

A PASSOVER PLAY

(Very brief bios are included to remind people what each character is known for.)

NARRATORS:

I am Agatha Christie and I am an English crime novelist, short story writer, and playwright.

I am Katharine Graham and I am an American publisher of *The Washington Post*.

I am Betty Friedan and I am a writer, feminist and women's rights activist.

ALL 3: We have created a play of intrigue, suspense and yes, even murder! We hope you are drawn in and captivated by our story.



Agatha: A long, long time ago, there was a Pharaoh, Imelda Marcos, who enslaved the Hebrew people. She declared that all Jews must work from sunrise to sunset, and children must work as hard as adults. They were whipped and beaten if they did not work hard enough or fast enough to build Imelda's storehouses.

Katharine: For a long time, Imelda's advisors had been warning her as to the growing threat of the Jewish nation. Her sorcerers had seen in the stars that a Jewish girl would be born who would grow up, overturn the entire Egyptian empire, and lead her people to freedom.

Betty: She became so obsessed that she ordered newborn girls to be drowned in the Nile, so they wouldn't grow up and bring even more Hebrew children into the world. However, there was one woman who tried to help the Hebrews.

Margaret Sanger: I am Margaret Sanger and I opened the first birth control clinic in the United States. If the Hebrew women can choose not to get pregnant, then they won't have the horror of seeing their newborn baby girls murdered.

Agatha: But some women chose not to use birth control and would hope for the best. One woman gave birth to a beautiful daughter and in order to save her, put her in a basket to float down the Nile River.

Katharine: It happened that Imelda's daughter was bathing in the river when she saw the basket with the baby. She was a kind soul and decided to take the baby and raise her in the palace as her own.

Mother Teresa: I am Mother Teresa and I am the founder of the Order of women dedicated to helping the poor and destitute. I will take this baby and save her and raise her in the lap of luxury. I will name her Wonder Woman, because I am so fortunate to have found this child.

Betty: Despite the fact that she grew up in the palace, Wonder Woman could not bear to see the suffering of the Jewish people. One day, she chanced upon an Egyptian taskmaster, savagely whipping a Jewish slave to death. Furious, Wonder Woman, with her amazing strength, hit the Egyptian and he immediately died. Certain that Imelda's officers would be after her for the murder, Wonder Woman fled the country.

Agatha: Wonder Woman lived in Midian for a number of years and was a shepherdess. One day, a lamb ran away from the rest of the flock. Wonder Woman chased after it and saw a strange sight: a bush covered in fire, yet the bush was not being burned! (I'll bet Julia Child would never have burnt anything.) Amazed, she drew even nearer, and all of a sudden heard the voice of God speaking to her. "Go down to Egypt and tell Imelda to let My people go!"

Katharine: So Wonder Woman and her sister Eva Perón traveled to Egypt and came before Imelda.

Wonder Woman: I am Wonder Woman, a superhero and goddess, and a founding member of the Justice League. You may not recognize me, but I was brought up in this palace by your daughter.

Eva Perón: I am the first lady of Argentina and I fight for women's suffrage and improving the lives of the poor.

WW & EP: We are here to demand that you Let Our People Go!

Imelda Marcos: I am Imelda Marcos and I am notorious for my extravagant spending and living in luxury while the people of my country suffer.

Imelda: You can't just come in here and demand that I let your people go.

WW & EP: If you don't listen, God will set terrible plagues upon you.

Imelda: I don't believe you. It's probably fake news.

Katharine: Plague after plague soon struck the Egyptians, each one more shocking than the next. The first plague turned the water of the Nile into blood. There was no water that was safe to drink. But Imelda thought it was magic and called in her scientist, Marie Curie, to explain the trick.

Marie Curie: I am Madame Marie Curie, a physicist and chemist. I have studied the blood in the Nile and Madame Pharaoh, I do not believe this is a trick. It is beyond my expertise to understand how the entire Nile could be turned into blood. This is from a higher authority and my recommendation would be to acquiesce and let the Hebrews go.

Imelda: I still don't believe it and I will not let them go.

Betty: The second plague followed. Wonder Woman stretched out her shield over the waters of Egypt, and frogs swarmed forth. They were everywhere. They covered every inch of land and entered the houses and bedrooms; wherever the Egyptians turned, whatever they touched, they found slimy bodies of frogs. The croaking filled the air.

WW: Are you ready to release the Jews?

Imelda: Yes, yes, just get rid of the frogs!

Agatha: But as soon as the frogs disappeared, she broke her promise and refused to let the children of Israel go. So God sent a third plague of lice. All over Egypt they crawled forth from the dust to cover the land. Man and beast suffered untold misery from this terrible plague. Although Imelda's aides pointed out that this surely was God's punishment, she hardened her heart and remained relentless in her determination to keep the children of Israel in bondage.

Katharine: So more plagues were sent upon Pharaoh. The fourth plague to harass the Egyptians consisted of hordes of wild animals roving all over the country, and destroying everything in their path. Only the province of Goshen where the children of Israel dwelt, was immune from this as well as from the other plagues. Imelda called upon her Chief Wildlife Advisor, who was more of a chimpanzee specialist, but who could also give advice on what to do about this terrible plague.

Jane Goodall: I am Jane Goodall, the world's foremost expert on chimpanzees. I have studied this plague and I believe there is nothing that can be done to save all of Egypt's wildlife. I've never seen anything like it and would advise you, Pharaoh, to appease the God of the Hebrews by setting them free.

Betty: So again Imelda promised to let the Hebrews go out into the desert on the condition that they would not go too far. Wonder Woman prayed to God, and the wild animals disappeared. But as soon as they had gone, Imelda withdrew her promise and refused Wonder Woman's demand.

Eva: You just don't know when to give up, do you? God is only just beginning. You and your people will regret not setting the Jews free.

Agatha: So true to Eva's prediction, God sent a fatal pestilence that killed most of the domestic animals of the Egyptians. How the people grieved when they saw their stately horses perish! How they cried when all the cattle of the fields were stricken! In addition, they had the mortification of seeing the beasts of the Israelites unhurt. Yet Imelda still hardened her heart, and would not let the Israelites go.

Katharine: Then followed the sixth plague, which was so painful and horrible that it struck the people of Egypt with horror and agony. Wonder Woman was boiling mad by this point, which gave God the idea to send boils down upon man and beast throughout the land of Egypt.

Eva: Are you ready to release the Jews?

Imelda: Yes, yes, yes. I beg of you, get rid of the boils!

Betty: So Wonder Woman prayed to God, and the boils disappeared. Since Imelda and her people were healed, she again backed out of her promise to let the Jewish people go.

WW: Since you keep backing out of your promise, a hail-storm of unprecedented violence will sweep the land; no living thing, no tree, no herb will escape its fury unhurt.

Imelda: This is again just fake news! I don't believe any of it. Your plagues do not harm me and I can always get you to stop them.

Agatha: So the seventh plague was set upon the Egyptians. When Wonder Woman stretched forth her shield, the hail poured down with violence; deafening thunder rolled over the earth, and lightning lit the heavens, and ran like fire along the ground. The hail did its work of destruction; man and beast who were exposed to its rage died on the spot; the trees lay shattered on the ground. But the land of Goshen, untouched by the ravages of the storm, bloomed like a garden amidst the general devastation. Again Imelda sent for Wonder Woman and acknowledged her sins.

Imelda: I have sinned this time. The Lord is the righteous One, and I and my people are the guilty ones. I implore you: stop God's thunder and hail, and I will let you go.

Eva: Are you sure? You know it's not nice to fool Mother Nature.

Imelda: Yes, I'm sure, I promise.

WW: Okay. Then when I leave the city, I will spread my shield to the heavens. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, in order that you know that the land is the Lord's.

Katharine: And it happened as Wonder Woman had said. The storm ceased, but Imelda's heart remained hardened. The next time Wonder Woman and Eva Perón came before Imelda, she appeared to relent, but only partly. She said the men could leave but that the women and children must remain. Wonder Woman and Eva would not accept this offer, and Imelda became angry and ordered them to leave her palace. Before leaving, Wonder Woman warned her of new and untold suffering. But Imelda remained adamant, even though her advisers advised against further resistance.

Betty: As soon as Wonder Woman left the palace, she raised her arms and shield toward heaven and an east wind brought swarms of locusts into Egypt. They covered the sun, and devoured everything green that

had escaped the hail and previous plagues. Never since the beginning of time (which was not really such a long time ago) had there been such a devastating plague of locusts as this one.

Agatha: Again Imelda sent for Wonder Woman and Eva Perón, and implored them to pray to God to stop the plague. Wonder Woman complied, mostly because she thought these locusts were pretty disgusting. So God sent a strong west wind that drove the locusts into the sea. When relief came, Imelda's obstinacy returned again and she refused to liberate the people of Israel.

Katharine: Just when they thought it was safe, a ninth plague ensued. For several days all of Egypt was enveloped in a thick and impenetrable veil of darkness that extinguished all lights. The Egyptians were gripped with fear, and remained glued to their places wherever they stood or sat. Only in Goshen, where the children of Israel lived, there was light.

Mother Teresa: I keep telling my mother, Imelda, to bargain with Wonder Woman and Eva Perón. Let them depart with all their people, leaving their flocks and herds behind as a pledge. I'm sure that would be a good compromise.

Betty: But compromising was not on the table.

WW & EP: We will accept nothing less than complete freedom for the men, women, and children, and they must be allowed to take all their belongings and livestock with them.

Imelda: NO! You will leave with nothing and never return. I warn you that if you come before me again you will die.

WW: That's okay. It won't be necessary to return because I have it on good authority that God will send one more plague over Egypt, after which you WILL give your unconditional permission for the children of Israel to leave Egypt. A tenth plague, the likes of which no one has ever seen, will be upon you before you know it. God will pass over Egypt and smite all first-born, man, woman and beast.

Betty: With these words, Wonder Woman and Eva left Imelda, who was seething with rage. Meanwhile, Imelda checked her supply of shoes, to see which ones she should wear in case she had to run quickly out of Egypt. She needed to avoid being sent into exile by the Egyptians for letting all this death and destruction happen while she was Pharaoh.

Agatha: Before this final plague, God commanded Wonder Woman to inform all the Israelites to mark lamb's blood on their doors and She will pass over them and not smite their firstborn. So the Hebrews did this and packed up their belongings in preparation to leave Egypt.

Katharine: Once the plague began, Imelda, furious, saddened, and afraid that she would be killed next, ran frantically through the streets of Egypt searching for Wonder Woman.

Imelda: Go! Take all the Jews with you! Take whatever you want!

Betty: Once they were given the word, they took their bread out of the oven, even though it was not ready. Instead of rising, the bread was flat, but at least they would have something to munch on during their escape.

WW: The time has come to grab your bags and get ready to leave at once! Don't wait for your bread to rise, just go!

Agatha: The Israelites did not hesitate, believing that soon Imelda would once again change her mind; and at midnight, Wonder Woman led them out of Egypt. However, as the Israelites left Egypt, Imelda changed her mind again and sent her army after the Hebrew people.

Katharine: The Israelites were trapped by the Red Sea and cried to God. God told Wonder Woman to once again stretch out her shield. The Red Sea split in half and the Hebrews were able to cross on dry land, safely reaching the other side. As the Egyptian army descended on them, the sea closed before they could reach the Israelites. The Jews left Egypt with sacks on their backs, and faith in their hearts.

Betty: Once on the other side, the women danced and sang their song:

ALL 3 Narrators say: Epilogue

Golda Meir: I am Golda Meir, the fourth Prime Minister of Israel and the first woman to hold this title. Such is the story of how the children of Israel were freed from the tyrannical Pharaoh. The shortest route to the Promised Land would have been straight across the land of the Philistines. But God wanted to give the newly-born Jewish nation the opportunity to throw off the remnants of Egyptian influence. They needed to be educated in the new ways so they could accept the Torah which was to be given to them on Mount Sinai. Therefore, God took the Jewish people on the scenic route. Instead of following the coast of the Mediterranean Sea all the way to the Promised Land, they were led southwards through the desert.

Harriet Tubman: I am Harriet Tubman. I escaped slavery and led hundreds of enslaved people to freedom along the route of the Underground Railroad. Weary and hungry the newly-freed Hebrews began to raise their voices against Wonder Woman and Eva Perón. They were not happy campers having been led into a place where there was neither bread nor meat to abate their hunger. They said "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat, when we ate bread to our fill! For you have brought us out into this desert, to starve this entire congregation to death."

Rosa Parks: I am Rosa Parks and I was an activist in the Civil Rights Movement and was called "the first lady of civil rights". God told Wonder Woman that She would give the children of Israel a heavenly food, that would rain down from the skies. The children of Israel called this bread from heaven "Manna." But the one thing that was hard to do in the desert was to prepare this food for consumption. There was only one woman who could help, and she was called upon to do so.

Julia Child: I am Julia Child, an American chef, author and television personality. I will prepare all the meals for the Hebrew people with the Manna God sends down from Heaven and no one will complain any more about their food.

ALL 3 Narrators: So, for forty years with Julia's help, God fed the Jewish people while they wandered in the desert. They survived and became a great nation. And all was good. Let us sing a song together to show our resilience.

SONG: *Fight Song* (Rachel Platten)

Like a small boat
On the ocean
Sending big waves
Into motion
Like how a single word
Can make a heart open
I might only have one match
But I can make an explosion

And all those things I didn't say
Wrecking balls inside my brain
I will scream them loud tonight
Can you hear my voice this time?

Chorus:

This is my fight song
Take back my life song
Prove I'm alright song
My power's turned on
Starting right now I'll be strong
I'll play my fight song
And I don't really care if nobody else believes
'Cause I've still got a lot of fight left in me

A lot of fight left in me

No I've still got a lot of fight left in me