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Dialogue from the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: A script for a dramatic presentation depicting the conversion of King Lamoni, written to encourage greater interest in the Book of Mormon among the young women of the Church.

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LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

DIALOGUE FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON.

SUSA YOUNG GATES.

THIS winter, our Sunday school gave a concert or entertainment. My class consisted of about a dozen girls, ranging in age between thirteen and sixteen years. We were requested to prepare a dialogue, and I decided to arrange something which should have the two advantages of novelty and of a special religious lesson. The Book of Mormon is as little read and understood by our young people as if it were printed in a strange language, and, if possible, I wished to create a vivid interest in that divine work, using only legitimate means to accomplish that purpose. Therefore I chose a very dramatic incident from the Book of Alma, being the conversation of King Lamoni, who was a Lamanite. The words of the text are as nearly as possible the exact ones represented in the sacred history. There were one or two characters introduced, such as the two daughters of the king and queen, but a careful comparison of the following dialogue and the story as abridged by Mormon, will prove that I have taken the smallest liberty possible with the sacred context. I will now give the dialogue, and add afterwards some words of explanation as to the costuming and minor details.

A SCENE FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON.

CHARACTERS:

Rose, - The Nephite, Ammon

Bertha, Lamoni, King of the Lamanites
Maud, The Queen of the Lamanites
Eva, The first daughter of the Queen
Ina, The second daughter of the Queen
Mamie, The maid servant of the Queen
Lulu, The head shepherd of the King
Litie, The head soldier of the Lamanite King
Mary, - The first Lamanite
Maude, - The second Lamanite
Nellie, - The third Lamanite
Louise, Second soldier of the King
Teenie, Third soldier of the King
Ida, Fourth soldier of the King

The stage is set as if it were a school room, with a small platform at the back on which is set two arm-chairs. Benches and a table and table-cloth. The scene opens and discovers all of the girls, but Rose, seated on the stage each with a Book of Mormon in her hands as if studying a lesson.

Enter Rose from the back or side of the stage.

Rose.—Why, girls what is the matter? Eva, you look as if you were crying. You all look quite sad. What is the matter?

Eva.—Well, I should think you would be sad, too, when you know our teacher has told us to have a story from the Book of Mormon all ready to tell next Sunday at Sunday school. I am sure I don't know what to do, for I can't remember any story.

Maud.—Neither can I. And if I were to read one over and over again,

I should forget it by the time I get in Sunday school.

Rose.—Well, girls, I, too, have to prepare a story, but I don't think our teacher will mind if we all have the same story, so I suggest a plan by which we can all learn a story off by heart and never after forget it. You know our teacher says there is no way so good to get a thing fixed in our minds as to act it out ourselves. Now, what do you say to our taking a certain scene from the Book of Mormon; let us choose the conversion of King Lamoni and his household, and we will each take a character from that incident and then we will act it out as well as we can right here in our school room. We will have plenty of time before school begins.

Bertha.—Oh, that will be fun. But (turning to the audience,) we ask these, our brothers and sisters and friends who are here to witness our efforts that they will listen kindly to us, and not laugh or make fun of us if we do not succeed very well, for we are only girls and this is our first effort.

Rose.—Now, then, girls, I shall take for my part, Ammon, the Nephite preacher.

Bertha.—I am the king of the Lamanites.

Maud.—I will be the queen of the Lamanites.

Mamie.—I will be the queen's maid servant.

Litie.—I am tall so I'll be the king's head soldier.

Lulu.—I choose to be the head shepherd of the Lamanite king.

Mary.—I will be one of the Lamanite people.

Maud.—And I will be another of the Lamanites.

Eva.—Ina and I do not like to do much talking, we will be the two daughters of the king.

Rose.—Now, then, I will fix up the things on the stage to represent the palace of the Lamanite king while you girls go out and arrange your costumes.

Rose remains on the stage while the others go out to arrange their costumes to present as nearly as possible the costumes worn by the Lamanites as shown in the pictures published in the *Juvenile Instructor*. Rose puts armchairs on platform to represent thrones, arranges tablecloths on chairs, and arranges benches to represent couches. While doing so she tells the audience what she is doing, as follows:

Rose.—You see I am making a throne from these chairs, and arranging a couch out of these benches. There, I think that is as well as we can do, with the material we have on hand, and I will ask you to let your imaginations do the rest.

Rose exits and there is a strain of martial music. Enter the king and his soldiers. King seats himself on his throne.

King.—There has been trouble with my shepherds. Let my head shepherd be brought before me that I may hear this story.

Enter soldier with head shepherd.

King.—Shepherd, tell me this story.

Shepherd.—Behold, we were tending the flocks, and the enemies of the king fell upon us at the watering place, and would have slain us, but for a young Nephite captive who slew the enemy with slings and with his sword, insomuch that he put the whole army to flight.

King.—Now this is marvelous. Is

not this more than a man who can put a whole army to flight?

Soldier.—This man is surely a friend to the king, for he exerts his mighty power in his behalf. But can he be a man? Truly not.

King.—Shepherd, I know now this is the Great Spirit, come down to preserve your lives, that you might not be slain by me as were your brethren. Behold, I fear lest I have angered the Great Spirit. (Pause as if in deep thought.) Where is this man that has such great power? I would call him to me, but I durst not.

Enter Ammon, the Nephite preacher.

Ammon.—I was about to speak to the king, but his countenance is changed. I will go away lest he is angered with me.

Soldier.—Rabbannah, the king desireth thee to stay.

Ammon.—What wilt thou that I should do for thee, oh king.

The king answers not.

Ammon.—What desirest thou of me? (He pauses for the king to reply, but as the king is still silent, he again speaks.) Is it because, oh king, thou hast heard that I have slain the enemy and defended thy servants and flocks? I am a man and thy servant, and whatsoever thou desirest which is right, that will I do.

King.—Who art thou? Art thou the Great Spirit that knows all things.

Ammon.—I am not.

King.—How knowest thou the thoughts of my heart. Speak boldly.

Ammon.—Wilt thou hearken and believe my words if I tell thee by what power I do these things?

King.—Yea, I will believe.

Ammon.—Believest thou there is a God?

King.—I know not what thou meanest.

Ammon.—Believest thou there is a Great Spirit?

King.—Yea, I believe that.

Ammon.—This Great Spirit is God. He who created the heavens and the earth. He dwells in the midst of the heavens with the host of angels. He looketh down upon the hearts of the children of men, and seeth the silent thoughts of the soul. He is gracious and kind, notwithstanding He knoweth and doeth all things great whatsoever.

King.—I believe all these things thou hast said. And art thou sent by that Great Spirit?

Ammon.—I am a man. Yet, behold, I am called by His Holy Spirit to teach these things unto the people. A portion of His Spirit dwelleth in me. Listen, and I will tell unto thee, oh king, all the record of His dealing with the children of men. (A pause.)

King.—I believe all that thou hast said. (King drops his head in his hands as if in deep thought. Then he arises, upon which soft, minor music begins to play. King comes down to the front of the stage, and kneels with uplifted arms, saying): Oh, Lord, do thou have mercy upon me and my people, even as thou hast had mercy upon the Nephites. Have mercy upon my people. Have mercy! (King sinks down to the earth as if overcome.)

Soldier.—Come let us lift the king upon his couch. (Soldiers raise the king and place him upon the couch, which must be placed so as to be in full view of the audience.)

Second Soldier.—Behold, our queen approaches.

Enter queen followed by her two

daughters and her maid servant, Abish.

Queen.—What is all this noise I hear? (Sees the king stretched upon the couch.) And is this, my lord, passed away from earth? Then wo, wo is me! (Queen wrings her hands and kneels down at the head of the couch.) Approach my daughters, and weep with me.

First daughter approaches (the couch and taking the outstretched hand of her mother, the two bow down their heads and weep.

Second Daughter.—(Turns to shepherd.) Knowest thou aught of this matter?

Shepherd.—This Nephite captive slew the enemy at the pool; then our king talked with the Nephite, and behold soon after our king, your noble father, fell to the earth as you now see him.

Second Daughter.—I cannot blame the fair-haired Nephite. For behold he is comely, and seemeth as a peaceful man and good withal. Yet, ah, my father. Is he dead or doth he but sleep?

Queen.—(To second daughter.) Approach and see thy father.

Second Daughter.—(With great emotion.) Oh, tell me, is my royal father dead or is but sleeping?

Queen.—Alas, I know not.

Second Daughter.—(To Abish.) Tell me, maiden, is he dead, or doth he but sleep?

Abish.—Nay, he is not dead, of that I am sure. This is not death.

Second Daughter.—Who is the cause of all this trouble and suffering?

Abish.—This fair-haired captive is one of the Nephite people; he has come here to do a mighty work. I have seen him in the vision of the

night. He is come with a message from the Great Spirit of the Nephites, which Spirit they call God. We must hearken unto him.

Queen.—Who has caused this great affliction to come upon me?

Abish.—The man who has caused this is a man of God, a servant of the Creator of the earth and the heaven. He can do whatsoever thing he pleaseth to do.

Queen.—If he is so powerful, let him be brought unto me.

Exit Abish. Re-enters, bringing the Nephite with her.

Ammon.—What wouldst thou, oh queen?

Queen.—Some say thou art a prophet of God, and can do mighty works. Now, therefore, tell me if this my husband be dead as some say he is, or only sleeping.

Ammon.—(Approaches the king and looks earnestly at him.) Behold, thy husband is not dead, but he sleepeth in God. He shall soon rise again. Believest thou this?

Queen.—I have no witness save thy word and the word of my servant. Nevertheless, I believe thee.

Ammon.—Blessed art thou because of thy faith. There has not been such exceeding great faith among all the Nephites. Behold, even now he awaketh.

The king arises and speaks.

King.—(Taking hold of the queen's hand.) Blessed be the name of our Father, and blessed art thou! Behold I have seen all the coming forth of my Redeemer in vision. How great is my joy! (He sinks again to the earth, and the queen sinks down to the earth. All exclaim, "Blessed be the name of the Lord!") The Nephite kneels down upon the earth,

and raises his hands as if in prayer. He, too, sinks down upon the earth. The servants and soldiers, all save the queen's maid servant, lift their hands as if in devout prayer, and they, too, sink down upon the earth.

Abish.—Now, then, glory be to heaven! I have seen the wish of my heart fulfilled. My dear master and mistress have heard of the gospel and believed in its teachings. I thank Thee, oh, my Father! I shall go to the people and bring them here, that they, too, seeing this great testimony, may perchance believe on the Lord Jesus and be partakers in His gospel. (She exits.)

Enter the three Lamanites. They look at the prostrate forms of those upon the stage and then begin to dispute.

First Lamanite.—This evil hath fallen upon our king and his household because of this Nephite in the land.

Second Lamanite.—Nay, it has fallen because our king did slay our brethren who watched his flocks.

Third Lamanite.—Now, see this Nephite. He it was who slew my brother at the pool near the flocks. I shall now slay him. (Raises his sword to slay the Nephite. But as he does so he falls dead. The rest of the people shrink as if in fear from the Nephite.)

First Lamanite.—He is the Great Spirit!

Second Lamanite.—(Angrily.) Nay, he is a monster, sent by the Nephites to slay us.

Fourth Lamanite.—He is sent by the Great Spirit to punish us. (They contend angrily.)

Enter Abish.

Abish.—Are ye all angry? Ah, I

weep for this. I like it not. (She weeps; then goes to the queen and takes her by the hand. Ammon arises and calls all to arise. The queen arises to her feet.)

Queen.—(Joyfully.) Oh, blessed Savior, who hast redeemed me from an awful hell! Oh, Thou, have mercy upon this people! (She goes to the king and takes him by the hand. He arises to his feet, sees the contention among his people and he motions them to separate. He goes to all those but the dead Lamanite who sought to slay the Nephite, and takes them by the hand and they arise.)

King.—Hear me, oh, my people, and give ear unto my words. For I have seen the greatness and the majesty and the glory of our Redeemer. Let all my people hear and praise Him who made the heavens and the earth and all that in them is. Behold our deliverer, and him shall we praise. (Pointing to Ammon.)

Ammon.—Nay, praise not me, but "praise Him who made the heavens and the earth and all that in them is." (Nephite falls upon his knees, and at a motion from the king, all kneel and join in singing the Doxology. Red lights are turned on at the tableau. The audience can join in singing if it is desirable.)

When the girls exit in the first of the dialogue, some one should be behind the scenes to assist them to hurriedly put on their costumes. An idea of these dresses may be obtained from the accompanying picture, which shows the girls as they were dressed and arranged in the last tableau. But instead of some of them standing as is done in this picture, all were kneeling, and when the red lights were set onto the stage the effect of the

picture and the singing in a solemn manner the Doxology was most beautiful and impressive. To say that it created a sensation would be stating the case mildly.

The girl who represented Ammon, the Nephite, was a tall, handsome girl with a sweep of long, yellow hair which made her look almost angelic in the final tableau. The king was a dark-haired girl with handsome eyes and features. So was also the queen who possessed the sweetest and most pathetic voice of all the number. The two daughters and the queen made their costumes out of cheap calico, with beads and various ornaments. The soldiers looked stately and imposing, clad in loose, short robes of white, with tin shields and spears. The Lamanites threw about them carriage robes and bright shawls, let their hair down and stuck into their dishevelled locks were turkey feathers galore. To my surprise, for I was on the other side of the stage, the three girls who were representing the Lamanite people came out with their faces streaked in red paint in true Indian fashion and they looked like a band of Pied Indians. Altogether the whole presentation was a grand success. I was present at every rehearsal and enforced a quiet and dignified spirit, allowing nothing to be said or done which would turn our efforts into ridicule. We were dealing with a sacred theme, and each one was instructed to strive for the blessing of success and peace upon our efforts. We were eminently successful.

This dialogue is well fitted to be used in Y. L. M. I. A. concerts or entertainments, and will repay double for the care needed to properly prepare and set the piece.

Try it, girls, and tell me by letter if you are not pleased with your labors.

THE WORKER AND THE REWARD.

H.

Respectfully to that devoted host who have been "faithful unto death," and to those yet remaining who in duty find it to be its own exceeding great reward.

Strange the way the gospel gathers from the lands of mother earth!
 Strange, how from the mongrel nations come the souls of priceless worth!
 From the cottage of the lowly, from the humble sons of toil,
 Those who have for ages wasted life upon their native soil!
 One from out a city fleeing, two from families—now and then;
 Well fulfilled the Prophet's saying—faithful women, trustful men!
 One in years gone by was noted, humbly working for the right;
 Testimony was her fortress in the long and dreary fight,
 As from house to house she carried words of truth with heart aglow,
 Oft beset, and queried, strangely, "Do you really, truly know?"
 "Yes!" the fervid word leaped gladly from a soul devoid of fear:
 "God hath sent again the gospel! Will you listen!" Dropped the tear!
 Faithful, earnest, never daunted, every duty well fulfilled;
 Can you marvel that the summons "Gather!" through her being thrilled?
 On the sacred soil of Utah, married, mother, saint most true;
 Friend, if e'er a friend was needed, so her friends in numbers grew!
 All undaunted, poor and toiling, bravely struggling, bound to win,
 Seeking aid, thus finding conquest over weakness, over sin!
 In each station learning, growing, blest with gifts, and oft a seer,
 Age and trial e'er increasing, yet experience said not fear!
 In the Sabbath School a teacher, taught of God and therefore true;