

# **Zipporah's Rebellion**

Written by Brooks Berndt

## **Cast of Characters**

Sister #1  
Sister #2  
Sister #3  
Zipporah  
Sister #5  
Sister #6  
Sister #7  
Moses  
Reuel  
Nomads  
Narrator

Narrator: The Hebrew Scripture Reading for this morning comes from Exodus 2: 11-16.

One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and saw their forced labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsfolk. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When he went out the next day, he saw two Hebrews fighting; and he said to the one who was in the wrong, "Why do you strike your fellow Hebrew?" He answered, "Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and thought, "Surely the thing is known." When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh. He settled in the land of Midian, and sat down by a well. The priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

### **Act I: Moses Watches Zipporah and Her Sisters at the Well**

*The play opens with Moses sitting and watching the seven sisters at the well from a slight distance. He has a bemused look on his face. The sisters do not seem aware of Moses' presence. They are bickering and tussling over who will get to use the well first. Each sister is trying to wrest control of the well's bucket.*

*Sister #1 defiantly emerges with it. Her eyes have a fierce and buggy look. She has a muscular hold on the bucket. Her voice at first roars and then becomes more controlled.*

Sister #1: "Listen here, dad put me in charge. I'll decide the order for drawing water from the well. Eh-hmmmm..." *(After clearing her throat, she shifts to a more casual, but confident tone of voice and manner).* "The most sensible thing is to go from oldest to youngest..."

Sister #7: “Oh, that’s a surprise. I suppose it is just a coincidence that you’re the oldest sister.”

Sister #1: “Always sour grapes when life doesn’t go your way. That’s precisely the kind of immature attitude I would expect from the youngest.”

*Sister #6 pretends to bow reverently before Sister #1 as she says, “O forgive us O wise and mature one. We beseech thee. Please show us the way.”*

*Sister #5 sarcastically says, “Yeah, show us what it takes to be daddy’s favorite.”*

*Sister #2 with a superior air says, “I can’t stand listening to any of you. All you do is bicker and fuss.”*

*Sister #3 with a mimicking sympathy: “Yes, and you just rise above us all, don’t you? Let’s all feel sorry for her. She has to be stuck with us brats.”*

Zipporah: “Let’s face it: The real problem isn’t us. It’s the patriarchal system. It’s those polygamist pigs.”

*Sister #5 sarcastically says, “What a penetrating, sophisticated analysis! All men are evil! Now I understand everything!”*

*Moses gestures to the audience as if to indicate that he is not evil.*

Zipporah: “Who said all men are evil. I just happen to be against polygamist pigs. They treat us girls like cattle to be bought and sold. The more cattle they own the better.”

Sister #1: “Oh get over your teenage rebellion, Zipporah. We all know this isn’t about patriarchy and polygamist pigs. This is about you blaming everything on dad.”

*Moses nods in agreement.*

Zipporah: “Just because your daddy’s favorite, don’t forget he’s still a polygamist pig like the rest of them.”

*With tired exasperation, Sister #6 says, “Polygamy is just the way it is. It’s never going to change.”*

Zipporah: “Well, isn’t it our wonderful dad, the wise priest, who always teaches us to have faith.”

*Moses looks perplexed by the arguments.*

*Sister # 2 with a superior air says, “And just what are we going to do? Pray that one day all our polygamist pigs will become pious princes?” As Sister #2 speaks, Moses nods his head as if to say, “Yeah, what are you going to do?”*

*Sister #3 mimics the superior air of Sister #2: “And just what are we going to do? Since I clearly understand everything.”*

Zipporah: “I’m going to start an organization: The Young Girl’s Alliance.”

*Moses looks perplexed again.*

Sister #7: “And, then what are you going to do when dad gives you away?”

*Moses nods his head again.*

*Sister #5 sarcastically says, “You’ll be just another teenage rebel turned submissive wife. With just the right luck, you’ll be wife number fifty.”*

*The sisters start to laugh as Sister #1 asserts, “You’ll marry the biggest polygamist of them all!”*

*Moses looks saddened.*

*With rising panic, Sister #6 says, “Speaking of pigs. Here come some now...”*

Sister #7: “Oh, no it’s the nomads! We’ll never get our water now.”

*Moses stands up defiantly determined to valiantly aid the sisters against this unjust indignity. He grabs his rod to prepare a counter-attack.*

Narrator: Exodus 2:17

But some [nomads] came and drove [the sisters] away. Moses got up and came to their defense and watered their flock.

## **Act II: Reuel’s Prayer**

*Reuel prays to the heavens. As he does so, his voice raises in pitch and exasperation.*

Reuel: O sweet and merciful God, why must I suffer? Why must I endure so much? For all these many years, I have been thy faithful servant. I have diligently followed your laws. I have been obedient to your will. I have done everything in my power to serve you as a priest for the Midianite people. From the time I was a young man, I have withstood trial after trial in my efforts to please you. I have spent long hours at the temple. I have cared for the widows and the orphans. I have dealt with the bickering and dissent among your people. I have weathered famines and floods. I have survived

plagues and dysentery. I have been through recessions and depressions. I have lived through administrations from both parties! But nothing, nothing, has been as trying and as strenuous and as difficult as this! Why God? Why? Why did you give me seven daughters?

*Reuel gets down on his knees with his hands together in prayer as he pleads to God in the heavens above. His voice changes to a groveling tone.*

O sweet and merciful God, I thought it has hard enough having twelve wives, but seven daughters has tested my limits. How much teenage rebellion can one father take? O sweet and merciful God, what am I to do? What am I to do with Zipporah? She has caused me to lose all my hair. Please God! Please send me a sign!

Sister #1: Father! We have returned!

Narrator: Exodus 2: 18-19

When they returned to their father Reuel, he said, "How is it that you have come back so soon today?" They said, "An Egyptian helped us against the shepherds; he even drew water for us and watered the flock."

### **Act III: Reuel's Prayer is Answered**

Sister #1: "And, father, while we were grateful to have the Egyptian save us, it seems we now have a new problem."

Reuel: "Yes, and what's that?"

Sister #1: "One of your daughters has become quite fond of the foreigner. I think there is the danger that she will run off with him."

Reuel looks upward and says, "O God, why me?"

Then, to his daughter, Reuel says, "What foolishness! This cannot happen! Each of them knows that they are destined to marry a Midianite from the Kenite clan."

Sister #1: "I know father. I understood immediately how you would feel, but your other daughters are not as mature as I."

Reuel: "You mean you're the only one who understands how disastrous this would be?"

Sister #1: "Yes, some of your daughters are excited about the preposterous idea that one might find true love, while I think some of the others would just as soon have a house with one less daughter."

Reuel: “Selfish little girls. All they can think about is their own happiness and wellbeing.” *A slight meditative pause before Reuel asks in an exasperated, yet casual way, “And just which one of my daughters wants to marry this dreadful Egyptian?”*

Sister #1: “Zipporah!”

Reuel: “Zipporah? But she hates men?”

Sister #1: “I know. Strange isn’t it? I am sure it’s just childish rebellion on her part to fancy running off with some Egyptian. If you listened to her, however, you would think it was all because of the man’s courage, his sense of justice, and all that mush. She even says that their marriage was meant to be. That this Moses fellow was sent from God!”

Reuel: “Sent from God! Ridiculous! Since when has a foreigner been some kind of sign from God?” *As Reuel says this, his voice slows down and he pauses as if a fantastic idea has just been revealed to him. Muttering to himself with wonderment he says, “A sign from God!?”*

*Sister #1 shakes her head in agreement as if to share in what she perceives as her father’s exasperation. As she shakes her head, she declares, “They’re immature and short-sighted, father.”*

*Reuel mutters to himself again, “A sign from God!?”*

Sister #1: “I knew I saw things your way father. I will go put an end to this nonsense right now.”

*Sister #1 begins to march off, but as she does so, Reuel speaks and stops her in her tracks.*

Reuel: “No! Stop! If you weren’t always trying to kiss up to me, you would see what a disastrous mistake that would be.”

*Sister #1 looks shocked.*

Sister #1: “A mistake?”

Reuel: “Don’t you see! Each one of us is called by God to a specific purpose in life. That purpose isn’t just written on a scroll and handed to us. That purpose is revealed to us amid all of the chaos and confusion of life. It’s revealed to us at times amid turmoil and turbulence. It’s revealed to us in the passions of our deepest convictions—convictions that we hold despite opposition. Zipporah has known her convictions all along, but it was not until she found her soul-mate—this foreigner named Moses—that I too have realized her calling. This man truly is a sign from God.”

Narrator: Exodus 2: 20-21

[Reuel] said to his daughters, "Where is he? Why did you leave the man? Invite him to break bread." Moses agreed to stay with the man, and [Reuel] gave Moses his daughter Zipporah in marriage.

*Zipporah and Moses rush on stage holding hands as a happy newly married couple.*

Narrator: And, with great gladness and celebration at their wedding, all of the people said, "Amen."