

Generations

A ten-minute play

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“Generations”

Characters

Jabez.....	The newest generation of the family line. To be played by a woman.
Jacob.....	The man who raised Judah, and overcome him alcoholism to do so.
Judah.....	The man who raised Jesse with the insecurities and the self-hatred that he created in himself.
Jesse.....	The man who is a ghost, who raised seven men and one ghost, Jabez.

Synopsis

Four generations of men tell their story of how they embraced and rejected the gifts that their father's gave them. The audience follows the beginning, which is also the end of the story: how are gifts earned? What can we inherit from our parents?

Setting

The play takes place at night, covering four generations of men.

JABEZ

This is a story
this is my story
a story of generations
a story of decendants
the story of Jabez
the story of a man whose mother yelled:

I bore him with pain

who spoke to god:

I demand you make him free of misfortune, a life without pain

this is the story of Jabez's begotten gift
how gifts are earned, not demanded

the story of four generations
the story of Jacob, of Judah, of Jesse, and of me.

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JACOB

(JACOB has an alcohol bottle in his hand)

This is a story of Jacob
this is my story
the beginning
I am Jacob and I've wrestled angels
returning to Canaan with my wife
this is before I couldn't see her
before now
when she screams like she's been torn-open
and this man lept on me
with liquid eyes
and we wrestled as my wife watched
motionless, because what can be done when you're fighting god?
and when day broke, the angel struck me, but I still held on
until he blessed me
until he named me 'Israel'
I am Israel, and I have wrestled an angel
and I can't see my wife
she screams again
from the tent midwives have been entering and leaving for six hours
men enter too
but I cannot
I am wrestling with my angel again
too sick to leave
too nauseous to stand
my angel is winning
but if I can pin him
if I can triumph
and see my son's birth
I will name him Judah
and I will never wrestle again

(JACOB sets the bottle down)

JUDAH

This is a story of Judah
this is my story
the beginning

Jacob was with me
named me, taught me
When he talked of pride in our country he looked
through me and past me
He was seeing the man I was to become
To become that man I led the army and killed forty-men
I killed the leader of the Canaanites with my stone
I expanded Israel
But Israel did not see me
I married
I begat children: Jesse
but still Israel looked past me
and after my brother, Joseph was born
I learned that Jacob wasn't looking at the man I was to become
but to the future
to the man he was waiting for
to Joseph.

Jacob talked of pride of country
but a country should be proud of his sons
I led my brothers and captured Joseph
I sold him to slavery, and brought his stained coat to Israel
So he would see me
So he would see a man
But I brought Jacob a new angel to wrestle with

And I was a man through our famine
through my wife's death
and when I travelled to Egypt
when I knelt before Pharaoh's man
begging for help

And when Joseph, the brother I thought was dead
put his hand on my head
and gave me the help I begged for

I saw the man that Israel had been searching for.
I knew how to be a man.

JESSE

This is a story of Jesse
this is my story
the beginning

The story of a ghost who lived for one-hundred years
and gave-up his son

The story of the stump who grew sprouts

From god, Sammuell came to my house and asked me to choose which son would be king.
I chose the one who was least like me

my father, convinced of how to be a man
taught me generosity, forgiveness, and piety
that I should give ten sheep away before I keep one.
how I should not only forgive an abuser,
but not hide if he came-around again
that I shouldn't correct a proud man, because 'who am I'

and I traveled
from a boy, to a ghost of a boy
from a man, to a ghost of a man

I presented Sammuell each of my seven sons.

As a ghost of a man
men and women in Bethlehem walked through me
deaf to protestations when my furs were stolen
when my herd eaten
for what can a ghost do?
you may feel one in your room, but how can it touch you?

my wife's mother knew my father
she didn't see me before we were married. Or after.
we intersected, and had seven sons
real sons. Young men.

They were strong, respected in Bethlehem, absolute in their belief, and demanded respect from those they
traded with

I didn't go to town much anymore.

And after he saw my seven sons, Sammuell looked at me.

At last I am seen. I am solid.

And he asked

Where is your last?

I told him that the 8th was tending my flock
there can only be one ghost in a household

I will wait for him.

He waited for the ghost boy, the ghost who would be king.
I wonder. Could I have been something more than a ghost?
More than a stump who would sprout something greater?

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JABEZ

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a story of generations
a story of descendants
the story of Jabez
the story of a man whose mother yelled:

I bore him with pain

and spoke to god:

I demand you make him free of misfortune, a life without pain

And god made me as himself

A generation of men.

Who wrestled with angels
who won and lost and triumphed again

Who searching to become a man
became less than one and greater than

Who was forced to give up everything
and become a ghost
neither respected nor known

Who saw his father
and followed without asking

Who saw his grandfather
and learned from his pride

Who saw his great-grandfather
and chose to not wrestle

Who became a shepherd

Who was born a man with the soul of a woman

The son of the father
truly a ghost

Who entered his father's house to see Sammuell, messenger of god

Yes. I will be your king.