

The girl no one wanted

The story of Jacob, Rachel, and Leah, from Genesis 29–30



THERE WERE ONCE two sisters.



The youngest sister was very beautiful and her name was Rachel. But the oldest sister wasn't beautiful at all (some thought her quite ugly), and her name was Leah.

Rachel was the kind of girl who always gets invited to parties and chosen for the team. Everyone loved her. And poor Leah? No one hardly even noticed her.

One day, their cousin Jacob came to stay. He was one of Isaac's sons and he was on the run. (Jacob had stolen and cheated and made some enemies—including his own brother—and now he was hiding.)

The funny thing is, Jacob—of all people—was the one God gave the special promise to, the same promise he had given his grandfather Abraham: “I will rescue the world through your family.” (But then God chooses people we least expect, as we'll see.)

Jacob stayed a long time working for his Uncle Laban.

One day, Laban said, “Jacob, I've decided to pay you for your work. What do you want?” A sudden thought struck him. “How about one of my daughters?”





Jacob looked at Rachel and he looked at Leah. Who would he choose? Of course, he chose Rachel.

“I’ll work seven years for free!” Jacob said. “If I can marry Rachel.”

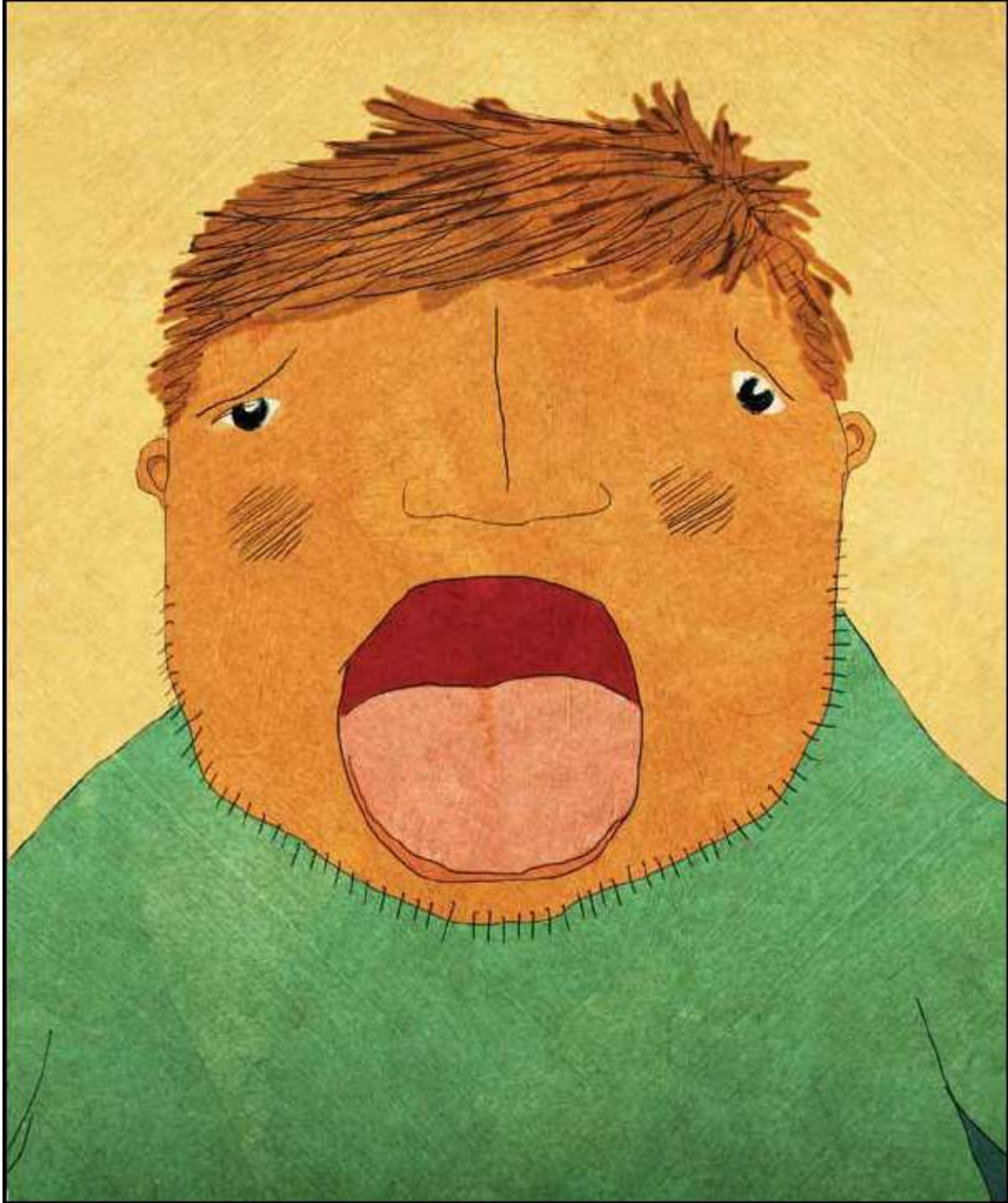
So Jacob worked seven years and, at last, his wedding day arrived.

But that night, Laban played a nasty trick on Jacob. Instead of sending Rachel to marry Jacob, he sent Leah. (Now, in those days, they didn’t have electricity, so it was dark in their tent and, besides, women wore veils and you couldn’t see their faces properly. So Jacob suspected nothing.)

The next morning, Jacob woke up—and screamed. His new wife was lying beside him but it wasn’t Rachel—it was Leah. Jacob jumped out of bed. “Laban!” he cried. “You scoundrel!”

But Laban said, “Work for me another seven years and then you can marry Rachel.”

So Jacob worked for Laban another seven years and, at last, Rachel became his wife. Now Jacob had two wives, but of his two wives, Jacob loved Rachel the best.



“No one loves me,” Leah said. “I’m too ugly.”

But God didn’t think she was ugly. And when he saw that Leah was not loved and that no one wanted her, God chose her—to love her specially, to give her a very important job. One day, God was going to rescue the whole world—through Leah’s family.

Now when Leah knew that God loved her, in her heart, suddenly it didn't matter anymore whether her husband loved her the best, or if she was the prettiest. Someone had chosen her, someone did love her—with a Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love.

So when Leah had a baby boy she called him Judah, which means, "This time I will praise the Lord!" And that's just what she did.

And you'll never guess what job God gave Leah. You see, when God looked at Leah, he saw a princess. And sure enough, that's exactly what she became. One of Leah's children's children's children would be a prince—the Prince of Heaven—God's Son.

This Prince would love God's people. They wouldn't need to be beautiful for him to love them. He would love them with all of his heart. And they would be beautiful because he loved them.

Like Leah.

