

FOREWORD BY DEBORAH E. MCDOWELL


"The real thing, warm, humorous, poetic."—*The New Yorker*

In this 1939 novel based on the familiar story of the Exodus, Zora Neale Hurston blends the Moses of the Old Testament with the Moses of black folklore and song to create a compelling allegory of power, redemption, and faith. Narrated in a mixture of biblical rhetoric, black dialect, and colloquial English, Hurston traces Moses' life from the day he is launched into the Nile river in a reed basket, to his development as a great magician, to his transformation into the heroic rebel leader, the Great Emancipator. From his dramatic confrontations with Pharaoh to his fragile negotiations with the wary Hebrews, this very human story is told with great humor, passion, and psychological insight—the hallmarks of Hurston as a writer and champion of black culture.



Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960) was a novelist, folklorist, and anthropologist whose fictional and factual accounts of black heritage are unparalleled. She is the author of many books, including *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, *Tell My Horse*, and *Mules and Men*.

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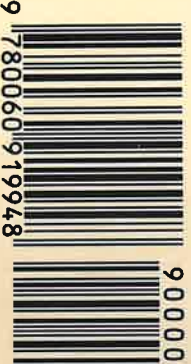
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ZORA NEALE HURSTON

MOSES, MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

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AUTHOR OF *THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD*



MOSES, MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

"A narrative of great power. Warm with friendly personality and pulsating with...profound eloquence and religious fervor."
—*New York Times*

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION



Moses was an old man with a beard. He was the great law-giver. He had some trouble with Pharaoh about some plagues and led the Children of Israel out of Egypt and on to the Promised Land. He died on Mount Nebo and the angels buried him there. That is the common concept of Moses in the Christian world.

But there are other concepts of Moses abroad in the world. Asia and all the Near East are sown with legends of this character. They are so numerous and so varied that some students have come to doubt if the Moses of the Christian concept is real. Then Africa has her mouth on Moses. All across the continent there are the legends of the greatness of Moses, but not because of his beard nor because he brought the laws down from Sinai. No, he is revered because he had the power to go up the mountain and to bring them down. Many men could climb mountains. Anyone could bring down laws that had been handed to them. But who can talk with God face to face? Who had the power to command God to go to a peak of a mountain and there demand of Him laws with which to govern a nation? What other man has ever seen with his eyes even the back part of God's glory? Who else has ever commanded the wind and the hail? The light and darkness?

That calls for power, and that is what Africa sees in Moses to worship. For he is worshipped as a god.

In Haiti, the highest god in the Haitian pantheon is Damballa Ouedo Ouedo T ocan Freda Dahomey and he is identified as Moses, the serpent god. But this deity did not originate in Haiti. His home is in Dahomey and is worshipped there extensively. Moses had his rod of power, which was a living serpent. So that in every temple of Damballa there is a living snake, or the symbol.

And this worship of Moses as the greatest one of magic is not confined to Africa. Wherever the children of Africa have been scattered by slavery, there is the acceptance of Moses as the fountain of mystic powers. This is not confined to Negroes. In America there are countless people of other races depending upon mystic symbols and seals and syllables said to have been used by Moses to work his wonders. There are millions of copies of a certain book, *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, being read and consulted in secret because the readers believe in Moses. Some even maintain that the stories of the miracles of Jesus are but Mosaic legends told again. Nobody can tell how many tales and legends of Moses are alive in the world nor how far they have travelled, so many have collected around his name.

So all across Africa, America, the West Indies, there are tales of the powers of Moses and great worship of him and his powers. But it does not flow from the Ten Commandments. It is his rod of power, the terror he showed before all Israel and to Pharaoh, and THAT MIGHTY HAND.

THE AUTHOR.

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