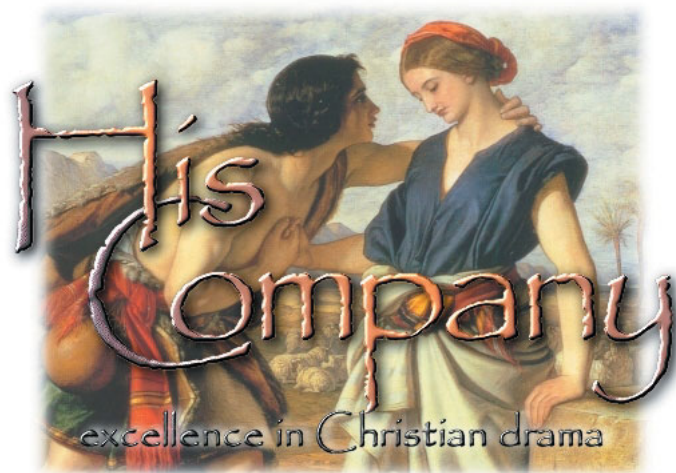


# **DIMENSIONS**

## **A MONOLOGUE FOR MOSES**

by  
David S. Lampel



*Moses enters onto a dark stage. As lights up, Moses is staring out at the audience, wide-eyed. He has just returned from the burning bush that held the presence of the Lord, and is in a state of shock. In his mind, Moses is still processing what has taken place. After a mildly uncomfortable pause...*

5

**Moses**

*(stunned)*

I used to be great.

*(pause; gradually loosening)*

10 I used to be great. There was a time, back in Egypt, when I held the future of that nation in my hands. My army had defeated Ethiopia, you see. I had come back the victor, and my future was assured. Or so I thought.

I used to be great—and I served greatness. My grandfather was a man who stood higher than all the rest. He was Pharaoh—He was king! And he had  
15 taken me into his household to school me in the ways of the throne. Then he had given me the privilege of serving him in war—the chance to defeat the invading armies from the south. And I did—came back the victor.

Ah, I used to be great. From low beginnings I rose to power through the love of my adopted mother and the kindness of the Pharaoh. But “kindness” can  
20 be a fragile connection to a king; neither he, nor I, could forget that the blood coursing through my veins was, in fact, Hebrew, not Egyptian. Though for the sake of my mother the king expressed generosity toward me, it was never anything I could depend on.

Even after my victory in Ethiopia, I could still feel the resentment of the  
25 Egyptians. The common people, the peasants. They knew I was a pretender; they knew I wasn’t one of them. Yet I had no better from those of my own stock—those living in miserable conditions who might have seen me as their savior. They, too, resented me for what I had become.

So, at the height of my fame, I found myself a man without a country.

30

*(pause; darker)*

Then I killed a man. One day I could take no more of the brutal treatment my people were receiving, and I killed the Egyptian wielding the whip. But I  
35 stood alone, as usual. The Egyptians hated me for turning against them—the Hebrews hated me for taking the law into my own hands!

*(painfully)*

Even grandfather turned against me, tried to eliminate me quietly, to rid himself of someone who had become a political liability.

40 *(long pause; nostalgically)*

I used to be great.

*(with a sigh)*

But then I became small. I became something lower than the people I had tried to defend—something lower even than the delta mud from which they  
45 made new bricks. The desert became my sanctuary—and the desert became the place where old ambitions were cooked out of me: pride, glory, wealth, fame. By the end of it I was as simple and base as a loaf of peasant bread fresh from the hearth. I was left stripped of ambition.

*(pause)*

50 Shepherds have no need of ambition or pride. They tend their charges with a comfortable contempt for anything not pastoral.

*(with mild sarcasm)*

They cultivate simplemindedness as a cherished gift—the highest plane on which man can dwell. We shepherds pay no mind to politics or power or  
55 wealth, holding equal disdain for all.

So there I was, comfortably small, with the aroma of sheep my cloak. Mine was a small life that I believed could get no smaller. But then it did.

Then the bush burned. Oh, it didn't really burn. When something burns, it's destroyed. This bush... glowed with fire, as if burning, but wasn't consumed.

60 The sheep saw it and ran—I saw it and went to see how a dried scrub bush wasn't destroyed by the flames it wore.

As I drew closer, I felt none of the expected heat—as one would expect to be warmed when approaching a fire in camp. Yet there was a repellant

brilliance that slowed my step. Even after all the fanciful entertainments of  
65 Egyptian court life, I had never seen anything like this before. Just as I moved  
to inspect the curiosity more closely, I heard the voice.

*(with hushed intensity)*

It was the Lord. The God who had set my people in Egypt—the God who had  
promised to return and set them free—was calling to me from out of the fire.  
70 I had never known Him very well. The blood of His people coursed through  
my veins, but He was still a stranger. Even now, I don't know why He chose  
me.

Then He stopped me, and with His words I became smaller yet. For God  
declared that the ground—the dirt and sand and common rock—around that  
75 bush was holy—holy because He was there! I suddenly realized that  
whatever stature I had remaining was nothing next to His. This voice  
belonged to the God of all eternity, and next to Him I was nothing.

*(long pause)*

Someday people will ask why I obeyed. Someday people will wonder why I  
80 didn't just turn away and return to my flocks. I may have a different answer  
by then—after I've completed the task He's assigned me. But right now—with  
the smell of His presence still in my nostrils—right now I would answer that I  
obey because I must. There is no other choice.

*(with intensity)*

85 He is holy, you see. And I am not. There's room for only one God, and the  
position has already been filled. And if He selects me to serve Him—in spite  
of who I am—then... I have no choice but to obey.

*Lights down.*

*Moses exits.*

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