

PERUSAL PAGES



Eric Samuelson



Newport, Maine

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THE PLAN

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Cast of Characters

Each of these short plays can be performed on its own. But if the entire cycle is produced, it can be performed with two actors (1 M 1 F), or with any number up to eleven (5 F 6 M). Gaia and Eve must be played by the same actress.

GAIA

Gaia
Lucifer

BATHSHEBA

David
Bathsheba

RUTH IN THE HOUSE OF BOAZ

Ruth
Boaz

RACHEL'S SISTER

Leah
Jacob

OUTSIDE JERICHO

Rahab
Joshua

EVE, DYING

Adam
Eve

The original cast of the Covey Center for the Arts production in Provo, Utah opened on March 18, 2009 in the Brinton Black Box Theatre. The production was directed by the author and featured the following cast:

Ashley Jean Bonner (Rahab)

Emily Ruth Foster (Ruth)

Andrea Hepfinger (Leah)

Peter Layland (Boaz)

Bradford Garrison (Adam)

Dianna Graham (Bathsheba)

Patrick Kintz (David, Jacob)

Travis Hyer (Lucifer, Joshua)

Julie Webb (Gaia, Eve)

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Cast of 9-11: The 6 Male roles and 6 Female roles most often are doubled to 4M 5W. Can be done with as few as 1 actress and 1 actor. The play examines some of the real-life dilemmas and emotions that face us all—choice and consequences, pain and difficulty and joy—framed in a series of short scenes from the Old Testament. This is Samuelsen's twenty-fifth produced play, and his experience is evident. The Plan shows us real people dealing with real problems. Earnest, sincere, guilty, and oftentimes hilarious, Samuelsen's characters span the gamut of human experience. Six short themed plays make up the evening: GAIA, BATHSHEBA, RUTH IN THE HOUSE OF BOAZ, RACHEL'S SISTER, OUTSIDE JERICHO and EVE, DYING. Each of these short plays can be performed on its own. But if the entire cycle is produced, it can be performed with as few as two actors (1 M 1 F), or with any number up to eleven (5 F 6 M). Gaia and Eve must be played by the same actress. **ORDER # 2030.**

Eric Samuelsen taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include Gadianton, which has seen three professional productions across the country, A Love Affair with Electrons, Family, The Plan,' and The Way We're Wired. He is resident playwright at Plan B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who has designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of Eric, including productions of six plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright. He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine The Sugarbeet. He was also featured in the book *Conversations with Mormon Authors*, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandanavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogs at Mormoniconoclast.com.

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Scene One -- GAIA

(LUCIFER stares down at a lagoon. GAIA enters, looks around, sees him.)

GAIA: Lucifer. We need to talk.

LUCIFER: Gaia. Look.

GAIA: Now.

LUCIFER: Right there!

GAIA: Lucifer, I finally found you, we have serious matters to discuss, I don't have time--.

LUCIFER: Quickly!

GAIA: Lucifer. . . .

(Looks.)

It's a lagoon, a coral reef.

LUCIFER: Yes! Life and light and mindless slaughter. Now, right . . . there.

GAIA: We don't have time to. . . fine. That fish?

LUCIFER: Yes, but what kind of fish?

GAIA: Taxonomy is Michael's department.

LUCIFER: I'm not talking to Michael. It's called a tang, a blue tang.

GAIA: She's hiding. Fine, that's what she does.

LUCIFER: That's all she can do. All night, all day, she looks for cover, a hiding place, some tiny hole or crack in a reef that's nothing but predators. She can't outswim anything, can't defend herself. She can hide, that's her only evolutionary advantage.

GAIA: Well, she also lays thousands of eggs. And her hatchlings are good at hiding too, and good at laying more eggs. I really don't see what--.

LUCIFER: Okay, now, next exhibit. Right there.

GAIA: That shark?

LUCIFER: The shark, yes! Gristle and cartilage and rows of teeth, a killing, feeding machine. Now, the fish and the shark, they're about equally intelligent.

GAIA: I know the argument you're--.

LUCIFER: Sharks, big and stupid; lagoon fish, smaller but smarter. So which would you rather be?

GAIA: They get the same mortality.

LUCIFER: The same mortality, yes! They're intelligences, like we are, they need bodies, like we do! So how is this fair, how does one get to be a predator and the other one prey?

GAIA: So the reports we've heard are true.

LUCIFER: Engage with me! Talk to me, hear my arguments. Make arguments of your own.

GAIA: I am.

(Intensely.)

There's a plan, we've all agreed to it.

LUCIFER: So we can't change our minds? Look at that fish. An intelligence.

GAIA: A limited one. "I'm hungry." "I'm scared."

LUCIFER: Capable of growth, like me, like you.

GAIA: You're growing? Or just changing your mind?

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LUCIFER: *(Taken aback at this.)* All I do is talk to people. All I do, all day long.

GAIA: Preaching against the plan.

LUCIFER: Not really. All the ways the plan doesn't work.

GAIA: It's beautiful.

LUCIFER: That's sick.

GAIA: To me it is. My earth, it's beautiful.

LUCIFER: Yours? You helped, that's all.

GAIA: Helped, you're right. I was lead engineer; I have come to think of it as mine, as most of us have. I do love it so.

LUCIFER: I remember you down there, stirring the soup.

GAIA: I spent millennia gathering the elements, methane, ammonia, hydrogen.

LUCIFER: You wasted millennia.

GAIA: Look what we did, though. Amino acids to proteins to life! We filled a world with life!

LUCIFER: Disgusting, most of it. Mites and bacteria and slime molds.

GAIA: And fish. And sharks.

LUCIFER: Yes! Hail, Gaia, Earth's mother! Creator of violence and death.

GAIA: Author of necessity.

LUCIFER: Well, I see your world. I see a shark and a fish. That's what it comes down to. Sharks and fish, predators and victims. Violent and bloody and so unfair.

GAIA: You don't really care about that fish. You care about how her life affects you.

LUCIFER: You didn't know her until I pointed her out.

GAIA: I know that she wanted a body. She wanted a chance to learn.

LUCIFER: And there. She's dead. She just died, that bigger fish just ate her.

GAIA: And the shark will eat the bigger fish. That's how it works.

LUCIFER: So which would you rather be?

GAIA: They're equal, Lucifer. Equally blessed, equally cherished.

LUCIFER: Cherished!

GAIA: You know that's true. HE loves them all.

LUCIFER: So HE sent them down to this horror show. Where we're going, right? Pain and sickness and violence and death.

GAIA: You're such a coward.

LUCIFER: Okay, if that's what you're reduced to—.

GAIA: You're a crybaby, Lucifer. Whine whine. ' Oh, I'm so scared. Oh, it's going to hurt! Oh, I'm going to get an owie on my pinkie!

LUCIFER: You don't know what pain is.

GAIA: Nor do you! We're just these shapes, incorporeal, we can't actually feel much of anything.

LUCIFER: I like my shape.

GAIA: So why does every single intelligence, when they've died, when they get back here, why does every single one miss it? Because they do.

LUCIFER: They're stupid.

GAIA: Your shark friend will be back here soon enough. Say that to him, tell him how dumb he is. Let me know when, I wanna watch.

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LUCIFER: He can't really hurt me.

(But he looks around uneasily.)

GAIA: Wanna bet?

LUCIFER: You think I'm just afraid. Of pain and difficulty. I'm not. I just see what I see.

GAIA: We all can see the same world. We just don't dwell on the worst bits of it.

(Pause.)

LUCIFER: When are you going?

GAIA: None of us know.

LUCIFER: Don't give me that. You're in the inner circle, no way you don't know.

GAIA: I've heard . . . soon.

LUCIFER: With Michael. GAIA and Michael, the first two. I knew that, see. I still know things, too.

GAIA: Fine, you know things, good for you.

LUCIFER: It's almost ready, isn't it? After all these years, all that death and preparation. It's about time.

GAIA: Men. And women.

LUCIFER: Us. And it'll be comfortable at first. You and Michael in that garden. And then you'll get to choose, won't you? You'll leave your garden, and you'll suffer and you'll think it was your idea.

GAIA: It will be.

LUCIFER: *(Shouts it.)* Sure! As long as HE gets to keep HIS hands clean!

GAIA: We agreed! We said we wanted this!

LUCIFER: We didn't know!

GAIA: We knew enough!

LUCIFER: NOT ME!

(Pause.)

GAIA: It could have been you in the garden. It was between you and Michael.

LUCIFER: Not Yahweh?

GAIA: You know his role. You've become this great baby, so afraid of pain, and look at him, look at what he'll suffer.

LUCIFER: More pain, the key to the plan.

GAIA: He agreed to it, and I honor him; I even think about him and I wish I could weep, and you--.

LUCIFER: I'm important too! Don't talk about him, I'm just as important as he is! I'm in the inner circle!

GAIA: Yes. You are.

LUCIFER: I don't know what I'm going to be doing yet, but it's got to be important. People listen to me!

GAIA: Which is why it'd be nice if you talked sense.

LUCIFER: Maybe I'll even be with you, there, in that garden.

GAIA: It'll just be us two. To begin with.

LUCIFER: Three's a crowd. I'd be intruding. An unwelcome guest.

GAIA: Something like that.

LUCIFER: Sounds good. Sounds fun.

GAIA: I'm not going to argue anymore.

(She starts to go.)

LUCIFER: Do you remember the meteor?

GAIA: Of course I do.

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LUCIFER: Those poor dying creatures. Huge, lumbering; all that's left of them now is my shark.

GAIA: Lobsters. Alligators.

LUCIFER: They weren't all stupid, there were higher intelligences, with some self-awareness, some sense of family and protecting the young and

GAIA: Lucifer. I remember.

LUCIFER: Do you remember that how that felt, watching? Everywhere, creatures choking to death. They couldn't breath, they could hardly move, and no idea why. There they were, feeding and propagating. Suddenly, smash. The air turning lethal. And they fell, by the millions, billions.

GAIA: Gabriel protected those he could.

LUCIFER: Gabriel. Mr. Cataclysm.

GAIA: That's his role. Once the dominant species reaches an evolutionary dead end. . . .

LUCIFER: I've heard the lecture--.

GAIA: Other species with greater potential--.

LUCIFER: Mammals, sure.

GAIA: They come under Gabriel's protection, and we, well, we.

LUCIFER: Allow something through.

GAIA: We allow something through. And in time, Gabriel's role will form the heart of a beautiful myth. A poet will celebrate it: a boat, a flood, a family. A true enough reflection of his function in earth history.

LUCIFER: And what of the brutality that poetry conceals, living souls choking out their lives in flood and firestorm?

GAIA: I trust HIM. HE's been right every time.

LUCIFER: The plan. Always the plan.

GAIA: It's beautiful.

LUCIFER: Yes, of course you think that, anything HE wants--

three and a half more pages to end of this scene

Scene Two -- BATHSHEBA

(BATHSHEBA lays flat on her back in bed, fists clenched. DAVID plays the lyre, a mournful tune. He finishes. He waits for her response. After a moment.)

DAVID: Did you like it?

BATHSHEBA: It's pretty.

DAVID: I thought it would please you.

BATHSHEBA: It does then. Very much.

DAVID: I wrote it for you. In your praise.

BATHSHEBA: Thoughtful.

DAVID: You seem pale. Distracted.

BATHSHEBA: Do I?

DAVID: Is something wrong?

BATHSHEBA: Is something wrong.

(Pause.)

I'm here, you're playing music for me, and I don't know anything. Outside this room, I'm completely. . . .
Can I even leave? Am I . . . free?

DAVID: You're free.

BATHSHEBA: Whatever you mean by that. Look, there are things I need to ask you, and I don't know how to
except just to ask.

DAVID: All right.

BATHSHEBA: *(Taking the plunge.)* He's dead, isn't he?

DAVID: Uriah.

(Pause.)

I'm sorry. I meant to break it gently. Yes. He's dead.

(She gives a great shuddering sigh of relief.)

I received word from Joab, just before dinner.

BATHSHEBA: So I'm a widow.

DAVID: *(Reaches to embrace her.)* I'm so very sorry.

BATHSHEBA: *(Holding him off.)* I'm in mourning.

DAVID: *(Stops.)* Of course.

BATHSHEBA: I'm a widow, I'm his widow. Those are the facts now. Things have changed, and I need to
know where we go from here.

DAVID: You need time, I understand. I'll leave you to your thoughts.

BATHSHEBA: No! Look, I'm pregnant, and I'm a widow, and everyone knows the child isn't his. So what
now? What's the plan?

DAVID: You're a widow; you go back to the home of your father.

(She laughs, close to hysterics.)

Most of our people don't find our law so amusing.

BATHSHEBA: Back to my father? You'd rather not kill me yourself, you'd rather he took care of it?

DAVID: You're distracted. Mourn: we'll talk tomorrow.

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BATHSHEBA: You had him killed. Uriah, you ordered his death.

DAVID: He died in battle.

BATHSHEBA: Yes, that would be the spin.

DAVID: He died in battle. That's the truth.

(Starts to leave.)

I'm intruding.

BATHSHEBA: My father arranged my marriage to Uriah when I was thirteen. I was informed of it the day before it took place. I met him for the first time under the wedding canopy, I had sex with him, a complete stranger to me, that night, as was required of me.

DAVID: And then, in time, you grew to love him.

BATHSHEBA: My father beat me when I displeased him. Uriah beat me as well; I displeased him more often.

(DAVID recoils at the thought.)

Nine years, *nine years* of barrenness, despite his best exertions. Of course I displeased him.

DAVID: I believe it shameful to strike a woman.

BATHSHEBA: Well, you're the king. You might want to let that be known.

DAVID: Perhaps in a psalm.

BATHSHEBA: Poetry! Yes, that will settle things. What do you want me to do?

DAVID: Mourn first, then we'll—

BATHSHEBA: Fine, I'll mourn, I'll sit shiva, I'll cover up the mirrors, I may even rend my dress, after I've changed into something I don't like as much.

DAVID: He was a good man, a convert to our ways.

BATHSHEBA: He *embodied* your ways. I existed to please him, and I didn't, and paid for it.

DAVID: I could send for your friends, someone to sit with you.

BATHSHEBA: I have no friends!

DAVID: Women of your household, perhaps, or—

BATHSHEBA: I have maidservants, who fear me as much as I feared Uriah, and with as good cause. My sisters are married and gone, my mother is dead. I have sufficient status to bar the door to my father, and I do. And now you're going to send me back to him?

DAVID: Am I your friend?

BATHSHEBA: Is that what you want?

DAVID: Very much.

BATHSHEBA: You don't want me in your bed?

DAVID: Well, I do find you . . . alluring.

BATHSHEBA: So which do you want? Friendship or sex?

DAVID: Well . . . do I really need to choose between them? Given our circumstances.

(She laughs again.)

Again I amuse you.

BATHSHEBA: Protect me! I'll do anything you tell me to!

DAVID: I would rather serve you.

BATHSHEBA: Serve me? You want to serve me?

(Her laugh has a panicky edge.)

David, I know you mean well, but you say things like that, and I don't know where I stand.

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(Pause.)

He slept outside my door.

DAVID: Yes.

BATHSHEBA: I know you think I'm a fool. I'm a woman, and we're all fools. But I was barren until I knew you, and then I was barren no more. I know what I told you, and when I told it to you. I know when he came home, and I know what everyone knew, where he slept that night.

DAVID: You have no real proof of any--.

BATHSHEBA: You had him murdered, because your child was growing in my belly and everyone knew it couldn't possibly be his!

DAVID: I did nothing of the--.

BATHSHEBA: And why you don't just kill me too, I have no idea, it would make everything so--.

DAVID: Do you interrupt your king?

BATHSHEBA: And now he's a king again. Friend, king, or murderous lover, which is it to be?

DAVID: (Stands.) You will respect your king!

BATHSHEBA: My king? Or the man who killed my husband?

(They glare at each other.)

If you're going to kill me, I'd rather you did it. Not my father. I have sisters.

DAVID: Your father would never--.

BATHSHEBA: My father's a priest, we both know what he'll do the second I walk in the door.

DAVID: You'll be under the king's protection.

BATHSHEBA: As was Uriah.

DAVID: You're a woman, Uriah was a soldier, it's a different--.

BATHSHEBA: You told him to come home. And he did, but wasn't that just Uriah all over, ostentatiously sleeping outside the house to satisfy some niggling point of honor.

DAVID: I sent him home because I was worried what people would say. Wagging tongues--.

BATHSHEBA: Yes, I'm terrified of gossip.

DAVID: I wanted your reputation--.

BATHSHEBA: The penalty for an adulterous wife is *death*. By *stoning*. A law enforced by your priests, under your orders.

(A pause.)

DAVID: You were not in any real jeopardy.

BATHSHEBA: Not in jeopardy! I couldn't hide it much longer, and my husband was at war! You send him home, he sleeps *outside* my house where everyone could see, and that was it, that was my death sentence!

DAVID: I would have protected you.

BATHSHEBA: You did protect me, you sent him to battle. No, not just to battle. To an assault, on a fortified city's walls. Right? You ordered Joab to send Uriah on a suicide mission.

DAVID: A gamble, hope for a breakthrough.

BATHSHEBA: Oh, it was a gamble, all right. What if it hadn't worked? What if he took the city? What would the story have been? The hero of the army, and his cheating tramp of a wife.

DAVID: Then I would have confessed my sin before the people.

BATHSHEBA: I'm just imagining it. This great public gesture, David, the hero warrior poet king, making some grandiose mea culpa in the public square. And who takes the blame? The slut. The harlot. The evil

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evil temptress.

DAVID: I would have taken the blame entirely on myself.

BATHSHEBA: I swoon at your nobility.

(She turns on him.)

You gambled with my life! And what was at stake for you? A tiny blemish on the reputation of the ruddy shepherd boy who killed Goliath. Nothing! Nothing!

DAVID: You're distraught. Your husband is dead, and you're mad with grief. I'll leave you alone.

(He starts to go.)

BATHSHEBA: And that's another way to win a fight.

DAVID: What do you want from me? A confession? Yes, I ordered the assault.

BATHSHEBA: Led by Uriah.

DAVID: He's an able commander.

BATHSHEBA: With a pregnant wife, by you. And so you had him killed. You gave the order, knowing Joab would carry it out. Good old Joab, so vicious and so necessary. You killed Uriah so you could have me to yourself. Admit that, at least.

DAVID: All right!

(Long pause.)

Yes. God forgive me.

(Pause.)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Out of a full heart, my God, take away my sin.

three more pages to the end of this scene.

Scene Three -- RUTH IN THE HOUSE OF BOAZ

(RUTH lies by the bed of BOAZ. She looks away from him as she speaks. As he wakes, they turn away from each other, their lines are their thoughts. Only when they look at each other do they speak to each other.)

RUTH: He's still asleep. I could just leave. I don't think anyone saw me come in and if I'm very quiet I could slip out and no one would know I was here. Yes. Yes.

(She starts to get up.)

No. Don't lose your nerve, you're just scared. Naomi said it was okay. Besides, where would I go? Back to Naomi? She'll ask what happened, and I'll have to tell her what a coward I am. She won't despise me, I don't think. She never has, even when Mahlon married me, which I know disappointed her, her son with a Moabite, rejecting his own people and God, but no, never a word, she's been my great friend throughout. Oh! He's stirring! I don't like this! Leave! Run!

(She starts to get up.)

Calm yourself. Calm down.

(She stands, irresolute.)

What's the worst that could happen? He could misunderstand. He could laugh at me. Or he could kick me out and tell us we can't glean from his fields anymore. Or . . .

(An appalling possibility.)

He could understand all too well. I'm here, at his bedside, brazen like a harlot. He's a man, after all. He could . . . do as men do. Take his pleasure. And what could I do but consent? I am here, after all. I chose to sneak into his bedchamber, lay myself down, uncover his feet. Pretty much just inviting him to . . .

(Starts to go.)

This was foolishness. I trust Naomi, she knows the customs here. But customs are just customs, and men have their desires. And if the worst should happen, I'm no blushing virgin. I was married. But a widow is respectable, a widow can hold her head up. I'm a stranger, but I am an honorable woman, I am no strumpet. Some things are just wrong.

(Firmly preparing to leave.)

I must leave, I have no choice. And I suppose that probably means leaving Naomi too, and returning, as Orpah did, home, to my own land and people. If my choices are poverty or dishonor, I know which I choose. Orpah will take me in.

(Considers it.)

Orpah. My sister. Who left poor Naomi to grieve alone, after losing her husband, losing two sons. After vowing to stay with her. That's who I want to be? Another Orpah?

(She sits.)

And what reason do I have to distrust Naomi? Or distrust the family of Elimalech? These are good people, caring and kind, and they've taught me so much, about the lovingkindness of Yahweh. Naomi said this was a right and proper act, though that seems quite impossible, and even terribly dangerous. But Naomi knows their ways. Besides. . .

(She looks down at BOAZ, still sleeping.)

Does he really seem so frightening? When he told his servants to let us glean his barley, he spoke so softly

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and kindly. Perhaps he is different from other men. Maybe this will be all right.

(BOAZ stirs again.)

Oh! He's waking! Pretend to be asleep!

(She lays quickly down and feigns sleep. BOAZ wakes. Yawns, stretches. He sees her.)

BOAZ: What in the world?

(He looks her over.)

She shouldn't be here.

(Gently shakes her shoulder.)

Miss? Miss?

(RUTH continues to pretend she's asleep.)

Of all the strange situations . . . Do I know her?

(Looks her over carefully.)

I saw her gleaning from my fields. The Moabite. Daughter-in-law to the one who was gone and returned, Naomi. Yes, I remember, she's the one. We talked briefly, she spoke so softly and well. And the others wanted to make fun of her accent, and her looks and ways, but that wasn't right, she's a loyal friend to her mother-in-law and they ought to have respected that. But what is she doing here? Could she have misunderstood? Could she have thought I was inviting her to be with me, as a woman and a man, together? Does she really think so little of me, to think I'd want her that way? A poor woman giving herself to me, a man of means?

(Looks her over again.)

But wait. Naomi, the one who left. The one she takes care of. She's kin to me, is she not? Distant kin, perhaps, but we share . . . an uncle, perhaps? Are we in some way cousins? So is this about my obligation to her?

(A little angry.)

So this is a demand, is it? An insolent ultimatum. The arrogance of it: support me, your kinswoman, or else. Or else what? What will she do to me, who can she turn to? I'll show her how power works in Israel.

(Shakes her again.)

Wake up!

(RUTH sits up, frightened, and turns away from him. He turns away from her as well.)

She certainly doesn't look insolent.

RUTH: He's going to hit me!

BOAZ: She looks frightened.

RUTH: *(Closes her eyes.)* Please! Don't!

BOAZ: She's cringing away from me.

RUTH: Please!

BOAZ: *(Backs away.)* She's afraid of me.

RUTH: Please! No!

BOAZ: What a terrible thought, that a poor widow would be afraid of me.

RUTH: He's so angry, he can't even speak.

(She dares to open her eyes, quickly glance at him and then away.)

He's moved away from me. In sheer disgust, from the look on his face. Who can blame him? An honorable man, finding a wanton woman in his bedchamber.

The Plan by *Eric Samuelsen*

BOAZ: She's as frightened as a mouse. Of me.

RUTH: I'll just go. This can't get more humiliating.

(She starts to leave.)

BOAZ: *(To her.)* Wait.

(She stops, surprised.. He turns away again.)

Why did I do that? What can I possibly want with her?

two and a half more pages to the end of this scene.

Scene Four -- RACHEL'S SISTER

(A tent. JACOB pulls on his sandals, ad lib muttering to himself.)

LEAH: Okay, look. Where are you going? What's the matter?

JACOB: I need to talk to your father.

LEAH: Why do you need to talk to my father?

JACOB: Oh, like you don't know.

LEAH: I don't!

JACOB: Fine, you don't have any idea. I still have to talk to him.

LEAH: He's gone.

JACOB: Gone?

LEAH: He'll be back tomorrow, or the next day. How urgent can it be?

JACOB: Great.

(Sits grumpily.)

LEAH: What's the big hurry?

JACOB: Oh, wow. You know, you're good, you really are, you sound so innocent, like you had nothing to do with—

LEAH: What are you talking about?

JACOB: That wasn't you under that veil?

LEAH: Yeah, and here in your bed last night. We got married, remember?

JACOB: And how, exactly, was it you and me getting married?

(A long and dangerous pause.)

LEAH: Seriously?

JACOB: I was marrying Rachel! I thought, last night, it was me and Rachel who—

LEAH: I'm four inches taller than Rachel, I've got to have twenty pounds on her! You really thought I was her?!?!?!?

JACOB: I worked seven years to marry her, everyone knew that, I don't even understand how—

LEAH: Well, gosh, I'm sorry. You married me instead. Get over it.

JACOB: Everyone knew who I was marrying!

LEAH: You signed the ketuvah!

JACOB: I signed a . . . no, no, no, to marry Rachel! Your sister! Not . . .

(New horrible thought.)

Oh, man. So last night, it may not even have been—

LEAH: Last night was . . . what it was, a wedding night. We're married, legally, lawfully. If I'm getting this right, you apparently didn't even bother to *look* at the marriage contract, which I sort of think would be the normal thing to do, to actually *read over* something before you sign your name to it, no, not you, couldn't be bothered, but *if*, if you had, you'd have seen my name. Which I thought you knew. Right there on top, big letters.

JACOB: (*Wincing.*) Leah, listen. Could you maybe keep it down a little?

LEAH: (*Obnoxiously loudly.*) What? Why?

JACOB: My head's just sort of splitting in half, and—

LEAH: (*Loudly.*) Hungover? Hah!

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(More quietly.)

That explains a lot.

JACOB: Look. It's tradition, people come up to you: "I'chaim," "I'chaim," someone hands you a drink. They toast you, you toast 'em back.

LEAH: So last night, then. Seriously. You had no idea?

JACOB: Sorry. I don't remember . . . much.

LEAH: Well, I wondered. Dad and I, we were sort of expecting a stronger reaction. But then you just signed your name, right there on the dotted line, so I figured, hey, he's okay with it, he's cooler than I thought.

JACOB: Sorry.

(New thought.)

Though, I'm not sure I'm the person who should be apologizing here.

LEAH: It was my father's idea. He was all ready to explain what the thinking was, but then you didn't even—

JACOB: Ah, an explanation, yes, that would be great! I'd love to hear his explanation!

LEAH: He loves me.

JACOB: He's your father, of course he loves his —.

LEAH: He loves *me*. It's not totally impossible, you know.

JACOB: It's also not relevant. When I think about the way you two—

LEAH: You want an explanation; every time I start, there you go, kvetching and moaning--.

JACOB: So explain.

LEAH: You ever give one thought to me, to my situation? My younger sister getting married first? My prospects not exactly brilliant, and then this public humiliation? Me, maid of honor to my younger sister.

JACOB: Okay, I admit—.

LEAH: Seven years, you've waited for Rachel, and never once did you go, oh, wait, she's got an older unmarried sister, boy, this could really be hard for her.

JACOB: We talked about it. Rachel and I.

LEAH: I bet you did.

JACOB: We did. Several times.

LEAH: And how did those conversations go? 'Oh, gosh, poor Leah. Oh, well, that's how things go sometimes.'

JACOB: Look, you're making us sound completely heartless. We were worried about you, we talked about it all the time. But you seemed content enough.

LEAH: Content. I didn't have a fit. I didn't weep and moan and throw myself a pity party. I promise you I wasn't content.

JACOB: We did what we could. We talked to some people. Guys.

LEAH: Trying to find someone who would take even me?

JACOB: I have friends.

LEAH: Friends, you're a stranger, working as a servant, who do you know?

JACOB: I'm your cousin.

LEAH: Which makes the whole thing even weirder. And it's not like you have a brother or something.

JACOB: Well. . . .

LEAH: What?

JACOB: I do, actually, have a brother.

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LEAH: You do.

JACOB: An older brother, yeah.

LEAH: Well that would have been nice to know. Seven years you live here, and that's the first any of us heard about any brother.

JACOB: You don't want Esau, I promise. Last I saw him, he was trying to kill me.

LEAH: Can't say I blame the man.

JACOB: It's complicated.

LEAH: So, as *your wife*, I'd still like to know—.

JACOB: Seriously, Leah, you don't want Esau. It's not a good situation. He thinks I tricked him, for one thing. Cheated him.

LEAH: You stole from him?

JACOB: Not really, more like a birthright sort of—.

LEAH: You stole his birthright?!?!?

JACOB: No! Well, maybe. Sort of.

LEAH: Sort of?

JACOB: I traded him for it.

LEAH: Well, that's not so bad. What did you give him for it?

JACOB: Bowl of soup.

LEAH: I'm sorry, I didn't quite hear. . . .

JACOB: Bowl of lentil soup.

LEAH: For his birthright!

JACOB: He was really hungry and anyway my Mom put me up to it.

LEAH: You know, who cares. Point is, I would have liked to have known about a brother. Even if you were a jerk to him. Soup? And your Mom, seriously, your Mom? What in the world did your Mom--?

JACOB: You said you didn't want to hear about it.

LEAH: No, you're right. You said 'complicated,' so okay. It still can't be as complicated as this.

JACOB: No.

LEAH: *(Pause, as they consider it.)* Anyway this wasn't some plot to steal my sister's boyfriend.
(He reacts.)

I mean it. I knew you were in love with Rachel. I was happy for you, both of you. I was.

JACOB: And you were my friend. Our friend.

LEAH: I tried to be. Remember that first dinner?

JACOB: Yeah.

LEAH: You didn't even see me. I don't think you took your eyes off Rachel for two seconds. I don't even know how you fed yourself, the way you were staring at her, thought you were going to take a bite out of the salt cellar or the wine flask, or—.

JACOB: *(A far away look.)* She was so beautiful. There was a connection between us, right from the start.

LEAH: Not for her. You think that was something new for her, to have some guy go all googly eyes over her? I'll give you this, though, you did move fast, kissing her eight seconds after saying hello the first time you met her. That made an impression.

JACOB: She kissed me back, too.

LEAH: She kisses everybody back! She's Rachel!

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JACOB: But she came to love me. I know that. It was mutual.

LEAH: Yes. She's in love. With you. She's with Dad right now, crying her eyes out.

JACOB: Oh my gosh. I've got to see her.

LEAH: Excuse me?

JACOB: I'm saying, I need to see Rachel—.

LEAH: And I'm saying that maybe *your wife* might have some objections to you wanting to see another woman the day after the wedding!

JACOB: Your sister!

LEAH: But you want her!

JACOB: We're engaged!

LEAH: (*Gesturing, 'you and me.'*) Well, *we're* married!

JACOB: Which was not my idea!

LEAH: Well, it wasn't my idea either!

JACOB: (*Holds his head.*) Oh, man. Shouldn't shout like that, I can't have this conversation right now.

three and a half more pages to the end of this scene.

Scene Five -- OUTSIDE JERICHO

(JOSHUA's tent outside JERICHO. RAHAB stands, trembling, before him.)

JOSHUA: Rahab.

RAHAB: Rahab.

JOSHUA: The prostitute.

RAHAB: The woman who helped your men. In exchange for . . . look, I need to get back. Why am I here, what's this about?

JOSHUA: I haven't decided what to do with you.

RAHAB: We have a deal. I hid your men, I risked my life and the lives of my children--.

JOSHUA: I know.

RAHAB: Promises were made to me, I was given an assurance--.

JOSHUA: I have questions about that assurance.

RAHAB: Your men and I came to an agreement--.

JOSHUA: I question that agreement.

RAHAB: I see. Questions. What questions?

JOSHUA: Why?

RAHAB: Why what? What's the problem? We had an agreement!

JOSHUA: I'm just trying to make sense of it. You're a woman of Jericho. You have friends, neighbors, family--.

RAHAB: You have an army of six hundred thousand men! We're just a little city. Why shouldn't I save myself and my children?

JOSHUA: How do you know of my army?

RAHAB: Joshua's famous army! Everyone knows about it! We trade with Egypt, we knew about your escape, the great plagues, Pharaoh's army drowned in the waters of the reed sea.

JOSHUA: So Egyptians told you--?

RAHAB: We knew the old tales as well, how the Hebiru went south from Canaan. We expected you to show up sooner or later to attack us. Desert to the east, kingdoms of the Nubia west and south, Assyria and Babylon north and east. We've waited for forty years. At first we were frightened--so huge an army. Then, when no one appeared. . . . You've been where? I'll wager: the Sinai, wilderness and mountain.

JOSHUA: Lost. We were lost.

RAHAB: Lost, yes. But you had to know *where* you were. Perhaps . . . you didn't know who?

JOSHUA: *(Surprised by this insight of hers.)* Yes.

RAHAB: Then your men arrived. It wasn't hard to work out. The exiled Hebiru, long gone from Canaan. Hebrew spies. I'd never seen anyone like that before, though, that strange mutilation.

JOSHUA: You refer to the mark. . . .

RAHAB: I am Rahab, the harlot.

JOSHUA: My men knew you? Carnally?

RAHAB: It's what I do.

JOSHUA: They say no.

RAHAB: Men lie with women and then lie to their friends about it.

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JOSHUA: My men would not. . . .

(He pauses.)

RAHAB: Do things like that? Worship a golden calf, say?

JOSHUA: You know that story too?

RAHAB: They told me a great deal. And they worshipped a God without name, a God whose initials spell out something they won't pronounce. They had to be Hebiru.

JOSHUA: Who do you worship? If I may ask.

RAHAB: I'm not devout.

JOSHUA: Ashteroth, perhaps? Consort to Baal? Outside the door to your home. My men saw a kind of stand, more like a high seat. It had the figure of a naked goddess, guarded by lions. Ashteroth.

RAHAB: Astarte. We call her Astarte.

JOSHUA: So you worship the goddess.

RAHAB: It's a pretty statue.

JOSHUA: More evasions.

RAHAB: I like pretty things. Perhaps I could be said to worship it.

JOSHUA: Astarte.

RAHAB: Beauty.

JOSHUA: Here's my dilemma. It's possible that you are simply a harlot, a prostitute selling herself for money. If so, you violate the Seventh of our commandments, the most sacred laws of our God. The statutory seen by my men likewise violates the Second Commandment. Preserving your life, promise or no promise, winks at sin.

RAHAB: I'm not a common—

JOSHUA: On the other hand, you might be something even more sinister. A temple priestess, a religious harlot. A worshipper of the fertility goddess Ashteroth, and therefore one who lays with men who wish a boon from the goddess, swift planting, a good harvest. In which case, your very existence violates the First Commandment, the Second, the Third. . . .

RAHAB: I hid your men!

JOSHUA: Apparently, you did more than just hide them. A sin for which their lives may well be forfeit.

RAHAB: You'll kill them?

JOSHUA: I would.

RAHAB: And me, despite their promises?

JOSHUA: That is the subject of this present conversation.

RAHAB: So your God allows you to lie, to murder?

JOSHUA: No--.

RAHAB: Break promises, promise falsely.

JOSHUA: When death is decreed by God, it's not counted as murder. When God commands deception, it doesn't count as a lie.

RAHAB: A convenient moral code, that.

JOSHUA: Hardly convenient. When God commands, we obey. His commandments are seldom . . . convenient.

RAHAB: I have betrayed my people for no purpose?

JOSHUA: I have not decided.

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RAHAB: Can I argue my case? Or do I just wait for your God to give you a vision.

JOSHUA: It would be best, I think, if you told the truth.

RAHAB: Yes, I'm a priestess of Astarte! I was forced into her service as a child, forced to lie with men seeking blessing, impregnated, and forced to watch my children ripped from my arms fresh from the womb, and fed to Baal for sacrifice! I watched three sons roll down the brass slide to the fire in the belly of the God, I heard them scream, I smelled their flesh burn! I have two daughters who live, two more raised to be priestesses, a worse fate even than their brothers suffered!

JOSHUA: So you do not believe in Ashteroth?

RAHAB: Believe in?

JOSHUA: Worship.

RAHAB: I do what is required of me, or I will die. If that's what you mean by worship, then yes, I worship Astarte.

JOSHUA: All right.

RAHAB: Is that even the right answer?

JOSHUA: Your children died? Your sons died in the flames. That must have been terrible.

RAHAB: It was. Yes.

JOSHUA: So that helps explain. . . .

RAHAB: My treason.

JOSHUA: I'm sorry. It aids us, so I shouldn't be ungrateful.

RAHAB: At least you admit I helped you.

JOSHUA: These plans are helpful.

RAHAB: I got them for you. It wasn't easy.

JOSHUA: Yes.

RAHAB: So. You attack tomorrow?

JOSHUA: We attack when God commands it.

RAHAB: Six hundred thousand men sweeping across the plain of Jericho. A sight worth seeing.

JOSHUA: And you look forward to the destruction of your people?

RAHAB: My people. Who I have more reason to hate than you could possibly understand. Destroy Jericho, it needs to be ruined!

JOSHUA: We plan to, we'll wipe it clean.

RAHAB: But not everyone! Not me, not mine! We were promised safe haven!

JOSHUA: And that, I have not forgotten.

(Pause, as he considers her.)

RAHAB: Who are you?

JOSHUA: People who worship the one true God.

RAHAB: Who is He, what does He look like?

JOSHUA: His name, we hold sacred. What does He look like? We don't know. He's everywhere, in our hearts.

RAHAB: That's what your men said! The same answers, the same mystery!

JOSHUA: It's mysterious to us as well.

RAHAB: I'll tell you. I don't think you have so great an army.

JOSHUA: Our army is indeed very great, six hundred thousand strong.

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RAHAB: Or six thousand? Or six hundred?

JOSHUA: The men in this camp are only the vanguard. Across the river—

RAHAB: Wilderness. We've seen nothing, heard nothing, no fires at night, no noise and commotion.

JOSHUA: We are very well disciplined.

RAHAB: I don't think so. I think your army is small, much smaller than the stories suggest. The Egyptians are great braggarts. They would not have it said they were defeated by a handful of escaping slaves.

JOSHUA: For a Canaanite, you know Egypt.

RAHAB: They come to town to trade, and they love the temple priestesses.

(Pause.)

This is your entire army, isn't it? This camp, these few tents.

JOSHUA: I told you, across the river—

three and a half more pages to the end of this scene.

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Scene Six -- EVE, DYING

(ADAM and EVE lay in bed next to each other. He's asleep; she lays awake, flat on her back, in terrible pain. She looks over at him. Finally, reluctantly, she speaks quietly.)

EVE: Adam? Honey?

(ADAM stirs, awakes almost immediately.)

I'm so sorry, honey. The herb we use, for pain. I could really use it right now.

ADAM: Of course.

(Gets up, begins making a kind of tea.)

EVE: I'm really sorry. I know you didn't get much sleep last night.

ADAM: You've been lying there, haven't you? Not wanting to disturb me.

EVE: Not for long.

ADAM: I told you to wake me if you needed anything.

EVE: And so I have.

ADAM: Good.

(Busies himself with tea things.)

EVE: It's not really so bad this morning. Mostly, I just wanted to talk.

ADAM: That's fine.

EVE: I was just laying here, and I thought, I bet today is the day.

ADAM: *(Starts at this, decides to ignore her. Brings her tea.)* Here's your tea.

EVE: Thanks.

(Takes a sip, makes a face.)

So bitter.

ADAM: We have honey, I could sweeten it

EVE: No, it's good. It's best when it's strong like this, really sharp. It seems to help more.

ADAM: Still, a drop of honey--

EVE: It's all right.

(Takes another sip.)

It's good that it's bitter. I tell myself that, anyway. I'll have some berries later, and they'll taste all the sweeter.

ADAM: That's the spirit.

EVE: Some berries. And perhaps some bread. If today is the day. . . .

ADAM: *(Sharply.)* Don't say that.

EVE: So you did hear me. I thought perhaps you didn't the first time I said it.

ADAM: We can't think that way. You're going to get over this, you're going to be fine.

EVE: Adam. . . .

ADAM: Let's not talk nonsense. Seth's coming by tomorrow; you'll want to see him.

EVE: I'd like to see Seth, yes.

ADAM: We'll give you a blessing. And before you know it--

EVE: I don't want you to give me a blessing.

ADAM: Fasting, and prayer, and faith--

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EVE: Can lead to miracles. That's entirely true. But not this time.

ADAM: You don't know that.

EVE: I do. I'm so sorry, I know this is hard for you.

ADAM: Hard for me! You're the one suffering! No, this isn't about me, this is

EVE: Please, let's not quarrel. Not today.

ADAM: Of course not.

EVE: Adam, really. I've accepted it. I'm sort of looking forward to it.

ADAM: To leaving me?

EVE: Ending this, the pain, the helplessness. It's going to happen, and sooner rather than later. And I want to go home. I want this to end.

ADAM: Sometimes you're better.

EVE: Not lately. I'm not.

(Pause.)

I would like to say my goodbyes, to Seth, to the grandchildren. But I don't think I'm going to have time, honestly. So that's a bit of a shame.

ADAM: I know you. You're a good deal stronger than you think.

EVE: You know, that's one of the things I've always loved about you. Your optimism.

ADAM: I'm glad I had some good qualities.

EVE: A few.

(A pause.)

You were restless last night. A dream?

ADAM: Not so bad.

EVE: I'd rather you just told me about it. You do this, you want to gloss over your own fears.

ADAM: All right. Yes, a bad one.

EVE: The grandchildren again?

ADAM: No, actually, not like that at all. Not about anyone we know, or anything we've experienced. It was strange, different. Just people, talking.

EVE: Really?

ADAM: They were dressed so strangely, their language harsh to my ears.

EVE: A prophecy perhaps?

ADAM: Possibly. It had that kind of clarity.

EVE: So tell me.

ADAM: It's something I've feared. They were just talking, that's all. Different times and places. But they were talking about. . . .

(Hesitates.)

EVE: They were talking about me, weren't they?

ADAM: You've had the same dream.

EVE: The same fear, perhaps.

ADAM: They were all suffering. All over the world, they were in pain, terrible pain. They'd hold their stomachs, or their heads. They'd moan and toss. From illness, accident. And worse than that, people in far worse kinds of pain. From the deaths of children, the suffering of loved ones.

EVE: How terrible.

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ADAM: And . . . they cursed.

EVE: They cursed God, do you mean?

ADAM: No. I might understand that, when some unknown calamity strikes . . . how someone might shout curses at the unknown, the unknowable.

EVE: But these people. They cursed something . . . else.

ADAM: Eve. They cursed you. They shouted it, the curse of Eve.

EVE: “We could be happy. We could be in paradise. But the woman listened. The snake seduced her. And she ate.”

ADAM: Those exact words.

EVE: Yes.

ADAM: You’ve seen the same vision.

EVE: I think so. It sounds like it. It was shown me.

ADAM: Shown you?

EVE: By the serpent.

ADAM: You never told me that!

EVE: No.

ADAM: So he gloated. Showed you what you’d done, rubbed your nose in it.

EVE: Oh, no. No, he showed it to me before I ate.

ADAM: So it’s a false vision, another lie.

EVE: I doubt it. Why would he?

ADAM: He was the father of lies!

two and a half more pages to the end of this scene (and the play)

THE END

See a promo Video of a rehearsal at the Covey:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psDC1PPhC60>

Review:

The Plan (drama)

By Eric R. Samuelsen

Reviewed by James Goldberg for AML

On 11/7/2007

I forget who it was who said watching Edmund Kean perform *Richard III* was like reading Shakespeare, illuminated by flashes of lightning. After centuries of stilted, poorly-rehearsed, convention-driven performances of Shakespeare's works, a single, unusually talented actor had found a way to bring out the emotional truths of some moments with a power and clarity that was overwhelming.

The Plan, Eric Samuelsen's broad-ranging retelling of a series Old Testament stories centered on women, felt something like that. The whole play is good, certainly, but it's the flashes of original, powerful insights that left me reeling, both after leaving the theatre following the original WDA staged reading, and again after my recent re-reading of the script. Far more than just raising feminist issues through the Bible, *The Plan* explores and articulates ideas core to the restoration of the gospel, and does important philosophical work showing the resonance of ancient gospel truths with some of the ideas we most closely associate with secular modernity.

In order to do justice to the philosophy presented in the play, I'll be writing separate, spoiler-ridden commentaries on each of the six distinct scenes that make up the play. The scenes are, historically (more or less) independent, and non-chronologically ordered, but thematically interwoven. For those who want a detailed overview of the six without thorough spoilers of every scene, I present the following plot synopsis:

Synopsis

In the first scene, we see a premortal Eve, still known as Gaia, confront her brother/colleague Lucifer regarding rumors that he will oppose the Plan God has presented. After seeing the pain-filled process of evolution, with the help of which God's children have created and organized life in the world, Lucifer has some compelling arguments about the seeming injustices of the Plan, and about the ramifications of human agency. The scene serves as an excellent prologue to the subsequent scenes of human struggle in the harsh ancient world, an interpretive lens through which to view the pains, struggles, and choices of various scriptural figures.

The second scene, between David and Bathsheba, takes place the first time she hears of the death of Uriah. This scene serves as a sort of introduction to the lot of women in ancient times, depicting the delicate situation Bathsheba has found herself forced into, and detailing the lose-lose decisions she faced on her way to the current point. An idealistic but somewhat clueless David serves as a foil for Bathsheba's clinical realism. We begin to see the arguments of both Lucifer and, perhaps more subtly, Gaia, about the pros and cons of the Plan played out in this detailed conjectural depiction of the forces that may have been operating beneath the text of this well-known Biblical story.

A scene on the night in which Ruth lies at the feet of Boaz closes the act, a definite shift in tone and perspective from the Bathsheba scene. Although still aware of the danger inherent in the situation, the scene is humorous, and often tender. Having been confronted with the harsh realities of life, especially for women, in ancient times, by the previous scene, we now get a glimpse of the good and gentleness that has existed in every age, and not only in the somewhat more enlightened times we've been blessed to live in. Again, the scene acts on two levels to create meaning: independently, and also in the context of Gaia's play-opening debate with Lucifer.

The second act opens with a scene called "Rachel's Sister," set on the morning after Jacob's marriage to

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Leah. Incredibly, Samuelsen finds a way to make even Laban (referenced in the scene, not depicted) come across as sympathetic and to show us the possible complexities of the situation, emphasizing the significance and uniqueness of the doctrine of covenant marriage.

Next comes “Outside Jericho,” an imagined meeting between Joshua and Rahab, the Jerichite woman who had agreed to help his men conquer the city in exchange for a guarantee of safety. The initial reason for the meeting is so Joshua can decide whether sparing Rahab and her family is permissible, in light of his mission to destroy the idolaters who inhabit Canaan, but their meeting develops into a discussion of the uniqueness of the Hebrew faith, and the complications of even necessary killing in the name of God.

Finally, having seen a range of the complexities of ancient life, we return to Eve, now lying sick and in pain on the final day of her mortality, talking with her husband, Adam. Not only does this scene return us to a character from the first scene, we come directly back to the thematic heart of the opening dialogue: is it worth it? Can the pain, suffering, and moral complexities of the Plan be justified in any way? The answer is perhaps, no different than the one we would expect to hear in any Sunday School or Fast & Testimony meeting across the LDS world, but I think it also becomes all the sweeter when we’ve had a chance to take a clear look at the difficult and bitter.

Keep your eyes open for future production(s) of *The Plan*. This is a play well worth seeing, and an important contribution to the body of modern Mormon letters.

The Plan: 6 Stories of Faith and Choices

Utah Theater Bloggers Review

Written by: Sara Harvey | April 02, 2011. Playing thru April 2, 2011

PROVO — In *The Plan*, a new play written and directed by Eric Samuelsen, we are taken on a journey into the lives of real people of the Old Testament and explore what it means to be a human. The Plan takes six stories of couples from the Old Testament and interweaves the biblical version with a little GAS: Gospel According to Samuelsen, which gives us the rest of the story. We get to see the couples as human beings with questions, concerns and choices to be made or contemplating choices they have made.

Samuelsen tells the stories by exploring the concepts of pre-earth life, predestined paths, and each of the roles we play in this life, which in turn lets us examine how the characters feel about those choices. Samuelsen does this quite effectively, mostly by interweaving culture and Old Testament womanhood with modern clothing and modern language. The play is full of drama, pathos, comedy, and the tragedies communicating the truth of this frail existence.

In the story “Gaia” the characters are Gaia (Julie Webb) and Lucifer (Travis Hyer). Lucifer is contemplates the role of predator and prey and the importance of the creatures fulfilling the measure of their creation. An interesting direction to take, having Lucifer being sympathetic to the destruction of the dinosaurs. He explains his point of view and how it differs from Father’s plan and how he would choose to be a shark, a predator acting on instinct. Gaia knocks him down with compassion and truth. I personally don’t like empathizing with the father of lies and would have rather seen the conversation between Michael (pre-earth Adam in LDS theology) and Gaia, perhaps discussing the choices that Lucifer makes and their point of view. That being said, the dialogue is interesting and the performances were good.

“Bathsheba” tells the story of Bathsheba (Dianna Graham) and David (Patrick Kintz) after the death of Uriah. Opening with a melodic tune on the guitar, David is playing for Bathsheba. Their relationship has its unique problems such as what to do with Bathsheba now that she is pregnant and her husband is dead. To cover up the pregnancy, David had Uriah come home briefly during a military conflict before sending him back into certain death in battle. But the plan didn’t work because Uriah slept outside his bedroom door. David contemplates his choices, which he says may damn him. Bathsheba was in a unique place. When the king sent for her, her fate was sealed. She was damned if she didn’t and damned if she did. Their love affair is the stuff soap operas are made of. Graham’s performance was my favorite of the night. The way she portrayed Bathsheba was honest and I believed her story. Samuelsen’s writing is witty and colorful and heartbreaking. I especially liked the part where Bathsheba explains why she was bathing on the balcony and how beautiful the night was.

In “Ruth in the House of Boaz” we explore the thoughts of Ruth (Emily Foster) and Boaz (Peter Layland). Each takes turn ruminating on their predicament. Their culture is the driving influence that motivates their choices in their relationship. This is the story that we have the most GAS in. But with that GAS the story is driven into a lighthearted—and I dare say—sweet love affair.

“Rachel’s Sister” was the story I wanted to hear the most. The story of Jacob (Patrick Kintz) working for seven years to marry beautiful Rachel only to be deceived and marry her sister Leah (Andrea Hepfinger). Here is where Samuelsen’s brilliant writing shines as it delves into the nature of what it means to be human and the feelings associated with love, romance, duty and devotion to ones God. This vignette received the most laughs from the audience, probably because as the audience, we were in on the “joke” being played on Jacob.

“Outside Jericho” felt like the longest story, as it poignantly touched on the consequences of war in God’s name. Justifying killing or lying is alright as long as it is in the name of God. I understood the message but felt it was a little overworked. The acting was good especially on the part of Ashley Jean Bonner who played Rahab

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with emotion and passion. Joshua (Travis Hyer) had the unwavering faith in God, which was motivation enough to drive his character. A question was raised and answered what is harder than dying for your religion? Living for it? No, killing for it. A somber subject which segued easily to the final story.

“Eve, Dying” shows Eve (Julie Webb) and Adam (Bradford Garrison) in the final moments of Eve’s life. She has no regrets. Adam raises questions about if it was the right thing to do to partake of the fruit. Their responses may surprise you. Eve says she aches for Adam, which made me think the word “aches.” It is a powerful word that only someone who has loved deeply or felt pain could understand; a great choice in language. I’m also impressed by Samuelsen’s line that shows Adam and Eve’s reaction to life outside the garden: “Better than what we had and worse than we ever imagined.” However, I was disappointed in the character of Adam. Although Garrison’s performance was fine, I expected Adam to be tall, strong and humble. Whether it was the choice of dialogue for him or physical smallness of the actor, I didn’t get that strength from this story.

Samuelsen declares he is a feminist. His strong female characters are a testament to this. However, strong women do not necessarily mean weak men. Nor does Samuelsen’s feminism translate into men who are bullies or the bad guys to blame for all the evils in the world. (This is what my husband likes to call “The Lifetime Network view of men.”) The woman of *The Plan* are bold and articulate. Although the script has an LDS outlook, this show is not your fun-loving, break-into-song Saturday’s Warrior. But it does lead you to want to blow the dust off the Old Testament and study the stories again. Are these stories important? Do you want to be a better person for watching them? Do you understand them? Do you empathize? Do you want to empathize?

As for the GAS in the show, Samuelsen says he takes full responsibility for these dramatic privileges and as a playwright isn’t that what we want him to do? Doesn’t it make us better people when we contemplate the human condition and then want to do something about it? That is just what *The Plan* did for me.