

Encounters in the Dark: Identity Formation in the Jacob Story traces the many moments of darkness in the life of Jacob from the darkness of his mother's womb to the triumphant scene of wrestling God by the Jabbok River. Through an exploration of key moments in Jacob's story, Noel Forlini Burt follows Jacob's journey from home to exile and back home again. His story symbolizes the larger story of Israel's own wrestling with God in the darkness of exile and return. Forlini Burt illustrates how the poetics and rhetoric of the narrative around name, face, wound, darkness, and crossing constitute a fruitful way of understanding embodied and contested individual and collective identity in the exilic/postexilic period. The driving theme of the Jacob story is one of identity: the identities of the characters, of the community that produced the text, and of contemporary readers who engage the text.

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