



IN THE PALACE

The king of Egypt lived in his beautiful palace. Whatever he said was done.

One night, the king dreamed two strange dreams. In the first dream he stood near a broad river, the Nile River. Suddenly seven cows walked out of the water onto the land. They were beautiful, fat animals. But then — seven more cows came out of the water. They were ugly, skinny animals, and they ate up the seven beautiful fat-looking cows. It frightened Pharaoh awake. Oh, it was only a dream.

Pharaoh fell asleep and dreamed again. It was almost the same dream. He stood at the Nile and saw seven beautiful ears of grain growing, full of kernels of grain. But then seven thin ears of grain grew and ate up the seven beautiful ears. It was a dream again, but it frightened the king. He thought, “Maybe something will happen. Will it be something good? Will it be something bad? I do not know.”

All the learned men of Egypt were commanded to come and explain the dream to the king. Whatever the king said had to happen.

There they stood, very upset. Oh, yes, they read many strange books, and they said many strange words, but they did not know the meaning of the king’s dreams. Then the king became angry. Yes, but how could they know and tell what would happen, because of the king’s strange dreams?

Then . . . only then, the chief butler remembered Joseph. The chief butler was standing behind the king, and all of a sudden he said, “O my lord the king, I know who can tell you about your dreams. Joseph, who is in prison. He can do it. He explained my beautiful dream, too.”

“Then Joseph must come here,” the king said.

Immediately servants ran to the prison to get Joseph. How poor and dirty Joseph looked! His hair was long. His clothes were dirty. His cheeks were pale. He could not appear before the king in this condition. But the servants knew what to do.



Joseph was washed and his hair was cut. They dressed him in a clean linen suit, and then they hurried him to the king, who was very impatient.

In the king's palace everything was beautiful, very beautiful. The king himself, in his royal clothes, was the most splendid of all. Joseph stood before him. Joseph only had a linen suit on. He was only a poor slave. Yet this mighty, rich king had something to ask of him. Did Joseph look proud? Oh, no, Joseph was not proud anymore. Long ago, in his father's house, he had been. But not anymore. He had endured so much sorrow that he had learned not to be proud any longer.



The king asked, "Can you tell me what my strange dreams say will happen?"

Joseph answered, "No, my lord the king, I cannot. But God in heaven knows everything. The LORD in heaven can tell you. Tell me your dreams."

The king told first about the dream of the seven cows, the fat and the lean ones. Then he told about the seven ears of



grain, the full and the thin ones. Joseph knew what it meant. God was telling him and he told the king.

Joseph said, "My lord the king, they are beautiful dreams but they are also sad dreams. Something is going to happen. First something wonderful, but then something sad. First seven good years are going to come, seven beautiful years. The grain will grow wondrously in the fields. There will be so much grain, the people will not be able to eat it all. But then seven lean years will come. The grain will shrivel up on the land. There will be so little grain that the people will be hungry. First seven years of plenty, and then seven years of famine.

"You dreamed two times. First about the cows, then about the ears of grain. It shall surely happen.

"O my lord the king, when the grain grows so wonderfully in the land, and when there is so very, very much, you must save it in your barns. Then when the famine comes, your people will have grain for bread and the seven lean years will not be so bad."

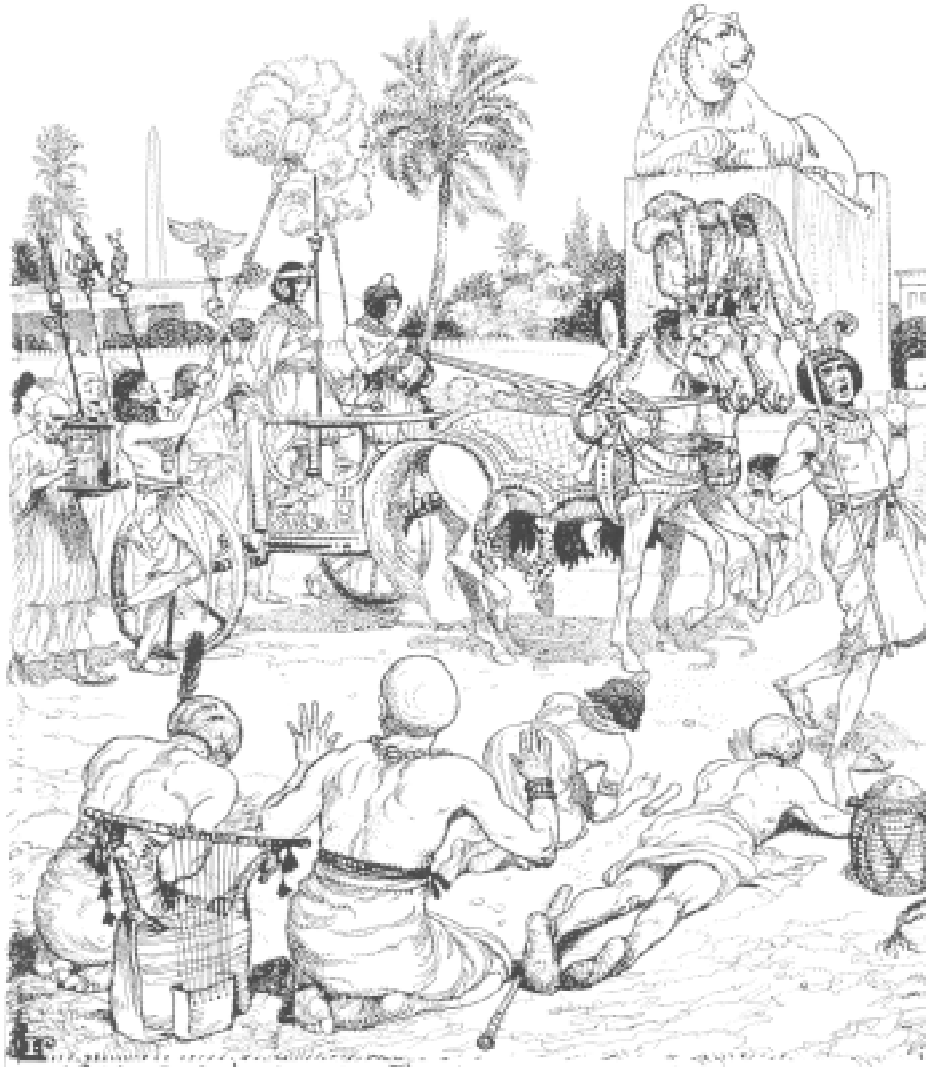
That was what Joseph said.

The eyes of the king shone with relief. Now he knew what would happen. This young man, this slave, was a wise man. He had given good advice. The king loved him very much. He said, "Yes, that is right. That is very good. We shall save the grain." But the king said more. He said something wonderful. He said, "I am the king. But you Joseph, you shall be the ruler under me. You must help me. You must make sure that barns are built to save the grain, and everyone must be obedient to you."

And then the king gave Joseph a golden ring on his finger, beautiful clothes, and a golden chain around his neck. Then Joseph rode in the king's chariot, so that everyone would know that Joseph, the poor slave, had become ruler over Egypt.

"Kneel! Kneel!" the servants called. Joseph stood in a royal chariot, beautiful horses pulled him along. He was wearing royal clothes. "Kneel! Kneel!" the servants cried.

The people outside fell on their knees and bowed before Joseph, the ruler of Egypt. All over the land Joseph rode along the streets and roads as if he was king himself. Quietly Joseph stood in the chariot. He watched the people kneel and call to him, but he was not proud.



Now his robe was even more beautiful than the many-coloured robe of long ago. Now he was rich, much richer than Potiphar. But Joseph's heart was quiet and happy. He thought, "God in heaven has taken such good care of me. He has never forgotten me. All my sorrow has suddenly disappeared."

Joseph looked up to heaven, where God lives. Quietly he prayed, "LORD, I thank Thee. I am so very happy. Help me to be a good ruler. I want to do my best. Please help me, LORD."