

Lot in Life
by
Doug Brook

2010 Playwrights Festival
Curtain Players, Westerville, Ohio
Staged Readings July 9, 10, 2010

Runner Up

Eleventh Annual Full-Length Playwriting Contest (2009)
Actor's Theatre, Santa Cruz, California
Staged Readings September 29, 30, 2009

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PREVIEW SCRIPT

For the full script, or production/rights inquiries, contact doug@brookwrite.com

CAST OF CHARACTERS

3m, 4f

Lot – The biblical character, nephew of Abraham

Meredith - Lot's wife, the biblically unnamed character

Rabbi - a contemporary woman rabbi

Woman 1 - Thomas (Lot's older daughter), Milcah (Lot's sister), Sarai/Sarah (Lot's aunt, Abram's wife),

Woman 2 - Christine (Lot's younger daughter), Iscah (Lot's sister), Lot's Herdsman, Hagar (Sarai's servant)

Man 1 - Angel, Arthur (son-in-law to be), Soldier, Abram (Lot's uncle), Sodomite 1 (voice)

Man 2 - Angel, Jennifer (son-in-law to be), Soldier, Nahor (Lot's uncle), Terach (Abram's father), Big Leader (Egyptian), Abram's Herdsman, Sodomite 2 (voice)

PRODUCTION NOTES

This play shines a modern sensibility on a biblical story, showing what we'd recognize as real people in real situations just like today. The story is best served by depicting real people; no caricatures, no stereotypes, no thick Brooklyn accents. The actors playing multiple roles are best distinguished between the roles by changed costume elements and changed hair or headwear.

(An empty stage and a woman **RABBI** downstage.)

RABBI

This week for our Bible review we'll look at the story of Lot, another of the many interesting characters in the Bible about whom very little was written. But even though there's not much detail on his life, there's more about him than most people are aware of.

(As each character is mentioned, light comes up on them upstage frozen in place.)

Of course, there's Lot himself, the nephew of Abraham. There's Lot's wife, and there's Lot's two daughters. Most people, even those who know the story of Lot, don't realize he had daughters, for reasons we'll get to. In a rarity for the Bible, Lot is not as well known as the woman in the story, his wife. Most of you who have heard of Lot probably didn't really hear of Lot himself, but rather heard of Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt.

(**MEREDITH** gets wide-eyed. She breaks out of their freeze, looks at everyone, confused, and approaches **RABBI**.)

One of the most interesting things about Lot is that he never...

MEREDITH

Excuse me.

RABBI

Yes?

MEREDITH

A pillar of salt?

RABBI

Yes. (to audience:) It's very interesting that Lot in his entire life never once...

(**MEREDITH** taps **RABBI** on the shoulder. The **OTHERS** disappear in darkness.)

MEREDITH

What are you talking about?

RABBI

The story of Lot. This is a weekly Bible study. This week we're studying Lot. It will become clearer as I go through the story. Please?

(**RABBI** indicates for **MEREDITH** to sit with the audience.)

(**MORE**)

RABBI (CONT'D)

MEREDITH starts to the audience, but soon turns around again.)

Lot never once even thought to ask... (to **MEREDITH**:) What now?!?

MEREDITH

Go through the story? Who are you?

RABBI

I'm a rabbi.

MEREDITH

A what?

RABBI

A rabbi. A Jewish spiritual leader.

MEREDITH

Jewish? What's that?

RABBI

Jews are the descendents of Abraham.

MEREDITH

Descendents of Abraham? You mean through his son Ishmael?

RABBI

No, not at all.

MEREDITH

Ishmael is the only kid he's got.

RABBI

The only...? I'm sorry, but who are you?

MEREDITH

I'm Meredith.

RABBI

Meredith?

MEREDITH

Yes, Meredith. You just introduced me. Lot's wife. The one you just said turns into a pillar of salt.

RABBI

Her name wasn't Meredith.

MEREDITH

It most certainly *is*. What did you think my name is?

RABBI

I didn't think your name was anything. You said your name is Meredith. But you're not Lot's wife.

MEREDITH

I most certainly am.

RABBI

But that was thousands of years ago. It's just not possible.

MEREDITH

Okay, descendent of Abraham but not of his only son, do you believe that story he likes to tell about a seven hundred year old guy building a huge boat with his three sons and sticking two of every animal on it during the biggest rainstorm in history?

RABBI

That's part of our tradition.

MEREDITH

Then you can believe I'm me.

RABBI

Even if you are Lot's wife, we don't know you as Meredith.

MEREDITH

What do you know me as?

RABBI

You don't actually have a name in the text.

MEREDITH

I don't have a name? You say I'm better known than my husband but people know his name and not mine? What kind of text is that?

RABBI

Well, it's a very old text.

MEREDITH

Listen, sister.

RABBI

Rabbi. Nuns are sisters.

MEREDITH

Nuns? What are... Let me see this text of yours.

RABBI

I don't think that's a good idea.

MEREDITH

Why not?

RABBI

If you are really from some time during the story of Lot, you shouldn't read about what hasn't happened to you yet. You could change history.

MEREDITH

It's not history for me yet.

RABBI

Actually it is. You just haven't gotten to all of it yet. But if you hadn't experienced all of what this text says we wouldn't be here now having this conversation.

MEREDITH

(Confused) Whatever. Fine. But I'm not leaving, so how are you going to teach this story of yours if I'm not allowed to know how it ends?

RABBI

Well, I can cover the beginning at least.

MEREDITH

Go right ahead.

(**MEREDITH** heads to the audience.)

RABBI

Thank you.

MEREDITH

One hint for the beginning of your little story. I was born. And I was named Meredith!

(**MEREDITH** sits in the audience.)

RABBI

(To audience:) Okay. The first thing we know about Lot is his lineage, from chapter eleven in Genesis. Terach, a distant descendent of Noah, had three sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

(**MAN 1** and **MAN 2** enter, holding signs that say Abram and Nahor, respectively. **THEY** visibly count that there's only two of them, then drag **LOT** onstage handing him a sign that says **HARAN**.)

Haran died...

(**LOT** exits again.)

But not until he had a son named Lot and two daughters.

(**LOT** reappears, with a sign saying Lot, along with the two **WOMEN** with signs saying Haran's Daughters.)

Abram took Sarai as his wife. Nahor took Lot's sister Milcah as his wife.

(**WOMAN 1** flips her card, which says Milcah. She reacts like a winning gameshow contestant. **MAN 2** takes **WOMAN 1** and starts to exit. **WOMAN 1** tosses a bouquet over her shoulder, caught by **WOMAN 2**. **MEREDITH** jumps up from the audience.)

MEREDITH

Whoa. What? What just happened?

(**MAN 2** and **WOMAN 1** return to where they were, disgruntled. **SHE** gets the bouquet back. **RABBI** indicates **LOT**, **MAN 2**, and **WOMEN** as she describes them. **SHE** flips back **LOT's** sign to say Haran.)

RABBI

Haran had three children, and then died.

(**LOT** flips his sign back to say Lot again.)

(MORE)

RABBI (CONT'D)

Lot had two daughters: Milcah and Iscah. After Haran died, Nahor married Milcah.

(**MAN 2** and **WOMAN 1** less enthusiastically walk off again, just handing the bouquet off this time.)

MEREDITH

Lot never told me that. His sister became his aunt?

RABBI

Yes.

MEREDITH

Does that sound normal to you?

RABBI

Not today, of course. But according to the text, times were different back then.

MEREDITH

They weren't that different.

RABBI

Apparently they were.

MEREDITH

And you were there so you know. What kind of family did I marry into?

RABBI

One destined for a prosperous future.

MEREDITH

I'll believe it when I see... Wait a minute. Does anything else happen with Milcah and Iscah?

RABBI

No. Not really.

(**WOMAN 2** pouts, exits.)

MEREDITH

So nothing happens with these two girls except a little inbreeding, but they got their names recorded for all time and I didn't? Who wrote this book?

(**MEREDITH** grabs the book from **RABBI**, looks at the cover.)

(MORE)

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Who's Gideon?

(**RABBI** grabs the book from **MEREDITH**.)

RABBI

It is the holy text, the Bible that tells us of the origins of our people. Please, just let me continue.

(**MEREDITH** puts up her hands in resignation and steps back..)

WOMAN 1

A rabbi wouldn't have a Gideon's Bible.

RABBI

Oh, don't you start.

WOMAN 1

But you wouldn't.

RABBI

That's not you not starting.

(**WOMAN 1** backs off.)

Anyone else? (pause) Thank you. So Terach took Abram, Abram's wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot, and headed to Canaan.

(**MAN 1** enters with a sign saying Abram, **MAN 2** with one saying Terach, **WOMAN 1** with one saying Sarai, and **LOT** with one saying Lot.)

MEREDITH

His nephew? Isn't Lot Terach's grandson?

(**LOT** flips his sign to say "Terach's Grandson.")

RABBI

He's Abram's nephew.

(**LOT** flips his sign to say "Abram's Nephew." **LOT** is increasingly unamused.)

MEREDITH

But he's also Terach's grandson? And he's also Terach's step-grandnephew because Terach's other son married Lot's sister, his niece?

(**LOT** flips his sign to show a complex family tree diagram.)

RABBI

Do you have a piece of paper?

MEREDITH

No.

RABBI

Then don't try to figure it out.

(**LOT** rips up his signs.)

They headed to Canaan, but stopped in Charan - the place, not their dead relative - and settled there instead.

MEREDITH

Why?

RABBI

It doesn't say.

MEREDITH

Seems like an important life choice. It doesn't say? Okay...

RABBI

Terach died there when he was 205 years old.

(**MAN 2** exits, hugging everyone as he goes.)

After that, at age 75, Abram is instructed by the Lord to finish the journey to Canaan. So to Canaan he went with Sarai and Lot and everything they had.

MEREDITH

I know. I was there.

RABBI

Were you.

MEREDITH

Doesn't it mention me?

RABBI

No. Not until... much later.

MEREDITH

Okay. This text of yours is missing my entire life.

RABBI

What we know comes from the bible, and in that sense we don't know anything about you.

MEREDITH

Well, Lot knew me very well. In every sense. My life was a really important part of Lot's. Don't you want the story told as it really happened?

RABBI

I don't believe you'd know.

MEREDITH

You'd rather believe that book?

RABBI

My life is dedicated to the belief of that book. How can we trust that you know what really happened?

MEREDITH

Because I was there! I'm Meredith!

RABBI

But we don't know Lot's wife as Meredith.

MEREDITH

Listen, rabbi, I went through sixteen hours of labor for each of Lot's daughters. I kept our home in order and our family safe. I am who I am. Why are you trying to take my identity from me?

RABBI

You're accusing me of identity theft?

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