RECAP
Rebekakh sends Jacob to Haran to marry one of her brother, Laban’s daughters. Jacob falls in love with Rachel, and offers to work for 7 years in exchange for Rachel’s hand in marriage. Laban agrees, but on their wedding night substitutes Leah for Rachel, excusing his deceit by asserting that it is not proper for the younger girl to marry before the elder. In order to marry Rachel, Jacob works another 7 years.

- **Bride price** = money, property, goods, or in this case 7 years of (unpaid) labor given by the groom (groom’s family) to the bride’s family. In tribal societies bride price is often explained as compensation for the loss of the bride’s labor and fertility within her kin group.
- **Dowry** = a bride’s share of her family’s wealth, e.g. money, property, goods, or in the case of Leah and Rachel, the slaves/servants their father gives them when they marry.

Leah is unloved but highly fertile. Rachel is dearly loved but infertile. Their relationship is one of rivalry for Jacob’s attention, respect, and love in which the sisters come to use their slaves, Bilhah and Zilpah, as surrogate mothers. The result:

In order to provide for his growing household, Jacob makes a deal with Laban whereby his wages will consist of all the newborn speckled, spotted, or black sheep and goats. Through careful breeding practices, Jacob becomes “exceedingly rich,” making his in-laws envious. After consulting with Leah and Rachel, Jacob takes his wives and children, and heads back to Canaan. Unbeknownst to him, Rachel has stolen her father’s **teraphim** ("household gods") which she hides in her saddle/cushion.
READ GENESIS 33:18-34:31
• What are the issues that arise within this story? How do the persons involved try to solve these issues?

• Who are the heroes, the villains, and the victims of this incident? How might it have been handled differently?

• Why is this incident recorded? What are we supposed to learn from it?

AFTERMATH (Genesis 35:1-26)
• Jacob buries the teraphim and the women’s earrings under the oak near Shechem, takes his family to Bethel where he sets up an altar to God. No one pursues them, all are terrified of them. God gives Jacob the name Israel. Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin, and is buried near Bethlehem. Reuben has relations with Bilhah.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Exodus 22:16-17
When a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged to be married, and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. But if her father refuses to give her to him, he shall pay an amount equal to the bride-price for virgins.

Deuteronomy 22: 28-29
If a man meets a virgin who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are caught in the act, the man who lay with her shall give fifty shekels of silver to the young woman's father, and she shall become his wife. Because he violated her he shall not be permitted to divorce her as long as he lives.

DINAH’S FATE
According an ancient rabbinic tradition (Pirke Rabbi Eliezer haGadol) Dinah gave birth to a daughter, Asenath. Jacob’s sons wanted to kill the infant, but Jacob took the child, hung a gold medallion around her neck with the inscription qodesh l’yhwh (“holy to God”) on it, and had her taken to Egypt, where she was adopted by an Egyptian official named Potiphera. Asenath was the Egyptian woman who became the wife of Joseph and bore him two sons Manasseh and Ephraim. It was because of this union that the tribe of Joseph received a double portion in the distribution of land in Israel.
(www.jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/asenath-midrash-and-aggadah)
READ GENESIS 38:1-30

- What are the issues that arise within this story? How do the persons involved try to solve these issues?

- Who are the heroes, the villains, and the victims of this incident? How might it have been handled differently?

- Why is this incident recorded? What are we supposed to learn from it?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ancient Hebrew garments for women

The curious custom of veiling the face: Rebekah veils her face when she goes to meet Isaac for the first time (Genesis 24:65). Jacob does not realize that he is being married to Leah instead of Rachel until the morning after their wedding night - was she veiled (Genesis 29:23-25). Tamar veils her face when she goes to sit at the crossroads (Genesis 38:14).

Deuteronomy 25:5-10 explains the duty of a brother-in-law (a.k.a. levirate marriage) as follows: If a man dies childless, his brother is obligated to marry the dead man’s widow. The firstborn son of this union is reckoned as the offspring of the deceased.

Onan’s motive: he would have to use his own resources to support a child that is legally someone else’s; and the child, as heir to his elder brother would displace Onan in the line of inheritance.