A Test

*Genesis 22:1-18a*

STORYTELLER

GOD

ANGEL

ABRAHAM

ISAAC

(This piece can be done with two stools to serve as the altar.

It is helpful to play all of Abraham and Isaac’s action in the middle of the space with the God and Angel characters remaining behind them on either side so they can jump into the action and bring the stools in as needed. The Storyteller can move in and out of the scene at will. It can be a helpful theatrical convention to work with the idea that Abraham never sees God or the Angel, even when they are physically close to him and/or talking to him directly.

To start this scene, Isaac can be sleeping to one side of the space, and Abraham can be in prayer at the other side of the stage. God is near Abraham to speak to him and the chorus is in the same area.)

STORYTELLER

A test. Genesis 22: 1-18a. And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him.

GOD

Abraham.

STORYTELLER

And he said.

ABRAHAM

Behold, here I am.

STORYTELLER

And he said.

GOD

Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah;

and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I tell thee of.

(ABRAHAM can begin to move to wake up Isaac and mime chopping wood, while the GOD character moves slowly back to his/her spot at one side and back farther in the space. STORYTELLER begins the next narration while ABRAHAM and ISAAC go about their actions. The STORYTELLER can also bring a stool forward placed in the center of the stage to be “the donkey.”)

STORYTELLER

And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

(ABRAHAM and ISAAC stand together next to the donkey stool and the GOD character and the STORYTELLER can come kneel before ABRAHAM to stand in as the young men. The STORYTELLER continues narration.)

STORYTELLER (continued)

And Abraham said unto his young men.

ABRAHAM

Abide ye here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

(GOD and STORYTELLER can go back to original places to resume original characters and leave the young men characterization. ABRAHAM and ISAAC continue mimed action. STORYTELLER picks up stool and moves it back to original spot.)

STORYTELLER

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father and said.

ISAAC

My father.

STORYTELLER

And he said.

ABRAHAM

Here am I, my son.

STORYTELLER

And he said.

ISAAC

Behold the fire and wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

STORYTELLER

And Abraham said.

ABRAHAM

My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.

(ABRAHAM and ISAAC move together to new section of the stage. . .best if they move around and come back to the center to be fully visible if possible.

GOD and ANGEL bring two stools forward next to each other to be the altar. ABRAHAM and ISAAC mime the action through narration.)

STORYTELLER

So they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of.

GOD

and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order,

(ABRAHAM grabs ISAAC, binds him mimed rope, and places him on the altar.)

GOD (continued)

and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

STORYTELLER

And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of the heaven and said.

ANGEL

Abraham. Abraham.

STORYTELLER

And he said.

ABRAHAM

Here am I.

STORYTELLER

And he said.

ANGEL

Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

(ABRAHAM looks up to see the ram which is mimed, being held by GOD or the ANGEL to one side of the stage. He can choose to cut ISAAC loose at this point with the knife he was holding to sacrifice Isaac, and then go pick up the ram. ISAAC runs off to one side of the stage—opposite where the ram was—and freezes.)

STORYTELLER

And Abraham lift up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said.

(To reinforce the presence of GOD again at this point, the GOD and ANGEL characters can move towards ABRAHAM while saying the next lines.)

GOD

By myself have I sworn,

ANGEL

Saith the Lord,

GOD

For because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son

ANGEL

That in blessing

GOD

I will bless thee,

ANGEL

and in multiplying

GOD

I will multiply thy seed

ANGEL

as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea shore;

GOD and ANGEL

and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

(At this point, GOD and STORYTELLER move to one side of the stage, opposite where ISAAC is, and freeze in a pose going back to the young men characters. The ANGEL can move to be near ISAAC. ABRAHAM can move to ISAAC, ISAAC can turn away, and ABRAHAM then turns to go to his young men who unfreeze and stand beside ABRAHAM, frozen again as though walking. The STORYTELLER concludes narration in this pose.)

STORYTELLER

So Abraham returned unto his young men and they rose up and went together to Beersheba and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

\*\*As a note for performance, it is an option for the Angel and God lines to be spoken simultaneously by Angel, God, and Storyteller characters. One voice can be predominant on certain words or phrases, while the other two voices can be a stage whisper.