

Moses and the People of Israel

In Egypt, the sons of Jacob became a nation: the people of Israel.

There came a new king of Egypt who was wary of them.

“We Egyptians need to keep control here,” he told his officials.

“Make those foreigners our slaves.”

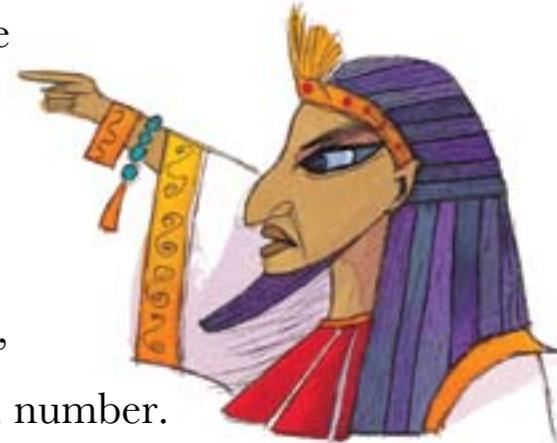
But still the people of Israel grew in number.

“Seize their baby boys,” ordered the king.

“*Throw them in the river.*”

One mother was not going to let that happen.

She made a basket and covered it with waterproof tar. She cradled her baby inside



and went to hide it in the tall reeds by the river's edge.

“Keep watch,” she whispered to her daughter, Miriam. As Miriam watched, she heard chattering. A princess of Egypt was coming with her servant girls to bathe.

The princess saw the basket. A servant took it from the water so she could look inside.

“Oh, it's a baby!” she said. “I want to keep him safe. I shall name him ‘Moses’. Now all I need is someone to look after him for me.”

Miriam stepped forward. “I can find someone,” she said. She returned with her mother. The princess was delighted and asked her to look after Moses.





Everything happened as Moses had said.

The night of death put the king into a frenzy. “Go! The whole lot of you,” he told Moses. “Take what you like but get out of Egypt.”

Moses and the people of Israel hurried away, feeling both scared and excited at what lay ahead for them.

They had been gone for some time when the king suddenly changed his mind. “What have I done!” he exclaimed.

“I can’t afford to be without those slaves.”

He frowned at his army officers: “Get the chariots ready AT ONCE,” he ordered. “We’re going after them.”

The people of Israel were camped by the Red Sea when they saw the army: the chariots glinted gold amid the cloud of dust thrown up by galloping horses.

“Don’t be afraid,” said Moses. “Watch to see what God will do.”

He held his staff high. At once a strong wind began to blow. It blew a path through the sea: dry land where there had been water. The people of Israel hurried through.

Behind them the Egyptian army came thundering.

But when the people of Israel were safe on the other side, the wind stopped and the water flowed back.

The Egyptian army was swept away. Moses had led the people of Israel to freedom.

