

Hans Sachs

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Very wonderful

beautiful and sincere poems,
religious and worldly,

all kinds of manners, serious tragedies, lovely comedies, strange plays, entertaining talks,
longing mourning, wondrous fables, including other funny antics and farces etc.

there are three hundred and six and seventy;
among them a hundred and seventy pieces, which were never published before, yet are useful
to the world and devoutly published

by the clever and widely known

Hans Sachs,

A lover of German poetry,

Collected and completed between the years 1516 and 1558.

Printed in Nuremberg by Christoff Heussler.

In the year 1558.

**Comedy. Jacob with his brother Esaw,
[It] has six characters and V acts.**

The herald enters, bows down and says:

Health and mercy, from God alone,
 Shall be [bestowed] upon you, the [ones that are] gathered here
 To listen to a story here,
 In German¹, [one that was] written down for us in its entirety
 In Genesis, [one that is] to be followed²,
 [one that] is a lasting instruction³,
 once Rebecca was pregnant,
 [she gave] birth to Esaw and Jacob.
 When both came off age⁴,
 Esaw sold his primogeniture⁵
 To Jacob for a meal of lentils.
 When their father Isaac, old
 [and] of weak sight,
 wanted to give his blessing to Esaw,
 his son, the first-born;
 [he] sends the beloved, chosen, and the predestined
 out to hunt for game;
 while Rebecca desiringly
 decided that Jacob
 should receive the blessing instead,
 even though Isaac would cry;
 if Esaw was blessed.⁶
 When Esaw returned from hunting⁷
 (Listen to this!), he got furious with Jacob
 and swore in anger to kill him.
 However, God protects Jacob,

[89]

[he] blesses him and multiplies his people⁸ and possessions.
 Now be quiet and listen in silence,

¹ Literally: in [a] German voice

² fürgeschrieben: literally: prescribed (but used in the sense of a rule/law that needs to be obeyed)

³ blied derives from bleiben: literally: to stay; here it is used to stress the continuity of the instruction, it will continue to be valid in the future (see Grimm: bleiben)

⁴ manpar: literally: turned into a man

⁵ erst-geburt: literally first-birth

⁶ I assume tears of joy

⁷ I could not locate jeyde but I suspect that the ey sounds like an ä and the d was mixed up with a g (which happened before in Hans Sachs' texts) so the word eventually reads Jägde (hunting)

⁸ in the sense of clan, house, family

How every thing will turn out.

Isaac enters [walking on] a stick, sits down and says with raised hands:

Oh Lord, on your highest throne,
How much good you have done for me
And my relatives until now!
I beg you: Grant me one [thing]!
And [it] is my deepest wish:
I do not have a proper⁹ heir¹⁰,
Because my beloved wife Rebecca's
Body is completely barren,
So I beg you that you may give me
A proper heir while I am [still] alive,
So my line will not die with me
[by] my fatherly heritage [I] became a servant,
because you promised Abraham,
my father, that his semen¹¹ will multiply
like the stars in the firmament,
uncountable like the sand at the beach.
I believe in your word strongly
You will grant [my wish] at this place¹².
Nevertheless, Lord, thy will be done!
I trust your grace!

Rebecca enters with her maid and says:

Issac, my master and dear husband,
God had mercy on me
Regarding our great plea,
He has showered me with his blessings.
I am fertile and pregnant,
But the fruit in my womb
[has] great movement¹³ and rumble;
therefore, I complained to God about it,
[because] I am a weak woman.
But God himself told me:
Do not be scared, Rebecca, you woman!

[90]

Two people¹⁴ are in your womb,
Two people will separate
From your womb here on earth.

⁹ leibs-erben: literally: body-heir, which can be understood as natural/biological heir e.g. son

¹⁰ use of double negative to strengthen message

¹¹ German has only one word for semen and seed; I am not sure which is more common in a biblical context

¹² I suspect the word place is only used to create a rhyme with the previous line

¹³ gestöß: derived from the word stoßen (pushing)

¹⁴ in the sense of nation, clan

One people will lose to the other,
The smaller one will triumph over the bigger one.

Isaac speaks:

[One] can clearly understand from this
that you carry two sons.
Lord, how mild [and] generous is your mercy!
My soul rejoices in you.
You do not desert who trusts in you,
[who] relies on your grace and mercy.
You alone are God, no one else.

Rebecca touches her stomach and says:

My master, I think, a contraction is coming.¹⁵
Ancilla, run for the midwife!
I truly will have to give birth soon.

Isaac says:

Rebecca, God will reward¹⁶ you.
Trust in him!
May God give you luck and health, too!

She and the maid leave, Isaac says:

God, give health and mercy!
Relief her of the children's bond¹⁷!
Everything is in your hand.
You are the only savoir.¹⁸

Ancilla brings two children and says:

Master, our lady [has] finally¹⁹ [and] successfully
Given birth to two beautiful sons.
Therefore, give me the messenger-bread!²⁰

Isaac:

Praised be the eternal God!

[91]

Tell me! Who was born
Last and who was born first here?

¹⁵ we could either be short for Weh (pain) or Wehe (contraction)

¹⁶ gewern probably derives from gewähren; see Grimm gewähren iv

¹⁷ I assume it means to relieve her of the burden of pregnancy and the choice of words was subjected to the rhyme scheme

¹⁸ usually Heyland (Heiland) refers to Christ but apparently Luther also used the word in the Old Testament to refer to God (see Grimm Heiland 2)

¹⁹ spat alternative to spät: literally: late, not the best choice of words but probably chosen for the rhyme; therefore, I interpret it as finally to incorporate some of the original meaning

²⁰ slices of bread given to messengers as a reward for delivering a message (see Grimm Botenbrot)

Ancilla:

This rosy one, named Esaw,
Was born first.

Isaac kisses him and says:

Then he shall be my favorite.
But tell me! How is the other one called?

Ancilla:

The other child is called Jacob.

Isaac says:

Lord, eternal praise to you!
Two sons, to multiply my people²¹,
I will raise [them] to honor God,
[I will] teach them in their youth
about the fear of God, [his] customs and virtues,
so I will have their honor in old age
and they will continue my line.
I will go outside
To see how everything is going about the house.

Isaac leaves, Jacob enters, says to himself:

I, Jacob, stay always inside the house;
Whatever needs to be done inside
I do obediently and willingly;
My parents, who gave me my life,
And give my food in a timely manner,
Agree with that.
That is why I follow their will²².
Compared [to it] my brother Esaw
Is wild, roams valley and mountain
With laborious hunting,²³
That he passionately follows,
[he] does respects neither the fear of God nor discipline.
Nevertheless, father loves him much

[92]

as the first born;
but mother loves me better;
he loves me more than him²⁴
because he gave me to eat this meal.
Now Esaw comes, my brother.

²¹ see footnote 8

²² literally: I see their will

²³ see Grimm Weidwerk

²⁴ unclear whom the he refers to, I would suggest God

Esaw enters with his hunting horn and hunting equipment, saying:
 Oh Jacob, what are you eating?
 I am tired and possessed by hunger.
 I followed the game everywhere,
 Across mountains and valleys.
 Let me try your meal!

Jacob says:

Brother, I will not do that.
 But if you will sell me
 Your primogenitor, I will
 Give you these, my lentils and the bread.

Esaw says:

Yes, otherwise I will have to die.
 The primogenitor will not be helpful then.
 Just give me this red meal!
 Let me take it inside with me,
 To replenish me and to be merry!
 Have my primogenitor!

Both leave.

Act II.

Isaac enters blindly with his eyes covered, he is lead by Rebecca
 And he says:

Rebecca, my dear wife,
 I quickly lose all my body's
 Strength, early [in the morning] and late [at night],
 I am very frail, weak, and exhausted
 Of hearing, seeing, all senses;
 I think I must soon go to
 My relatives in the grave.

[93]

Therefore, I have decided
 To give my first-born son,
 Esaw, the fatherly blessing,
 How it is supposed to be done according to all manners;
 Before I complete my sickly life.
 Therefore, call him to come inside to me,
 So I can tell him about my decision!

Rebecca brings Esau²⁵, he says:

Father, what do you desire,
 Why did you call for me?

²⁵ the spelling of the name varies; in some dialects w and u can sound similar

Isaac says:

Esaw, my son, the first-born,
I am now old and without strength,
Drawn to death.
Therefore, take your quiver and bow,
Your sighthound, go into the wilderness²⁶
And there catch me some game!
Return and prepare me diligently
A good meat skewer; the way I like to eat it;
So my soul will give you the blessing
Before death will take my life!

Esaw bows down and says:

Yes, father, I will go immediately
To hunt game like you wish it,
To prepare a meal from it for you,
So you will give me your blessing.

Isaac says:

My dear son, do that!
I will lie down to rest
Until you return from the hunt
With the game; just as I asked you to.

Esaw leaves and Isaac follows him on a stick soon after. Rebecca
Enters with Jacob and says:

Listen, Jacob, my dear son,

[94]

Isaac, your old father,
He talked to his son
That he shall hunt
Game and prepare a meal
For him to eat and after this
He will give his fatherly blessings to him.
My son, listen to my voice!
Go outside to the herd! Bring from the side
Two good young billy goats to me inside,
So I can prepare diligently from it
A meat skewer for your old father
The way he likes it,
This you will take inside to your father
So he will eat it and bless you
Before he dies

²⁶ feld for the translation as wilderness see Grimm Feld and their discussion of the different meanings of the word; I based my translation on its connotation as the opposite to home, and civilization

Thinking you were his son Esaw!

Jacob says:

Oh dear mother, look!
My brother is rough and I am smooth.
Even though the father has no sight anymore
He will recognize me by my voice;
And he will doubt me
Should he reach for me, consider that!
Then, he would despise me
For betraying him.
In that way his blessing
Will turn into a curse from him.

Rebecca says:

Go, my son, and try it!
The same curse shall fall on me, too!
Go and obey my voice!
Bring me the young billy goats soon
Before your brother returns from his hunting!
Go soon, my son, and be quick!

Jacob:

Dear mother, because of your plea

[95]

I will do as you wish.
Just look, that we will not get into danger!
I am in great fear.

Rebecca:

Do not worry and go!
I will look to it, I will hide it.
I will bind both billy goats' fur
Around both your hands.
Should the father turn to you,
Wanting to reach for you, you will be rough!
I will also dress you
in your brother's, Esaw's, clothes
that smell²⁷ of [animals] in heat²⁸;
your father recognizes them by their smell.
It will not go wrong,²⁹
Because he has gone blind completely.³⁰
He will not take you for anyone
But Esaw, the first-born.
Therefore, do not fear any anger,

²⁷ see Grimm Schmecken A

²⁸ see Grimm Bisen

²⁹ literally: therefore, it has no defect (see Grimm Gebruch 2)

³⁰ literally: because his face/sight is completely dark

Should the father get to know it!
 You already bought the primogenitor
 From Esaw for a meal of lentils!
 Therefore, just go in! Do not be afraid!
 Nothing bad will happen to you because of it.

They both leave.

Act III.

Ancilla leads Isaac in, he sits down and says:
 Now I am waiting for Esaw, my son,
 So I can eat and to bless him.

Jacob brings in the covered bowl and says:
 My father, may God give you health and rest!

Isaac says:

I am here, my son! Who are you?

[96]

Jacob says:

I am Esaw, the first-born,
 [the one that] has always been loved by you.
 I did as you asked.
 Stand up and eat from my game
 So your soul will give me the blessing
 So I can live happily from now on!

Isaac says:

My son, how did you find so quickly
 The game, at this hour?

Jacob:

The Lord, your master, gave it to me.
 He shall be praised eternally!

Isaac says:

My son come here so that
 I can reach you with my hands,
 [to see] if you are Esaw, my son!

Jacob steps closer to him and says:

Father, that I will do gladly.

Isaac grabs Jacobs hands and says:

The voice is Jacob's,
 The hands are Esaw's.
 Tell me, Esaw! Are you here?

Jacob:

Yes, dear father, I am here.

Isaac says:

So bring me my food here,
So I can eat from your game,
So that my soul will give you the blessing,
So that you shall live happily always!

Isaac eats and says:

[97]

come here, my son, and kiss me!

Jacob says:

With pleasure, father, willingly.

He kisses him, Isaac says:

I [can tell by] the smell³¹ of your clothes,
You are Esau and no one else.

Jacob kneels down, Isaac puts his hand on his [Jacob's] head
And says:

Perceive! The smell of my son
Is like the smell of the wilderness;
God gave him his blessing!
May God always give you some of the dew and rain
Of the sky
And of the soil's moisture,
So you shall have both,
Food³² and wine, in abundance!
The people³³ must serve you!
Your soul [will] rule over them
And the people³⁴ must humbly lie at your feet
To do penance!
Be master over your brother!
Your mother's children from near and far
Must lie at your feet!
Be a master over all your friends!
Cursed be who curses you!
But eternally blessed be
Who gives his blessing to you, my son!
This shall be from now on and forever!

³¹ see footnote 25

³² Koren: literally to taste (see Grimm Koren 1a) but used like die Kost (diet, food, nutrition); therefore, I translate it as food

³³ in the sense of nations

³⁴ now in the sense of persons

Jacob stands up, bows, leaves. Isaac says:
 Now, Lord, let your servant rest in peace
 With a joyful farewell
 Because I completed the blessing
 Like a testament!
 Esaw, my first-born son;³⁵
 I will pass away and go down,

[98]

into my grave as a very old [man],
 [I will] be with my relatives now.

Esaw enters with a covered bowl too and says:
 Stand up and eat from your son's
 Game, oh my father,
 So your soul will bless me!

Isaac says:
 My dear son, who are you?

Esaw says:
 I am Esaw, the first-born
 Son, chosen by you, father.

Isaac says:
 Esaw, tell [me]! Who is the hunter
 Who brought me here to my bed?
 And I ate from all his food
 With pleasure and even desire;
 Before you came, and [I] gave him the blessing.
 [He] will stay blesses anyway.

Esaw says:
 Alas, what unbearable pain!
 Bless me too, dear father!

Isaac says:
 Jacob, your brother, came
 And took your blessing with a trick;
 Betraying [you] shamefully.³⁶

Esaw says:
 He is properly called Jacob;
 The other time he betrayed³⁷ me

³⁵ this line is simply there for the rhyme

³⁶ the grammar of this is quite messy, it literally says: betraying there in/to all shame

³⁷ untretreten: see Grimm Untertreten 2g, it seems as if Esaw's lines were based on Luther's translation of 1 Moses 27:36

[it became] my misfortune.
 He has my primogenitor;
 Now I also lost
 My fatherly blessing to him;

[99]

I had put all my hope on it.
 Alas, my father, did you lose?
 Do you not have retained any blessing for me?
 Shall I stay unblessed,
 Live my life in misfortune?

Isaac says:

Alas, I made your brother
 Master over you,
 And all his brothers I made
 Into his servants: Listen on!
 I gave him wine and corn,
 As if he was the first-born.
 Therefore, I cannot give you, dear son,
 Anything more now.

Esaw says:

Do you only have this one blessing?
 Bless me too, my dear father!

Esaw cries loudly, the old [man] puts his hand on him and says:

Perceive, my dear son, Esaw,
 From above the sky's dew!
 [You] shall also have, here on earth,
 a good solid³⁸ home.
 You will live off your sword alone.
 But you will serve your brother.
 Eventually, you will become master
 And [you] will rip the yoke off
 Of your neck and emancipate [yourself] from him.
 This shall be your blessing here on earth!
 My dear son, now lead me
 Outside again to my rest
 And close the door well after you!

Esaw leads him outside.

Actus IV.

Esaw enters alone and says:

³⁸ feiste means fett (fat) with this spelling but I suspect the i comes from dialect pronunciation and not word root. Therefore, I interpret it as feste (solid)

[100]

Well, my brother, he has betrayed
 My father and thus taken
 My first-born blessing;
 I accepted all of it.³⁹
 In a [few] short days
 My father will suffer deep sorrow⁴⁰ because of it.
 I will avenge myself on my brother,
 Shooting him, or stabbing him,
 The moment he comes near me;
 As soon as I will see him.
 I will go out⁴¹ now
 And when I arrive
 He will have to die⁴²,
 Even if it will cost me my life.

Esaw walks out defiantly⁴³, shouldering the weapon, then comes Rebecca
 and her maid, she speaks:

Alas, dear Madame, I heard
 Horribly threatening news⁴⁴ about Esaw;
 How he wants to strangle Jacob,
 [and] no one shall refuse it to him;
 [he] does it only out of revenge,
 because he [Jacob] received the fatherly
 blessing only through betrayal.

Rebecca:

Ancilla, listen! If that is true,
 [then] go and call in Jacob,
 my dearest son!

Ancilla brings Jacob and Jacob says:

Dearest mother, here, I am.
 Why did you call for me?

Rebecca says:

Jacob, my dearest son,
 I have to tell⁴⁵ you now,
 Listen, [that] your brother threatens you much;
 Like that he wants to strangle you

³⁹ in the sense of accepting once negative fate; vertröst see Grimm vertragen 2b

⁴⁰ literally: pain of the heart; it has the connotation of a physical sickness that can lead to death (see Grimm Herzleid)

⁴¹ außgon probably a different spelling of ausgehen

⁴² literally to give up his ghost; still common figure of speech for dying

⁴³ drutzig probably a different spelling of trotzig

⁴⁴ Tröwort (see Grimm Dräuwort); literally: threat word

⁴⁵ in the sense of disclose

[101]

because you took his blessing.
 My son, obey my voice!
 Go and journey⁴⁶ to Haron,
 And take refuge with my brother Labon
 And stay with him there
 Until your brother's anger will have blown over,
 And forget,⁴⁷ what you did to him!
 I shall have you brought back again
 from Labon in due time.
 Otherwise I will bitterly lose
 The two of you in one day.

Jacob says:

Mother, I will do as you said.
 But it seems best to me,
 To inform father as well.

Rebecca says:

Just keep silent, my dear son!
 I will do everything right.

Ancilla leads Isaac in and Rebecca says:

My master, my life is unhappy;⁴⁸
 Shall we give Jacob a bride
 From the daughters of Canaan here
 That do not have our belief?

Isaac says:

I praise your consideration.
 Come here, my dear son Jacob!

Jacob says:

Here, I am, father! What do you want?

Isaac says:

My dear son, listen to me!
 Do not take a daughter from this land
 Canaan, but go⁴⁹
 To the land of Mesopotamia

⁴⁶ zeuch see Grimm Zeuche

⁴⁷ it is not clear whether Esau will forget the betrayal or Jacob should forget it, I prefer to connect it to Jacob because of the following subsentence

⁴⁸ I cannot locate a proper meaning for vertreust, I suspect it is derived from either vertrauen or vertrösten (to trust, to find comfort) though that would make a very positive sentence, which then clashes with the following lines, so I feel vertreust should have a less positive connotation

⁴⁹ see footnote 45

[102]

to your forefather's house there!
 Therefore, take a wife from
 Among the daughters of old Labon,
 Who is your mother's brother!
 [fulfill] the almighty God's
 blessing soon and be fertile,
 turn yourself into many people;⁵⁰
 [I] gave to you Abraham's blessing,
 and to those coming after you, your clan and tribe,
 so you will own the land,
 that you won from a stranger,
 that God gave Abraham!

Jacob shakes his father's hand and says:

God bless you, my dear father!
 May God keep you alive
 Until I return to this land!

Isaac says:

Go⁵¹! God's hand is with you.

Jacob:

May God, the Lord, be with me;
 Protect me on my way,
 Give me clothes and bread⁵²
 And lead me back home
 to my father and mother,
 he shall always and eternally
 be my God above anything else.
 I will also build him a pure house of worship
 To honor his name
 And [I will] give him the tenth
 Of all my wealth and goods,
 Which were given to me by God's grace⁵³.

Jacob shakes hands with [his] mother and says:

Dearest mother, may God bless you!
 [May] he protect us from all harm⁵⁴!
 Meanwhile take care

[103]

⁵⁰ in the sense of nations

⁵¹ see footnote 45

⁵² the phrasing in German reminds me very much of the prayer Our Father/ Lord's Prayer

⁵³ I have the impression that this section evokes and confirms the basic principles of the institutionalized belief of Christianity

⁵⁴ again a line from Our Prayer/Lord's Prayer

Of my old, weak father!
So I will find him alive [upon my return]!

Rebecca:

We will escort you
Because we still [need] to give you more instructions.⁵⁵
When you succeed in our teachings
Then God will honor you with [his] help!

They all leave.

Act V.

Esaw enters alone and says:

My brother is full of hope
That he escaped out of the reach of my hand now;
It [the hand] would surely have killed him.
My parents treat me like a joke,
Despise me, the first-born.
That is why from now on I will only
Think about how I can cause them deep sorrow.⁵⁶
I realized that both of them
Shun away from all daughters of Canaan
And are horrified [by them]
Because of that I just took two of them [as wives]
[and] now, [to act against] them impiously,
I will go and take the third [wife].
I do not ask if they dislike it;
Because I was cheated out of my blessing
I will from now on live wild
And I will feed myself on the spur of the moment,
[I] will not follow any discipline nor punishment.

He leaves, Rebecca leads in Isaac, he says:

Oh, how is our son Jacob?
He has been out of the country
for 14 years now.
During this time no one has told us
About his well-being,
Whether he is doing well or badly.

[104]

That makes my heart [full of] fear.

Rebecca:

My master, be merry! Not long ago,

⁵⁵ in the sense of binding instructions/orders

⁵⁶ see footnote 39

A man came to Canaan.
 He told me that my brother, Laban,⁵⁷
 Gave Jacob his two daughters,
 Rachel and Lea, in addition
 He [Jacob] was rich in cattle and goods,
 [and] would soon travel south again
 to the land Canaan
 of his old father-in-law,⁵⁸ Laban.
 He is already preparing for the road.

Isaac puts his hands together and says:

Oh God, these are happy news.
 If only such honor will happen
 That I will see my son again while [I am still] alive;
 Because Esau is undutiful
 In both, words and deeds,
 And [he] is completely not like us.

Rebecca:

Jacob has always been more moral
 That is why God was always with him.
 Come with me to the road!
 We shall journey to Hebron;
 That is where our son, Jacob,
 Will arrive in 14 days.
 That is what this man says.

Both leave. Jacob enters alone, says:

Now I came to my fatherland,
 Fearing greatly my brother's hand.
 Although I sent
 Messengers to him,
 To the mountains Seir, to ask for mercy,
 [I hope] he had granted it to me;
 but I fear, he is coming after me,

[105]

putting me down in the streets;
 I do not trust him much.
 Lord, you blessed me fully.
 With this stick I enter
 Over the Jordan and now
 I turned into two crowds.⁵⁹
 Because of this, oh Lord, save me
 From my brother's hand

⁵⁷ spelling differs from previous Laban

⁵⁸ Schweher see Grimm Schwäher

⁵⁹ Heer can mean army or crowd in German; the latter is frequently used in biblical narratives to describe large groups of people

That he wont strike on this end
 Both, mothers and children!
 I hope, oh God, your benevolence towards
 Me does not diminish;
 Like before, when I trusted in you,
 When I believed firmly in your words,
 And you multiplied me [to be as many] as dust
 And [as many] as sand on the shore of the sea,
 Which no one can count.
 I [need to] remember one thing:
 I have appointed presents for my brother,
 Sheep, camels, donkeys, and cows;
 They need to be driven before the children.
 [Should] my brother ask whose herd this is,
 the servants shall say nicely:
 “It belongs to the servant Jacob,
 who wants to give it to Esaw,
 his dear master, as honor and praise.
 Jacob follows alone in the back
 With his two wives and children”;
 May I find mercy in the eyes of
 My brother; that is what I thought
 And did.

Esaw enters, hugs him around his neck [lovingly] and says:
 My brother, you are welcome!
 Do you want to return to your possessions?
 My brother, tell me! Who are those
 That came through before you?

Jacob bows and says:

[106]

These were my servants, maids, wives and children,
 But in the front, the sheep and cows,
 Camels and others,
 This, my master, shall be yours,
 So I may find mercy in your eyes.

Esaw says:
 [You found] mercy, my brother, without doubt.⁶⁰
 I have enough; keep what is yours!

Jacob says:
 Alas, no! I beg [you], Oh my master!
 Accept God's blessing from me!
 When I see your face
 It is like God's.

⁶⁰ laugen see Grimm Laugen (lying)

Do not dismiss my presents.

Esaw offers him his hand and says:

Well, I will take your presents.
I am not angry with you anymore,
For what you did to me.
Do not doubt that!
Now I will accompany you
With my 400 men
To the enormous Seir.

Jacob says:

No, my brother, turn around!
I have enough people with me.
I also have fragile, young children,
[and] additionally many young cattle.
And should I overdo it
I shall perish in the streets
And otherwise die just easily.
Therefore, go and let me stay!
I will journey leisurely.
I thank you for your brotherly loyalty.

Esaw says:

[107]

your future makes me happy.
I will go ahead; you [will] follow
And receive my hospitality!

Esaw goes out. Jacob says:

I thank you God,
Out of kindness,
[and] through your mild, fatherly nature,
[You] have turned my brother's heart docile;
[he], who swore to kill me
in his fierce anger.
All things are in your hand.
Now I am in my fatherland,
[I] will now go to Hebron,
where my father and mother live.

Jacob leaves, Rebecca and Isaac enter. Rebecca
says:

Master, be merry and well comforted!
You will soon be freed of sorrow.
I heard from a messenger
That our son Jacob is going to come today

With wife and child, an entire crowd.⁶¹

Isaac says:

Dear God, praise, glory and honor be upon you
Now and for eternity;
You, who has given us blessings in abundance
Here at this time.⁶²
I will have to thank you forever.

Jacob enters, the mother runs towards him,
embraces him and says:

Welcome, a thousand times!
Praise God in his hall;⁶³
He helped you to return to this land!

Jacob:

God's hand was with me;
I cannot thank him enough.

[108]

Isaac says:

Whose voice do I hear?
Is it you, my dear son Jacob?

Jacob embraces the father and says:

Yes, it is me. Eternal praise to God!
May God greet you⁶⁴, my dearest father!
God, the highest benefactor,
Out of his fatherly nature,
[he] has protected me on my journey,
[he] has given me two wives and 13 children,
plenty of camels, sheep, goats and cows
and much more.
He alone shall receive praise, glory and honor!
I also reconciled with my brother.
He will arrive here shortly,
To ask for your grace and mercy.

Isaac lifts his hand and says:

My son, now I would like to die,
Because you are still alive,
And I have lived now for
One hundred and eighty years.
Tell [me], where your blessings from God are,

⁶¹ see footnote 58

⁶² I suspect it is a line without meaning, just there for the rhyme

⁶³ sal see Grimm Saal 3

⁶⁴ literally: God greets you. In Southern Germany and Austria it is still common to greet someone with the words Grüßgott, meaning may God greet you

Your cattle, and your wife and child, too!

Jacob says:

For now, they are outside the city,
Coming here, like two crowds.⁶⁵

Isaac says:

Oh Lord, God, praise and honor to [you]!
Rebecca, come! We shall leave
The city and go to [meet them],
welcoming⁶⁶ Lea, my daughter-in-law,⁶⁷
the twelve sons and the daughters as well.
May God be with us all!

They all leave. The herald finishes it:

[109]

Now you have heard the story,
Which serves very much to God's glory;
It is a beautiful figure
[for] the two people that live on earth.
First, Esaw stands for
All rough and raw people
That live⁶⁸ in sin and lust;
Flesh and blood win;
[not] fearing God, [being] bad and wicked,
despise all punishment and discipline;
however, they hunt after those works that bring
salvation⁶⁹ on earth, [but] without pressure,⁷⁰ without use;
they want to find salvation only through work,⁷¹
those [works] they know of from the scripture
or that people made up,
they do not care much for God's blessing,
building their hope on their work alone,
thinking God owes them

⁶⁵ see footnote 58

⁶⁶ Entfahen is a different spelling of Entpfahen (to receive/welcome)

⁶⁷ schneure is a rare dialect word for daughter-in-law (see Grimm Söhnerin)

⁶⁸ literally: to lie, I suspect the word was chosen to keep the rhyme with the following line

⁶⁹ werk-heiling see Grimm Werkheilige: a term coined by Luther to describe those that strive to find salvation through good work and deeds. Here, Hans Sachs uses it referring to the work that brings salvation not in the sense of the people ... though it clashes with the meaning of the section, see footnote 70

⁷⁰ see Grimm Noth

⁷¹ in the sense of actions lacking spirituality; being solely focused on the material, earthly things, at least that's how I interpret it, though the notion is a bit irritating since Protestantism (the one based on Luther at least) stresses how one can find salvation through hard work on earth, but then it is a grammatically very problematic section, maybe I don't pick up on some things

and despise their brother Jacob,
 always trying to strangle him,
 torturing and harassing him out of jealousy,
 pursuing [him], chasing [him] out of the country.
 On the other side, Jacob stands for
 All the pious Christian people on earth
 That only look to God,
 [that] keep his laws diligently,
 [that] devout themselves to their neighbor in love,⁷²
 [that] live properly virtuous and peacefully,
 [that] just⁷³ obey subserviently,
 [that] see themselves as useless servants
 [knowing] that all their work and fortune
 is worthless in front of God's judgment,
 they only rely
 on the blessing of the one [and only]⁷⁴ God.
 Their comfort is Jesus Christ,
 [he] who redeemed them on the cross
 with his innocent blood;
 their hope rests on him alone.
 These are the rightfully chosen children;

[110]

[that] God treats fatherly
 and protects them through his mild nature
 from the blood-thirsty Esau;
 but [he] burdens them with the cross⁷⁵
 of muting the flesh and blood
 so [they] will not be stained with sin
 but [their] spirit will float above;
 God will give the eternal fatherland,
 Where eternal happiness will await,
 After the temporary life.
 Hans Sachs wishes that to all of us.

In the year of salvation 1550, on the 31 day of January.

The persons in this comedy are:

1. The Herald.
2. Isaac.
3. Rebecca.
4. Ancilla.

⁷² reminds me very much of the New Testament and some core principles derived from it, like Mathew: love your neighbor like yourself, or the part where Jesus says turn the other cheek

⁷³ see Grimm Schlecht 8d

⁷⁴ eynigen see Grimm Einzigen; Hans Sachs uses einigen instead of the more common einzigen, but follows in that manner Luther's bible translation

⁷⁵ I do not know if that also works in English, in German a burden can be described in the idiom .

5. Esaw,
6. Jacob, two brothers.