

The Old Testament

According to Smart Alec

This translation comes from scrolls found in a cave to the East of Jerusalem. Due to the remarkable preserving qualities of the cave (its own Librarian and a Dewey-Decimal filing system that nobody could understand) the scrolls have survived unread for centuries. They were originally written in the little-known language of the Paralyte desert sect, a sect that believed that alcohol was a gift from God which brought them closer to the deity. The author undertook a period of study to understand this ancient sect and their language. So intense was his study that he almost became Paralytic himself.

What follows is the entire translation so far. More will be added when it has been translated.

Genitals: the first Book of Smart Alec

The Creation

And so in those days before days, in those times before time, did the Lord Nobody's God decide to make unto Himself¹ a created thing. He saith unto himself (for there was none other to address his remarks to) "I will make unto myself a created thing. And it shall have light and dark and land and sea and strange things crawling, and a place of great cold, and a place of great heat, whereunto I can boil my kettle."

And thus did the Lord labour for many eons and aeons, fashioning and making, nailing and sawing, painting and decorating, until before Him lay His creation. And He named it the Universe, which means First Attempt.

Then did the Lord Nobody's God people the worlds of the Universe with strange and wonderful creatures, and growing plants and crawling things: the cedar and the viper; the lily and the lion; the salamander and the crow; and the onion, and many other things. And He saith unto them "I am the Lord thy God, bow down before me." But they did not heed Him, and went about their business of crawling and growing, and being wonderful and strange.

Thus the Lord Their God realised that He needed a creature of much intelligence and little wisdom, that might be more easily persuaded to fall down before him. So He saith to Himself and the creatures of the Earth (who weren't listening): "I will people the land with people to have dominion over you, and that shall be a lesson unto you: don't mess with the Almighty, He can make your life misery. And I shall fashion them in My image, infinitely huge and with waving tentacles and

¹ The male personal pronoun for God has been used throughout this translation. However, in the original texts there are a special set of non-gender-specific pronouns which appear to refer only to God. The symbols used appear to indicate great age and the fact that God is without antecedents. The literal translation is "Old Bastard".

three heads." But of this last fashion He thought better, and considered the wimple. So He made them smaller and to a more standard size.

First He took clay and shaped it and gave it life. Then He breathed on it, and gave it knowledge and language. And He spake to His creation thus: "I have breathed on you and given you the power to discourse with me. And the creation replyeth: "Next time easy on the onions, oh God."

And God did say unto His created thing: "Lo, I will give you dominion over all the Earth and all the strange and wonderful creatures, and all the growing plants and crawling things, if thou just bow down and worship Me. And the created thing said "Fair enough", because it recognised a good deal, and bowed and worshipped.

And the Lord his God proclaimed: "Thus wilt thou worship Me for the rest of your days, and so also will your offspring worship Me, and their offspring unto the end of time!"

But the creature sayeth "Hang on, that wasn't in the contract."

And the Lord Our God did answer "Read the small print."

Then did the created thing ponder and say unto the Lord: "but how shall there be offspring when of me there is only one?"

And the Lord God answered "study the ways of the Onion. It toileth not neither doth it indulge in shenanigans. Yet it buddeth in great profusion and populates the Earth."

But the creature was wroth, and sayeth to the Lord: "It must needs buddeth in great profusion to keep up with thine appetite. But I shall bud not without a decent work incentive, like unto the other creatures of the Earth. I shall not have it said by my offspring that we are the Chosen of the Lord, like unto the Onions. And, by the way, shouldn't it have been populateth and not populates?"

And thus was the Lord embarrassed and did create another creature like unto the first, but with bumps in different places. And He called one of them Man and the other Woman, and He placed them both under great cups and did shuffle them

until neither could tell which was the first. And the Lord said unto them: "There. Let that teach you not to cheek your betters. From now on thou shalt procreate as the beasts of the field - but not doggy-fashion. Now go forth and populate the Earth and take dominion of it. And forget not to worship Me. I proclaim that one day shalt thou work for food and shelter, one day shalt thou rest and procreate (but not doggy fashion) and one day shalt thou spend in worship of My name and My ways."

But the Man did cavil, and negotiated the Lord down to one day in seven of worship. So the Lord stitched him up with five days of work and one of rest And this was the First Covenant of The Lord.

And so the people of the Lord went forth and took dominion, and did procreate and populate the Earth. And they did work and worship to the allotted schedule. But there came one who did say: "What use to us of all this worship? Why must we offer all this praise and thanks unto the Lord? For hath He not proclaimed that we shall take our ease but one day in seven, and that we shall not do it doggy-fashion?"

And did the people murmur behind him: "Yes, more rest days and less work", and "give us a 3-3-1 split", and "I find His achievements a little overrated, anyway".

And the Lord Our God was wroth, and spake in thund'rous words: "fall down and worship or I shall smite thee!"

But the man saith "Typical. You haven't got a good argument so you resort to force."

And did the people murmur behind him: "Yea, big bully".

And the Lord God smote him.

Then did God look upon the other people and saith to them in great wrath: "For this your disobedience I will visit unto you plagues and death, pain and suffering, war and starvation, and many other pairs of things to ruin your weekend. And your dominion over the other creatures is ended, that the fleas may nip you and the

lions eat you and the bees sting you. And the Earth shall not easily give up its treasures to you and you shall toil forever - except Saturdays and Sundays, of course, for I shall keep unto you my Covenant. But I shall turn My faces away from you and show unto you only My buttocks, that ye be daily reminded of My displeasure. And thy days shall be filled with foul winds and storm, thanks to the onions."

Then did the Lord see the downcast eyes of the people, and hear their lamentations, for they knew not of plagues and death and pain and suffering, but they recognised a grounding when they heard one. And God did take pity on His people and did say: "Lo, so long as you shall keep one day in seven holy unto Me then shall I not show unto you My buttocks, although neither shall I show unto you My faces. Thou shalt behold instead some other part of My anatomy. And though death shall claim thee, yet shall those faithful unto Me be saved beyond death. And this is My Second Covenant unto you."

And the people did say "fair enough", and "sounds reasonable to me", for they had seen the smiting and were grateful for any concessions. And they spake not of the hope in their hearts that one day the Lord would repeal the doggy-fashion rule.

Methuselah

And so did the children of Men prosper, and did populate the earth. And in those days the blessing of the Lord was upon them and they did live out their lives to great length. And the greatest of these men was Methuselah. For many years did he live in his full powers, then for many years in his half powers, and then at last in his final flickerings.

And he knew his children's children. And his children's children's children And so on unto the fortieth generation, although he got a bit vague about names after the seventh generation. And he lived for the span of 194 hands. But finally he came unto death after 969 years, for one of the hands had been missing a finger. And then was there great distress in the land, for the Oldest Man in the World was no more. And the children of Methuselah, and his children's children, and so on, called upon the record-keepers of Guinness with lamentation and saith "969 years, surely that's a record." And the record-keepers did reply "it's not an official record unless you make another run within one hour."

And the Lord God heard the lamentation and did lessen the numbers of their years, for he realised the pension costs were prohibitive. And they dwelt in the sight of the armpit of the Lord and did sacrifice their onions unto him.

Noah

For many generations did the people cleave to the Covenants of the Lord, and did work for five days, and did rest for one day, and did worship for one day. And the people prospered and spread across the Earth, and were fruitful and did multiply. And the Lord did take a holiday because everything seemeth to be going so smoothly. And to carry His luggage did the Lord create the Seraphim. And to buzz lazily around His head on sunny summer afternoons did He create the Cherubim. And He did create the Elohim to say hello to Him. And many other spirits of Earth and Air did He create to worship Him during His vacation. But He had learned of His previous experience and gave unto these creatures absolutely no wisdom at all, that they question Him not, nor seek round-table talks.

And the Lord was away for many years, getting a tan and buying souvenir paperweights. But in His absence did the people begin to question, and said to each other: "The Lord is on holiday, yet we toil here for five days in seven. And of the two days remaining must we spend one on our knees in worship and thanks. Yet He is not here to listen to our prayers. We pray to emptiness and our words are hollow. Let us cease our praying and take an extra day of rest and relaxation. And let us try it doggy-fashion while He's not watching."

But, unbeknown to the people, was God checking in with His messaging service daily. And when he heard not the prayers of His people He grew concerned. And when He heard about the doggy-fashion He laid aside His surfboard and waxed wroth. In great haste did the Lord return (and in the haste did the Seraphim send His luggage to the wrong planet) and He looked at His creation and He saw.

All of the people had turned their faces from Him, and the Holy Places lay in ruins, and His gardens lay untended, and the slugs grew fat in the brassicas. Then did the Lord say: "I will smite these backsliders with great pestilence and I will lay

them low. But his ire waxed higher, and he called for his angels, enjoining them to stop fussing over the luggage and bring a great flood upon the land, that all the evil be swept from the place, and the Earth made clean for another go.

At that time there dwelt in Lada in the land of Sok by the river Chaldees just South of the Lake of Herons next to the Bakers in a small 2-up-2-down a man called Noah. And he lived here with his wife, who has requested anonymity, and his three sons, Ham, Bacon and Jaffacake, and the wives of Ham and Bacon who were named Frita and Salami. (Jaffacake they were a bit worried about, but that is another story.) And Noah and his family had not forsaken the way of the Lord, and cleaved unto him, and keepeth the Sabbath, and verily did pray like the clappers.

And God looked down and saw Noah, and saw that he was faithful, and vowed to save him and all that was still good in the land. So He sent unto Noah an angel to warn him of adverse meteorological conditions, and to instruct him in the building of a great Ark.

Thus did the Angel of the Lord appear unto Noah and saith to him: "I am a messenger of the Lord. He's sorry that he couldn't come himself but he's still missing three suitcases and is trying to get a refund. I bring news of great woe. You must build unto yourself a boat."

"A woe boat?" asketh Noah, who was faithful unto the Lord but not too bright.

"You must build a great boat, 300 cubits long by 50 cubits wide by 30 cubits tall, and you must prepare it to receive the blessed of this land."

"What's a cubit?" Asketh Noah.

"A cubit is 36 thals in length," replieth the Angel.

"Right," sayeth Noah. "What's a thal?"

"A thal is 12 lumins," replieth the Angel, "and before you ask, a lumin is one four-hundred-and-thirty-second part of a cubit, and I'll show you what a cubit is later. The boat shall be called the Ark, and it shall hold two of every animal deemed

blessed by the Lord, and it shall hold thee and thy wife (who wishes anonymity), and thy sons and thy sons' wives."

"And Jaffacake?" asketh Noah. "I've been meaning to speak to the Lord about Jaffacake."

"And especially Jaffacake," sayeth the Angel, "for he is blessed of the Lord and Seraphim and Cherubim, for he maketh us laugh."

"And what about food for the voyage?" asketh Noah.

The Angel of the Lord sayeth: "Take thou of grain and provender and cooked meats and custard powder and onions, enough to sustain all on the Ark for forty days and forty nights."

"And what of water?" Asketh Noah. "We'll need water."

"Have no concern for water," sayeth the Angel. "Water shall be provided."

"But where shall we build this vessel?" Asketh Noah. "Who is going to provide the plans? When are the animals coming? Which ones can I expect? How do I keep the cats off the parrots? What happens if the termites get peckish? Why the onions? And how big is a cubit?"

"All thy questions shall be answered in their proper time," sayeth the Angel of the Lord. "But know you this now. The Lord enjoineth you to keep this project secret and to show to none of your work, except your anonymous wife, your sons and your sons' wives. For of the people who are to be saved, none are not aforenamed."

"A cubit had better not be very big, then," muttereth Noah.

Thus did Noah begin his great work. And he hammereth and saweth, and did give up his day job to work on the boat. And he showed of his work to his family, but not unto the people of Lada, nor to those in the land of Sok, nor also to the dwellers by the river Chaldees and the Lake of Herons, nor even to the Baker next door, for they were sunk in wickedness and depravity and did do it doggy-fashion. But the neighbours did get suspicious about the big tarpaulin in the back yard.

So by day and by night did the *Great Boat* take shape, and the neighbours jeereth at Noah and his family, calling them loonies. All except for one man, for he was the wood merchant and was making a fortune out of Noah. But the family of Noah kept their peace and spoke not.

And when the Ark was finished did Noah go out unto the Merchants of the Land and buy up great store of grain and provender and cooked meats and custard powder and onions. And at this did the neighbours jeer again, and call the family of Noah *tilpukkah*². And they spoke among themselves about where Noah had got the money for his boat, and they muttered about the strange people dressed in white who arrived in the night and left by the chimney.

But the Lord looked down, and saw the Ark was ready. And he sent forth his Seraphim to call together two of every animal, and his Cherubim to call two of every bird, and others of his Angels to call two of every insect and reptile, and all other creatures of the Land and the Air. The creatures of Water were not called, for they were about to have a field day.

And some of the creatures did not heed the call: the Unicorn and the Manticore, the Ettin and the ten-legged Skanderblast³. And the Harpy was considered just too disgusting and was quietly forgotten.

And when all the animals were safely gathered in did the Lord enjoin them to partake only of the victuals provided and not of each other. And the cat apologised.

Then did The Lord Our God send great rain. And the waters of the rivers rose up and swamped the land, and the people saith "who'd have thought it? Barmy old Noah right after all." And they drowned.

² *Tilpukkah* is a term difficult to translate, but the modern equivalent is likely to be "person who shouts loudly to themselves about the relative merits of different vegetables while on public transport, and who nobody wants to sit next to. Are they doing it because they're mad or just because they want a seat to themselves?"

³ Your guess is as good as ours.

And the rain did continue, and covered the plains, and the hills and even the mountains. And the face of the land was covered in water. And the Lord saw that all the evil had been cleansed from the Land and he saith: "It is good. Let this be a lesson unto all that the Lord Thy God shall not be taken for granted." And then he realised that only Noah and his family were around to hear him, and they didn't need convincing. And then did the raining cease.

For forty days and forty nights did the waters cover the world and the Ark did float on the waters. And the food in the Ark was eaten and turned to dung, and the dung flies ate their fill and the rest was shovelled overboard. And the sons of Noah came to him and complained in various words: "The Lord has turned us into shovellers of dung."

And Noah replied "Question not the ways of the Lord for they are beyond our understanding. Question not your belief in the Lord, for the ways of the Lord are beyond belief."

"You can say that again," muttered Jaffacake.

So Noah began "Question not..." but the Lord interrupted him.

"Send forth a flying thing that may seek for land. And if it return with a sprig then shall you know that land is close and the floodwater recedes."

"What flying thing should I send, Lord?" Asketh Noah. "A butterfly? A fruitbat? A pelican?"

And the Lord offered unto him a clue: "It's got homing in its name".

Thus did Noah send forth a homing wasp, but it returned with nothing. So he sent forth a homing cormorant, and it returned with a sprig. But it was of seaweed so didn't count. Then he sent forth a homing pigeon, which returned with a sprig of an olive tree, and Noah and his family rejoiced, for the flood was over and they no longer had to shovel dung.

So the Lord led the Ark to Mount Ararat, whereon it was grounded. And the waters receded and the animals went out and began to repopulate the Earth.

And Noah and his family left the Ark and gave thanks unto the Lord for their deliverance. And the Lord realised that the Flood had been overkill where a bit of judicious smiting would have done. So he sayeth unto Noah "Thou shalt plant in this place an onion as a sacrifice unto me at thy deliverance. Plant several. And I shall place in the sky a sign that I shall never again flood the Earth. I think Jaffacake will like this one."

And, as a Covenant to all that never more would he send flood, he placed in the sky a rainbow. And Jaffacake saw the potential and was glad.

"But," addeth the Lord, "I reserve unto Myself all smiting rights, for vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. Oh, and forget that stuff about doggy-fashion, I was having an off-century."

And did Ham and Frita breathe a sigh of relief.

And Noah did live long and prosper, and did grow vines and did discover the processes of wine. And it came to pass that Ham was passing his father's tent and did look in, and did see his father drunk and naked. And he did call his brothers, saying unto them: "the old fool's lost it again."

Then did Bacon and Jaffacake take a garment and walk backwards into the tent to cover their father that they be confronted with the sight not. But they did trip over the chamberpot and did wake the old sot. And did Noah say "Shambaa"⁴, and did curse Ham for seeing his nakedness. But he did praise his other offspring and did give to the children of Bacon dominion over the children of Ham. And he did offer to the children of Jaffacake many things, for his confusion was great. And God did enlarge Jaffacake, which made him very popular.

⁴ Shambaa means, more or less, "the contents of my chamberpot".

Babel

And it came to pass that the Lord began to suffer a build-up of earwax, and the people did have to shout. Then did they say: "Let us go down to the plain of Goglom and build us there a tower to reach unto the Lord, that we may converse with Him without ruining our throats."

And they took bricks and mortar and did begin a great tower, which was 500 cubits at the base, for Noah had told them of the cubit. And the height of the tower was great, even unto the heavens, and was it seen by God. Then was He sore afraid, for He had removed His faces from the people and showed them to them not, and was at present blessing them with the sight of His left foot. And he said unto himself: "Lo, if this tower shall continue will they be able to look me in the face, then might they say it."

So he came down to the plain of Goglom in a veil and picture hat, and did confound the languages of the people, that they might not hold successful planning meetings. And the people spread across the face of the Earth, and the cubit became no longer a recognised International Standard of Measurement.

And the languages of humanity were many, and the tribe of translators did rejoice.

Abraham

And once more did the people spread out and repopulate the Earth. And the offspring of Ham and Frita and Bacon and Salami were numerous, and the children of their children, and they made the tribes and nations of the Earth. And so did it continue for many centuries.

And it came to pass that in the land of Sinnonim dwelt a man called Abraham. And he had passed long years in this land, and was looking forward to retirement. But he was a light in the eye of the Lord, and did give him much joy, for he was faithful unto the covenants of the Lord.

And the Lord sayeth unto him: "Abraham thou are blessed in my eye and thou keepest my convenants."

And Abraham was surprised at the voice coming out of his wok, but recognised the ways of the Lord, so he replyeth: "Lord, Your burden upon us is not great. By Thy First Covenant must we give up one day in seven to the praise of Thy Name and Thy Ways⁵, and by Thy Third Covenant must we say "ooh, how pretty" to rainbows. It leaves time for a day job."

And the Lord was pleased, and said unto Abraham: "You are the Chosen of the Lord, and from thy loins shall spring My Chosen people, that My name be praised in glory for ever more."

And Abraham was aghast and sayeth "What, all of the Chosen People?" For it had been been many years long since, and his loins were withered and his rivers were dried up.

And the Lord ignored him and continued: "Take up thyself and thy wife Sarah and your other wives and your flocks and your onions and your wok, and remove them

⁵ Praising the Name and Ways of the Lord would appear simple, but you try saying how wonderful and varied the name "God" is for 12 hours at a time. Every week. For the rest of your life. Needless to say, the Ways of The Lord tended to get a lot of attention.

from this place to the land of Smugli by the Sea of Tonk, and there found me a Nation."

And so did Abraham carry out the bidding of the Lord and removed his household to the Other Place. And he bought the land of Smugli for 90 shekels, three cows and a strangely attractive goat, and did settle there. But of the Nation he had some doubts, for he thought he had been firing blanks for years.

And so it came to pass that many years passed, and yet was the Nation of the Chosen only Abraham and Sarah and his other wives, and none of them were getting any younger. Then did the Lord call unto Him of his Seraphim and say unto them: "Go and give unto the wives of Abraham that which they desire."

"And what might that be?" asked the Seraphim, hopefully.

"Give unto them offspring, that they might found the Chosen Nation of The Lord," sayeth The Lord.

And so with joyful cries did the Angels descend on the tent of Abraham and give unto his wives that of which they were desirous, and also offspring. And after nine months was the tent of Abraham filled with the cries of babies, and did Abraham go into the desert to give thanks to The Lord and get some peace.

And in the desert did the Lord come unto Abraham and did show him his earlobes, which had just been pierced. And did Abraham say unto the Lord: "Very pretty, but isn't it self-mutilation?"

And then did the Lord say unto Abraham: "Let it be known that thy male children shall have not of a foreskin but that it shall be removed. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Mutilation? I'll show you mutilation."

Then did Abraham return to his tent with a heavy heart and a sharp knife, and the wailing of the male children was great for many days, and Abraham got no sleep.

And of all the children of Abraham was his favourite, Isaac, for he was the son of Sarah. And the Lord did see this and did think to test Abraham, for the ways of the Lord are mysterious, although mostly definable as manic-depressive.

And the Lord did call out "Abraham!"

And did Abraham reply unto his wok: "I am here Lord", for the wok answering machine was yet unmade.

And the Lord saith unto Abraham: "Go out to the land of Morfiah and take with you thy son Isaac, and sticks for to make a burnt offering, which shall be thy son Isaac."

And Abraham was sore confused that The Lord should go to all this trouble of doing and undoing just for the heck of it, and did bethink "blessed be the ways of the Lord."

So he took his son Isaac and a stack of sticks and servants and an ass, and did go out to the land of Morfiah. And did he leave his servants in one place, entreating them to guard his ass, and did he go forth with Isaac and the sticks to a high place. And Isaac did carry the sticks, because Abraham needed his breath for the return journey.

And Isaac was a bit suspicious, and did say to his father: "Lo, where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

And Abraham did reply "the Lord shall provide", and did Isaac think "well, there's always a first time."

Thus they came to the place of sacrifice, and did Abraham instruct Isaac to raise an altar unto the Lord, and to place thereon the sticks and then to climb on himself. And did Isaac ask: "Are you sure those plans aren't upside down?"

Then did Abraham take up his knife and raise it to plunge into the heart of Isaac, but the Lord sent an angel to stay his hand. Then did the Lord say "Some joke, eh, Abraham?" And Abraham and The Lord did laugh, but Isaac did not see the funny side.

Then did The Lord say: "Sacrifice unto me yonder ewe caught in the thorns, and set flame to thy sacrifice, for I fancy a bit of roast lamb. And because of this your offspring shall prosper and Isaac's seed shall spread across the Earth." And Isaac knew this to be so for he had been practicing.

And they did return to the servants, and Abraham did sit on his ass and return unto his house.

And it came to pass that Sarah died, and Abraham grieved and did take many more wives to assuage his grief. And to these wives were given many children. And then did Abraham give up the ghost, exhausted in the work of the Lord.

Lot

The Lord watched over His Chosen People and gave to them prosperity and inexpensive housing.

But it came to pass that on the plain of Adon were two cities, Sodom and Gonorrhoea, and they were sunk in depravity and wretchedness, and did unto each other in imaginative ways. Then did two of the Seraphim bring this to the eye of The Lord, saying: "Lord, send us forth to these cities that we may see and experience for ourselves the depth of their depravity and maybe bring back some souvenirs."

So the Lord sayeth to them "Go forth, then, in My name, for one night, and bring back to me the stories in great detail that I may judge them."

And the Angels sayeth "One night? We had been hoping for a month or two."

But they went forth and came unto the cities of the plain at the setting of the sun, and entered therein. And they did say to each other "let us be as travellers that we may seek accommodation and test the hospitality of the city." So they went unto a house and knocked to seek shelter.

Now it came to pass that the house they chose was that of Lot and his family, and he was strong in the ways of The Lord. And when he saw the strangers at his gate Lot did pull them inside, exhorting them with "It's not safe to be out round here after nightfall."

And the strangers did protest, saying: "No, let us dwell in the streets for this night" and "We wouldn't dream of putting you out", but did Lot insist in the Name of The Lord.

And Lot did offer the strangers the hospitality of his house, the foods prepared by his wife and the comfort of his couches, and he did converse with them on the wonders of the name of God. And the Angels did say each to the other: "Surely

this place is like unto the kingdom of Heaven, which is not at all the reason for our visit."

But in the middle of the night the people of the City came up to Lot's gate and did cry out: "Open, oh Lot, and give unto us the strangers. For we wish to know them. Like, *really* know them."

And the Angels did say unto Lot: "Allow us to go out and show ourselves to the crowd that they will leave your gate and offend you not further. Honest, it'll be no trouble."

But Lot was fearful for the strangers and said: "I will send not you, my guests, to the gate. Instead I will send my daughters that the crowd be appeased by them."

And the daughters agreed with alacrity, but the Angels set blindness upon the people at the gate, thus starting a false rumour about what can make you blind.

And then did Lot, his wife, his daughters and the two Angels pass the night in discussion and prayer, and did play charades.

At dawn did the Seraphs arise and take their leave of Lot. And they wandered the streets on the off-chance, but all slumbered. So they returned to The Lord intact, and sayeth between them: "We have got to get rid of that Lot."

And when they did tell God of what they had seen of the cities of the Plain he waxed wroth and sayeth "I shall destroy these places in a single night and shall smite them with My righteous fire. But my faithful servant Lot shall I allow to escape. Go forth and warn Lot that he must flee, taking with him all that is valuable to him. And this very night shall my wrath rain forth."

But the Angels said unto him: "surely this is not a task for thy might, oh Lord. Let us, thy Seraphs execute the eviction order." For they were desirous of a little action.

And The Lord saw the wisdom of their words and did so mote it be. And he took the afternoon off and went to play golf.

Then did the two Angels call their fellow-Seraphs and make an appointment for a gathering upon the plain at 8:00pm (bring a bottle). And they hied away to the house of Lot and did warn him, saying: "pick up thy wife and thy daughters and thy movables and get out now, oh Lot, for the vengeance of the Lord will be visited upon this thy city at 8:10pm with fire and brimstone, or smoke and ash in case of rain. And when thou leavest look not back upon this city on pain of salt."

And Lot did pick up his wife and then put her down and told her to pick up other things. And he did gather his daughters and his movables and did leave the city and looked back not. But his wife did turn to see what the Angels were up to, and was turned to a column of salt. And did Lot mourn: "Well, she always wanted to be a pillar of the community."

And at 8:00pm did the angels of The Lord descend from heaven in a fall of flame and did meet on the plain. And then did they go forth into the cities. And then there was great burning and much hot action. And the angels did chastise them with whips, and did wear leather body harnesses.

And at dawn did the Seraphs return unto the Lord, and did the Lord ask: "Are the cities destroyed?"

And the Angels did reply to the Lord: "Yea, all in the cities are utterly destroyed", for they were feeling pretty destroyed themselves.

Then did the Lord say "Let it be told to all nations that the cities of Somdom and Gonorrhoea shall be talked of no more. And they shall be expunged from the tourist routes and remain unseen. And their names shall no longer exist, except as a social disease and a spelling mistake by the Marquis of Queensbury."

And the Angels did marvel, for telling it unto all nations was not a surefire way to stop it being talked about.

Then did Lot and his daughters go out to the hills and dwelt in caves away from others. And did the daughters say each to the other: "If we stay here we shall die without issue. Let us make the most of what our father has to offer."

So they did make their father drunk and the eldest did enter in with him and did lie with him. And he was able to get it up and he knew his daughter but he knew not it was his daughter. Mayhap he believed it was one of the local sheep.

And on the next night did the other daughter do likewise, and did Lot wake up the next day and say: "some party last night, I don't remember a thing. Hope I didn't embarrass anyone."

And the offspring of the daughters of Lot made many great nations, and the Social Workers did weep and gnash their teeth.

Isaac

And it came to pass that Abraham did pass away, and did leave unto Isaac all that was his, and some that he had borrowed from the neighbours and forgot to return. And unto his other children did he leave gifts, and enjoined them to depart from Isaac's sight. And this they did right readily, for he had many flocks and smelled as a wet sheep. And they did go East, for they were not Village People.

Then did Isaac take unto himself a wife who was called Rebekah. For she had been chosen for him by a committee of one ancient servant and ten camels, and she was his father's grandniece. But Rebekah was coveted by Abimilech of the Philistines, and he took her perforce into his harem, and did number her 58, for he already had 57 varieties. And Isaac did go forth to Abimilech and did bring unto him the smell of wet sheep, and did say unto him "my herds are not thy herds, my baggage is not thy baggage." And Rebekah saith: "who are you calling baggage?"

Then did the wives of Abimilech entreat him to send forth the shepherd and his wife, and open some windows. And Isaac and Rebekah repaired into Canaan, for the sheep were leaking, and did live long and prosperous lives, despite the smell.

Thus did Rebekah and Isaac raise two sons, who were Esau and Jacob. And Esau was an hairy man, but Jacob was a smooth operator. So when Isaac was in his dotage did Jacob come before him wearing his brothers clothes and a false beard, and did say "I am Esau, your first-born. Give unto me your blessing and inheritance, yea, even the wok. Just sign here, here and here." And Isaac blessed him, though Jacob sneezed not. Then did Jacob cast off his disguise and say "Now are all thy flocks mine, yea, even the cute ones." And Esau was wroth, but took from Isaac the wok and a mess of pottage in full payment of his birthright (for he understood not economics and liked not the smell of wet sheep) and went to the East to visit his uncles and father a Nation.

Then did Isaac die, and his funeral pyre did burn high, even unto heaven. And great was the smell of drying sheep.

Jacob

Jacob, who was the son of Isaac, did deceive his father in the matter of his brother's birthright, and did take unto himself that which was not his before he took it, although it was his thereafter, except the wok and divers pottage. Now read on.

And it came to pass that Jacob bethought to betake a wife, for he remembered God's promise unto his grandfather that a mighty nation would spring from his loins, and currently the qualifying headcount was down to one. So he went out to the East, into the land of the two rivers, from whence had come his own mother and to whence had gone his uncles and brother. And he thought "May as well keep it in the family."

And as he travelled he came to the place that was called Bethel, and rested the night. And as he slept a dream came to him of a great ladder from Heaven to Earth, and Angels moved up and down, praising God and praying for the invention of the elevator. And Jacob marvelled, for the Angels had wings and thought not to use them. And when he woke he praised the Lord, saying "surely this is a true vision, for did it not proceed from the onions I ate last night?" And he raised a pillar in that place, as do many men in the morning.

Thus he came to the place of his uncle Laban, who was his mother's brother. And there did he see his cousin Rachel, who was watering her father's flocks. For they were dry and smelled not of wet sheep. And Jacob was smitten of Rachel and saith to Laban "seven years will I serve thee in exchange for the hand of thy daughter Rachel. Sign here, here and here." And Laban agreed, but found in the small print that Jacob wanted more than the hand.

So Jacob worked seven years in the service of Laban, tending his flocks, especially the cute ones. And at the end of the seven years Laban made a great feast and

gave unto Jacob the hand of his daughter, and the other bits, too. And Jacob took his wife, although she would not remove her veil. But he found in the morning that his wife was not Rachel but her sister Leah.

Then he betook himself to Laban, tired but wroth, and demanded Rachel as his wife. But Laban sayeth "the contract stateth one daughter to be delivered. Thou boughtest as is, we can't accept back damaged goods". So Jacob sayeth to Laban "seven more years will I serve thee, and then shall I have thy daughter Rachel. Sign here, here and here." And Jacob toiled seven years more, and took Rachel as his most favoured wife.

Then did Laban say unto Jacob "thou art my two sons-in-law, also my cousin twice removed and my nephew, but not mine own son, for that would be too weird even for this family. Thou must stay in this land and inherit what is mine." But Jacob replyeth: "I will go down to my Father's land and take with me that which I have earned, plus long-service bonus and pay in lieu of fourteen years leave." But Laban grew wroth and ordered his servants that Jacob should not leave. Then did Jacob seize the goods and flocks of Laban, and did Rachel sit upon his Teraphim and hide them completely⁶.

Then did Jacob flee into the wilderness with his tribe and his goods, and with many of the goods of Laban. And they came unto the place known as Penuel, where God did reveal her little toe unto Jacob. And did Jacob wrestle the little toe of God, seeking two pinfalls, a submission or a knockout. But God grew bored and said unto Jacob. "Enough, already. For this I shall call thee and thy descendants Israel⁷, that all may know how things stand between us."

So Jacob and his wives returned to Canaan, and to his Father's tent, and did sire twelve sons that would found the twelve tribes of Israel. But there was dissent

⁶ Teraphim is usually translated as household gods, but they made them in some pretty exciting shapes back in those days.

⁷ Isra-El means (and I kid you not) "May God show his strength!" So when uttered by God it means "Give me strength!"

between the sons of Leah and the sons of Rachel and the other sons, even though there were enough sheep to go round.

Joseph

Jacob had twelve sons, and they were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, the sons of Leah; Joseph and Benjamin, the sons of Rachel; Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilhah; and Gad and Asher, the sons of Zilpah. And they were numbered twelve and twelve were their number, and these are the names of the tribes of Israel, who are descended from them. Except for Joseph; and sometimes Simeon; and Levi; and Judah; and Gad. For these are the names of the eleven through thirteen tribes.

Yet Joseph and Benjamin were not as the others, for they were the favoured children of the favoured wife, Rachel, and they stayed at home and did dress in fine raiment while their brothers tended the flocks in the fields. Perhaps Jacob always wanted daughters.

And Joseph did eat many onions and did dream sacred dreams, wherein his brothers bowed down before him as he accepted the Best Actress award. And his brothers grew weary of the telling of the dreams, and the onion breath.

It came to pass that Jacob sent his sons out to the flocks with neither provender nor lunch money. And when he did see the pile of uncollected Barbie lunch boxes he bethought to send Joseph with sufficient sandwiches for all. So did Joseph dress in his finest raiment, which was a coat of many colours given to him by his father, for beige was so out that year, and he did set off to find his brothers.

And when he finally came unto them they marvelled, for they knew not how he found them, and Joseph saith "I just followed the smell of wet sheep". Then were his brothers wroth and sought to kill him, for the smell of onions was much greater than the smell of wet sheep. But Reuben saith "he is the favoured of Rachel who is the favoured of Jacob, who is the favoured of God, and she packs quite a punch."

And Judah saith "then let us not kill him, but let us put him down a well, away from onions." So this was done, and the leery coat was stripped from Joseph.

And it came to pass that traders passed that way, and did hear the song of "Somewhere over the Rainbow" that did issue from the well. And they did say unto the brothers "how much for the damp singer?" And the brothers did agree a price and Joseph was sold into slavery, and the young man did go West. But the brothers killed a lamb and spread its blood on the coat, and did take it to Jacob. "Alas!" said he, "for Joseph is slain. See, his coat is rent!" And Levi bethought himself: "so is Joseph by now."

But Joseph travelled West with his captors, and came to the land of Goshen, which is in Egypt. And there did he catch the eye of the Captain of the Guard of that place, who was Potiphar. And Potiphar paid a goodly price that he may have Joseph unto himself, although he forbade onions. Thus did Joseph rise to the occasion, and did rise through the ranks of Potiphar's servants to become his overseer.

But there were servants who became jealous of Joseph, for he had the favour of Potiphar and elfin good looks, and they did plot to have him imprisoned. And they filled Potiphar's ear with calumnies of Joseph's expensive wardrobe, and did question his taste in hats. Thus it was that Joseph was imprisoned by Potiphar, but he said unto himself "It is the will of God", and did hie himself to the prison library to study the interpretation of dreams. And the governor of the prison did call on him often as an after-dinner performer, for he was an Interpreter of the Jungian school with elfin good looks and a cabaret repertoire, and his fame spread throughout Egypt.

At that time was the Pharoah of Egypt greatly troubled, for he had dreamed a dream. He dreamed that he stood on the bank of the Nile, and there came forth from the waters seven fat cows, and they did graze contentedly on the grassy bank. Then came forth seven thin cows, and they did devour the seven fat cows.

So did the Pharoah seek far and wide for wise men to interpret his dream. And when this failed he sought the counsel of priests, soothsayers and idiots.

They told him many things. They saith that the seven thin cows meant there would be a plague of supermodels upon the land; this he discounted. They claimeth that feeding cows to cows createth madness; this he believed not. They stateth that cow is backward to wok, and the wok is the mouthpiece of God, so cows are the mouthpieces of Satan; this he understood not. They believeth it to be a message from the gods that he should give more unto the temples; or unto the poor, specifically Reg the Interpreter of Dreams; this he did not do. And some blameth the onions.

Then came to him news of Joseph, and he ordered the prisoner brought before him. And Joseph was brought, saying "how can I possibly go to a royal garden party in these old things?" And when he was told of the dream did Joseph say "oh, Pharoah, the answer to thy dream is simple. God shall grant seven years of plenty, when the granaries shall overflow, the flocks shall increase and we'll gather lilacs in the spring, again. Then shall there be seven years of famine, but by careful fiscal management shall you be able to break the cycle of boom and bust. And now I'd like to finish with a song, *Falling in Love Again*."

Then was the Pharoah overjoyed and did clasp Joseph to his bosom, and did promise him great riches and many hats, and Joseph bethought "here we go again". Thus Joseph and the Pharoah became fast friends, although speed isn't everything. And the Pharoah placed Joseph in charge of preparations for the famine, saying "what this project really needs is a Jungian-trained camp ex-criminal who can perform a Cole Porter medley at the drop of a hat (of which he has many)." And, just in case, Pharoah ordered the execution of all supermodels. Thus it came to pass that all the excess stores were gathered in, so that the seven years of famine counted not in the kingdom of Egypt. At least, not for the friends of Pharoah and Joseph. But in the land of Canaan the herds dwindled and

the crops failed, and the house of Jacob knew great hunger, as did the people in the house. For the God of Israel had forgotten to tell Israel of the famine, although she had forewarned the Pharaoh.

Then did the brothers say to their father, Jacob, "send us into Egypt that we may buy grain, for our Barbie lunch boxes are empty." And Jacob sent them forth, but kept back his youngest son, Benjamin, for his nail polish was yet undry.

And the brothers came into Egypt, even unto the land of Goshen. And here they met the Famine Relief Project Manager, who was Joseph. But they knew him not, for there was no smell of onions to make their eyes water. But Joseph did treat them roughly and did slap their wrists, and did imprison Simeon for fashion crime. And he sent the brothers back to their father with little grain for their gold, and enjoined them to return soon, on pain of pain. And he told them to bring with them their youngest brother. But Joseph secreted into their sacks of grain the gold they had paid, that they may have money for a swift return.

Thus the brothers returned unto their father with heavy heart, and told him of their treatment. But the grain made little pottage and soon they needs must return unto Egypt or starve. And they took with them Benjamin, and Benjamin took with him many hat boxes. And Jacob bade farewell with a heavy heart.

But when they came unto Egypt the Famine Relief Project Manager met them with smiling countenance, and led them to a feast, whereat was sat Simeon in a new hat, looking uncomfortable. And Joseph did bid them eat, and enjoy the riches of Egypt. But when they were at ease, and had eaten their fill, and had consumed the after dinner mints, did Joseph arise with a dark countenance. "Lo! I invite you into my house as, guests. I forgive your fashion trespasses (and they are many) and I give to you the best of my provender. Yet still you act as robbers and brigands. One of you has pinched my lipstick. Who is it?"

Then did Joseph order his servants to search all present, and they did find the lipstick in Benjamin's diddybag. "It is a plant!" claimeth Benjamin. "No it is a

lipstick," sayeth Joseph, "and you have stolen it." Then to his servants he saith "take him away and dress him in loon pants, place him in the beige room and play unto him James Last and his Orchestra, that he may know the enormity of his crime."

Then did Judah prostrate himself before Joseph, and did say "take not our youngest brother, for he is the light of our Father's life and beloved of us all, even as our flocks. He is blameless, the lipstick is not even his shade. Take me in his place, I am stronger and can survive even James Last." And all the brothers did wail and prostrate themselves.

And Joseph was moved to see the love all had for Benjamin, and he said "fear not! I am your brother Joseph, who you sold into slavery. Yet have I made my name through dreams - you could say I've slept my way to the top. And now it is even as I have said, for you are all bowed before me, and am I not the best Actress? Servant, the statuette!"

But the brothers were astounded and did mutter "How is this so?" and "What about the onion breath?" And Joseph replyeth "We are of the house of Abraham, and we have all given a small part of ourselves unto the Lord." And thus he did reveal himself unto them.

And so the brothers returned joyfully unto Jacob, and did bring down into Egypt all of the house of Jacob, and they dwelled there and prospered.

Here endeth the Book of Genitals. Stay tuned for the next exciting instalment: The Book of Eczema.