

# WHERE WOULD WE BE WITHOUT US?



by Zelda Wolf Jacobs  
Adath Israel Sisterhood  
Cincinnati, Ohio

**WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM**  
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 820  
New York, NY 10115

**CAST:**

3 Ancients: David's Girl, Asenath (Joseph's wife), and Zipporah (Moses' wife)

4 Sisterhood Women: Ann, Betty, Carol, and Debby

4 Seminary Women: Joan, Gail, Lois, and Esther

**PLACE:**

Scene I Airport

Scene II On the Plane staged at same time

Scene III The Desert

**OPTIONAL COSTUMES:**

Sisterhood Women: jeans or slacks under raincoats

3 Ancients: long robes (Biblical style)

Seminary women: contemporary clothes

**SCENERY:**

Bare stage with 4 chairs.

A large picture of a palm tree may be used to indicate desert.

There are no breaks between scenes.

**TIME:**

About 15-20 minutes

Updated by Lois Silverman  
11/03

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(Sisterhood women come in and sit in chairs)

ANN: Wasn't it wonderful that Women's League has its own mission to Israel?

DEBBY: And that we're on it!

BETTY: And that the Israeli government asked for us Women's League women to organize a new archeological dig in the Negev?

CAROL: And that they called in the efficiency experts—US?

DEBBY: Well, there are no people more organized than Sisterhood woman.

ANN: I don't know how they've managed up 'til now.

BETTY: They haven't. That's why we're here now on the way to Israel and the Negev as the Sisterhood—Women's League for Conservative Judaism delegation.

DEBBY: But what do we know about archaeology?

CAROL: We'll learn. We always learn fast. Besides the Israeli government knows our reputation for organization and perfection.

ALL: (to the tune of "Candyman," parody by Lois Silverman)

Who can bring the *kreplach*

With kasha or with cheese.

Then put on a *tallit* and *daven* with great ease?

A sisterhood gal can. A sisterhood gal can.

Who can put sunshine

on everything she sees,

Then put on some makeup and argue *halakha* with great ease?

A Sisterhood gal can. A sisterhood gal can.

A Sisterhood gal can and she does it with great love and helps the *shul* go around.

Everything she makes,

Everything she bakes,

Is *kosherdik* and delicious.

Talk about your stylish dishes

She sure ain't capricious.

Who can raise the dollars

For every temple goal,

Who studies the weekly *sidrah* and then goes out to bowl?

A Sisterhood gal can.

Who can sing a *z'mirah*,

Does *birkot* and volunteers,

Who can be a mommy and dry a *kinde's* tears?

A sisterhood gal can. A Sisterhood gal can.

A sisterhood gal can and she does it with great love and helps the shul go around.

(OFF STAGE VOICE:) Ladies and Gentlemen. El Al flight 10A non-stop for Lod Airport now loading at Gate 7. All passengers may now board. Please show your boarding passes.

(Women get up and walk “musical chairs style” around arranged chairs. They take seats again. They then start to make uniform motions as if eating “square meals” in mechanical, synchronized manner, and say in unison in monotone voices:)

9 P.M.—food, food, food

10 P.M.—snack, snack, snack

12 o'clock—oranges, oranges, oranges

1 A.M.—chocolate, chocolate, chocolate

3 A.M.—daven, daven, daven

5 A.M.—breakfast, breakfast, breakfast

SONG: *(to tune of “Food, Glorious Food” from show “Oliver”)*

CAROL: 9 P.M. eating time, what will we have for dinner:

Time to start the hourly feeding.

ANN: 10 P.M. it's time to snack, will they bring the coffee back?

Ready for the second feeding.

BETTY: 12 o'clock, orange juice, peanuts and apple juice

1 A.M. seltzer or coke.

DEBBY: Soon it's 3 A.M.—minyan, lox, bagel and onion

the food it gets to be a great big joke

ALL:

Food, glorious food and, each dish worth the trying,

Each suiting our mood, soon we feel like dying,

Just watching each hour go by, what next are they serving?

EI Al is the way to fly, it's unnerving,

Food, glorious food, “what next” is the question.

Three banquets a night, I've got indigestion,

Temptation has done us in, what's a mother to do?

Oh food, wonderful food, marvelous food, fabulous food,

beautiful food, glorious food.

(OFFSTAGE VOICE) Ladies and Gentlemen, this is your Captain. Please buckle your seat belts and place your seat in an upright position.

(Sisterhood women stand, grab chair, push it off stage, walk back on stage to opposite side singing *to the tune of “Take Me Out to the Ballgame”*)

Take us out to the Negev,

Take us out of the crowd,

This is a trip off the beaten track,

What dis-cov-er-ies we will bring back.

When we dig, dig; dig in the Negev,

Excavating in our homeland,

Cause we want to see what we will find

When we sift that sand.

Take good care of the children,

Get them to Hebrew school

Check on their laundry and TV time,

Hebrew classes come rain or come shine.

For it's Mother's Day in the Negev,

Excavating in our homeland,  
Cause we want to see what we will find  
When we sift that sand.

(All make motions as if digging)

DEBBY: (shouts) I found it! (Holds up rolled scroll)

ANN: What is it? (excitedly)

BETTY: It looks like some sort of parchment.

CAROL: This could be an important discovery. It looks very old. It might be as important as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

ANN: What does it say?

DEBBY: This is amazing. I can hardly believe it (she reads silently for a moment). It seems that centuries ago some renegade scribes in copying the Torah made certain changes. Listen: (she reads aloud) "The Book of Zedekaiiah: Now it came to pass in the days when judges ruled, there were great problems in the land. And certain men were as scribes, and inclined to be male chauvinists, as men often are. They wrote it as it was not. The stories they wrote compounded the problem for they spoke ill of the great men's greater wives, for they were sorely oppressed by their own wives."

BETTY: Can you believe this?

ANN: Go on, go on.

DEBBY. Here, you read for a while (passes scroll to Ann)

ANN: "They wrote ill of these fine women, to the glory of their husbands."

"Jacob loved Joseph because he was a son of his old age. He made for him a coat of many colors and Joseph's brothers were jealous, there was much animosity and evil plotting. They cast their brother into a pit, then sold him to a passing Ishmaelite merchant for 20 pieces of silver, took his jazzy coat covered with kid's blood and sold their father a bill of goods, for they were no good." (passes scroll to Carol)

CAROL: "Joseph found favor in Egypt with Potiphar an officer of the Pharaoh Then he had trouble with Potiphar's wife, '*koch leffel*' that she was, and he landed in jail until two years later, perchance, he came to Pharaoh's attention as an interpreter of dreams. The Pharaoh had a dream about seven skinny ears of corn and 7 fat ears of corn and Joseph interpreted that there would be 7 good years and then 7 lean years. He told Pharaoh to appoint officers to store food during the 7 years of plenty for the 7 lean years. It came to pass and it was good in the eyes of Pharaoh..."

(Enter 3 ANCIENT WOMEN)

ANCIENT WOMEN: (Together) Hold it! Hold it!

(Sisterhood women look shocked)

BETTY: Who are you?

ZIPPORAH: We're the women of your most prestigious ancestors, Joseph, Moses and David.

DAVID'S GIRL: We've been waiting millennia for this day when someone would discover this scroll and we could tell the story as it truly was. We just want to set the record straight so you women will know you've always been equal to men, sometimes more equal, in spite of the way some Jewish men treated their women.

ALL ANCIENTS SING TOGETHER (*To tune of "It Ain't Necessarily So"*)

It ain't necessarily so,  
it ain't necessarily so,  
Those things once "*geshribben*" by men who were driven  
To tell things the way they don't go.

DAVID'S GIRL: King David was smart, so you thought,  
King David was smart so you thought,  
You thought him a poet, his psalms they did show it,  
it ain't necessarily so.

ZIPPORAH: O Moses ascended the mount,  
O Moses ascended the mount,  
Til he got hysterical, helping God's miracle  
Teaching the Jews how to count.

ALL: Oh Joshua he blew down the wall,  
Oh Joshua he blew down the wall,  
His wife said "go lump it,"  
then he blew that trumpet  
And watched all those bricks start to fall.

ALL ANCIENTS; it ain't necessarily so, it ain't necessarily so,  
The men got the glories in most Bible stories,  
But it ain't necessarily so.  
The women behind 'em did all the remindin',

ZIPPORAH: And how! The facts were bent

ALL ANCIENTS: You may think it factual, but it wasn't actual That's not the way it went.

ASENATH: Old Pharaoh thought Joseph was nice,  
Old Pharaoh thought Joseph was nice,  
But I kept them hopping  
I sent old Joe shopping  
And got the wheat at wholesale price!

ALL ANCIENTS: We're telling the story to show  
It ain't nessa, ain't nessa, ain't nessa  
ain't nessa, ain't necessarily so.

ANN: Tell us more. This is a revelation.

ASENATH: I'm Asenath, Joseph's wife, daughter of Potiphar, the Priest of On. (*to tune of "The Impossible Dream" from "Man of La Mancha"*)

I'll tell you a story that's true  
Events as they happened that day  
It's not as the story is written,  
Those words said the Biblical way.  
It's true Joe was sold as a slave,  
And down into Egypt was sent,  
The King called him up to interpret,  
But that's just as far as it went.  
It was my quest, to get a supply  
The wheat was on "special" It was such a good buy,

So I said to him. “Joe, just have faith and don’t pause  
Are you willing to march to the store for this heavenly cause,  
For, in time, if you’ll only have faith,  
In this glorious quest  
When the King’s inventory shows short.”  
Well, you all know the rest.  
And the world was much better for this  
And my Joe got the credit galore,  
He strove with his last ounce of “*keches*”  
To “*shlep*” all the wheat from the store.

BETTY: Who would have believed it? Read on some more!

DEBBY: (reading the scroll)

“And the Pharaoh let the people go and Moses led the Children of Israel into the desert where they encamped and then journeyed into the wilderness where there was no water and thou knowest the rest of the story of the climb up Mt. Sinai and it has been told unto generations but it is not as it was written.

ZIPPORAH: (interrupting) Now, let me just clarify that. I’m Zipporah, wife of Moses. I have been waiting many centuries to reveal the truth. Things that you read in the Bible turned out all right, but this was what really happened. Moses was inclined to daydream a lot. He always seemed to have other things on his mind. His head was always in the clouds, so to speak. He was so involved with the Israelites, he never had time for his family. When I wanted him to read to Gershom, he’d say “There’s a bush burning out there and I have to put it out.” or “I have to check on the plagues.” or “How will I get the Children of Israel across the Red Sea if the Pharaoh comes after us?” It was always something. But what really did it was when we were at Mt. Sinai and I sent Moses out to buy a tablet so I could write home to my folks and he didn’t want to go, but I said ... “Moses”

(to the tune of “*Gonna Build a Mountain*”)

Go on climb that mountain, just a little hill,  
Go on climb that mountain, and he said, “I will.”  
Then he climbed that mountain, and he went up high  
He said he didn’t wanna do it, but I said you gotta try  
Moses, you always daydream—Don’t know how I cope.  
Gotta stop those daydreams, get on up that slope.  
Gotta quit those daydreams, see a project through,  
Then he climbed that mountain, made it all;  
Then he saw that Heaven, as the story tells,  
When he climbed the mountain, breathed that special air  
He took his daydreams up the mountain, found that God was waiting there.

(continues talking) Don’t you know, he went up the mountain and came back with two clay tablets, and they already had writing on them. But it turned out for the best.

CAROL: They’ll never believe this at home. Keep going.

DAVID’S GIRL: I’d like the chance to say a few words, too. I’m a friend of David’s, you know, the King. He was a wise, pious, brave soldier; a terrific politician; quite a musician, but I have a little secret about those psalms. Come closer.

(sings to the tune of “I Write the Songs [that Make the Whole World Sings]”)  
David was quite creative,  
but I ghosted all of his songs,  
I put the words and the meter all together,

I'm his woman and I wrote his psalms.  
I wrote the psalms that made the whole world sing.  
I wrote the psalms of love and godly things.  
I wrote the psalms that made the poets cry. I wrote the psalms. I wrote the psalms.

(Enter Seminary Women)

GAIL: We've been listening behind the sand dune to this whole conversation and we felt it was time for us to put in an appearance. This is all symbolic anyway, you know. It's true the women of antiquity were extraordinarily influential—more than they were given credit for—but, don't forget us, your contemporaries. They (points to Ancients) , you (points to Sisterhood women) and we are all very important influences on the world around us. And don't you forget it!

JOAN: *(to the tune of "Where Would You Be Without Us?" from "The Roar of the Greasepaint")*  
(To Ancients)

Where would we be without you, ladies?  
Just tell us, where would we be?  
Look at yourselves—you are as clever as ever we'll see.  
How could we cope without your guidance and your expert advice?  
Yours is a lasting and pure guidance.  
And what's more, you're so nice. Aren't they?  
Where would we be without your courage?  
You are as fearless as three  
Faithful if we should drag; strong if we start to sag.  
Ladies, you've got to agree.  
Tell us frankly, where would we be without thee?

GAIL: (speaking) But don't underestimate the power and influence of the contemporary woman.  
(continues singing)

Where would we be without us, ladies?  
Just tell us, where would we be?  
Look at us all—we are so clever as ever could be.  
Pity the world without our guidance and our modern advice.  
Ours is the lasting and true effort.  
And what's more, we're so nice. Aren't we?  
Where would we be without our vision  
Helping to carry things through?  
People don't pass us by, we're great and we know why.  
All of us care what we do. Heaven helps us.  
Where would we be without you?

JOAN: We are the women of the Sisterhoods and Women's League for Conservative Judaism. We are the women behind the scenes at The Jewish Theological Seminary and the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies. We are the force behind the preservation of Conservative Judaism.

ANN: We are all Sisterhood women, too. That's why we're here. We're all very involved in Torah Fund Campaign. But I don't know if our ancient counterparts are as aware of the work we modern women do. So, let's tell them.

LOIS: First, you ladies owe it to yourselves to visit the Seminary in New York and the Ziegler School in Los Angeles. You've found time to talk to us in the Negev. New York is just a hop and skip away, relatively speaking.

ESTHER: You'd find the center for all Conservative Judaism there. Since its founding, over 100 years ago, it has ordained more than 1500 rabbis. What do you think of that?

GAIL: We have an outstanding Graduate School and the Seminary College of Jewish Music trains composers, choral directors and teachers of Jewish music. The Cantorial School trains young men as Cantors. In Los Angeles, The Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies trains Conservative rabbis.

JOAN: And the American Student Center, Neve Schechter, in Jerusalem, is home for Rabbinical students who must now spend one year of study in Israel. It is also home for the college students participating in the new Midreshet Jerusalem study program. We have so much to offer.

SEMINARY LADIES: *(to the tune of "For Me and My Gal")*

The Seminary's for you and me, pal.

The U of J's the west coast locale.

Congregations are waiting

For the folks graduating

And we're here and now stating

That we need them—And how!

The Rabbis learning, how they sermonize.

The Cantors scoring, how they harmonize.

And this way —

We're going to build a better world for all, for you and me,

You'll see! Together!

For you and me, pal.

The Scholars teach them. They're the very best.

The great Museum stands up to the test.

Everybody's been going

To exhibits they're showing

And the *sukkah* they're building

Is the very best dressed.

The rare Library has the wisdom of Sol.

The needs are varied, the order is tall.

But this way

We're going to build a better world for all, for you and me,

You'll see! Together!

For you and me, gal.

LOIS: By the way, don't forget, the Ramah Camps are the most successful American contribution to Jewish education, giving thousands of young people the opportunity to live a total exciting Jewish life within the complete program of summer camping activities. I know my children have gone there!

ANN: *(to the tune of "Camelot")*

A law was made a distant time ago here,

When school is out, before it gets too hot,

To teach our kids, to please our kids,

They must go ... to camp a lot.

With applications sent in mid-December,

The forms complete to hyphen, dash and dot.

The youngsters love to go until September...

To camp a lot. (camp a lot, camp a lot)

I know it sounds a bit bizarre.  
But they camp a lot. (camp a lot, camp a lot)  
That's how our children are.

They all improve their forehand and their backstroke.  
They pack their *humash* with their camping gear.  
In short, there's simply not a more congenial spot  
For happ'ly summer-aftering than here in Camp Ramah.

A law was made a distant time ago here,  
A camp trunk and a wardrobe must be bought.  
It's time for Jewish kids to have their camp fun at Camp Ramah.  
A minyan gets together before sundown.  
By 8 a.m. the *Shaharit* crowds appear.  
The *Adot* learn the Hebrew "Sound of Music"  
At Camp Ramah (Camp Ramah, Camp Ramah)  
I know it gives a person pause  
But at Camp Ramah (Camp Ramah, Camp Ramah)  
You learn the Kosher laws.

You make good friends who last you for a lifetime.  
You make your plans to meet year after year.  
In short, there's simply not a more congenial spot  
For happ'ly summer-aftering than here in Camp Ramah.

JOAN: And we, the women, support all this through our efforts through Women's League's Torah Fund Campaign. The Mathilde Schechter Residence Hall and Goldsmith Hall houses are great a great places for students to live while going to the Seminary in New York; and Women's League supports the residence halls at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, too.

ESTHER: They'd be nowhere without moral, physical and financial support. You can talk about the bounds of Conservative Judaism from morning 'til night, but it's you and I who make it work.

GAIL: Each one of us, in her own way, working for the goal she sets before her, to make Conservative Judaism a viable, living way of life for our generation and generations to come.

ANN: But you're talking about thousands of Sisterhood women.

ESTHER: of course, but each one of the thousands is an exceptional individual doing her job, and that's YOU! ( *to tune of "One"*)  
One—filled with inspiration,  
One to do is all it takes,  
One—what a combination,  
Every move that you make  
One job and suddenly Nobody else will do  
You're told there's one and one only  
It's you know who.

One filled with good intention  
And by now you know the rest,  
And you do the very best, it's fun—done,  
Oh, wow, give us your attention  
Here and now we want to mention  
You're the One!

BETTY: We've learned a moral today, from the women of the past and the women of today. That in past generations, as it is today, and as it will be in the future, the Women are the movers and do-ers.

ENTIRE CAST SINGS TOGETHER (*to tune of "Nothing Can Stop Me Now"*)

After our success today, nothing can stop us now

It's been fun, we're glad to say

Nothing can stop us now.

You keep Ju-da-ism, alive and well

You glow with grace and with style

Come next year just plan to be here with us

You're very dear to us, when you are near to us

You make all the dreams come true

Future's assured . . . and how!

Torah Fund's on its way

'Cause of what you did today

Tell the world we lead the way

Nothing can stop us now.