone!

(Esau goes to Jacob.)

Esau: Please, Jacob. I didn't really mean it!

Jacob (laughs): I am so sorry, brother dear, so sorry! But a deal is a deal! You sold your covenant with God for a bowl of pottage!

(Esau turns away.)

Esau: For such a paltry sum, for such a cheap, fleeting desire, I gave up the most important thing in my life. I sold out! And now the decision cannot be revoked. It's too late to think clearly now! It's too late! I sold my covenant with God for a bowl of pottage! I sold out, and now it can never be undone! Sold out!

(Curtain)

Narrator: Esau lived only for the present; he did not look beyond his own immediate desires. Esau was completely taken up in the pleasures of satisfying his senses; he cared only for fun on a day-to-day basis. Esau was a foolish spendthrift of the most valuable things in his life. He sold out his covenant with God for a mere bowl of pottage. Sin would have *you* live only for the present, not look beyond your immediate desires, become absorbed in the pleasures of your senses, care only for fun for the present — and in this way, you, too, will be a spendthrift of the most valuable things in your life! You will sell out your manhood and your womanhood for things as trivial and fleeting as a bowl of pottage. You will sell out your character and your dreams for a flimsy thrill and then you will find yourself a broken, mangled bit of humanity with no hope, no dreams, no relationship with God.



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