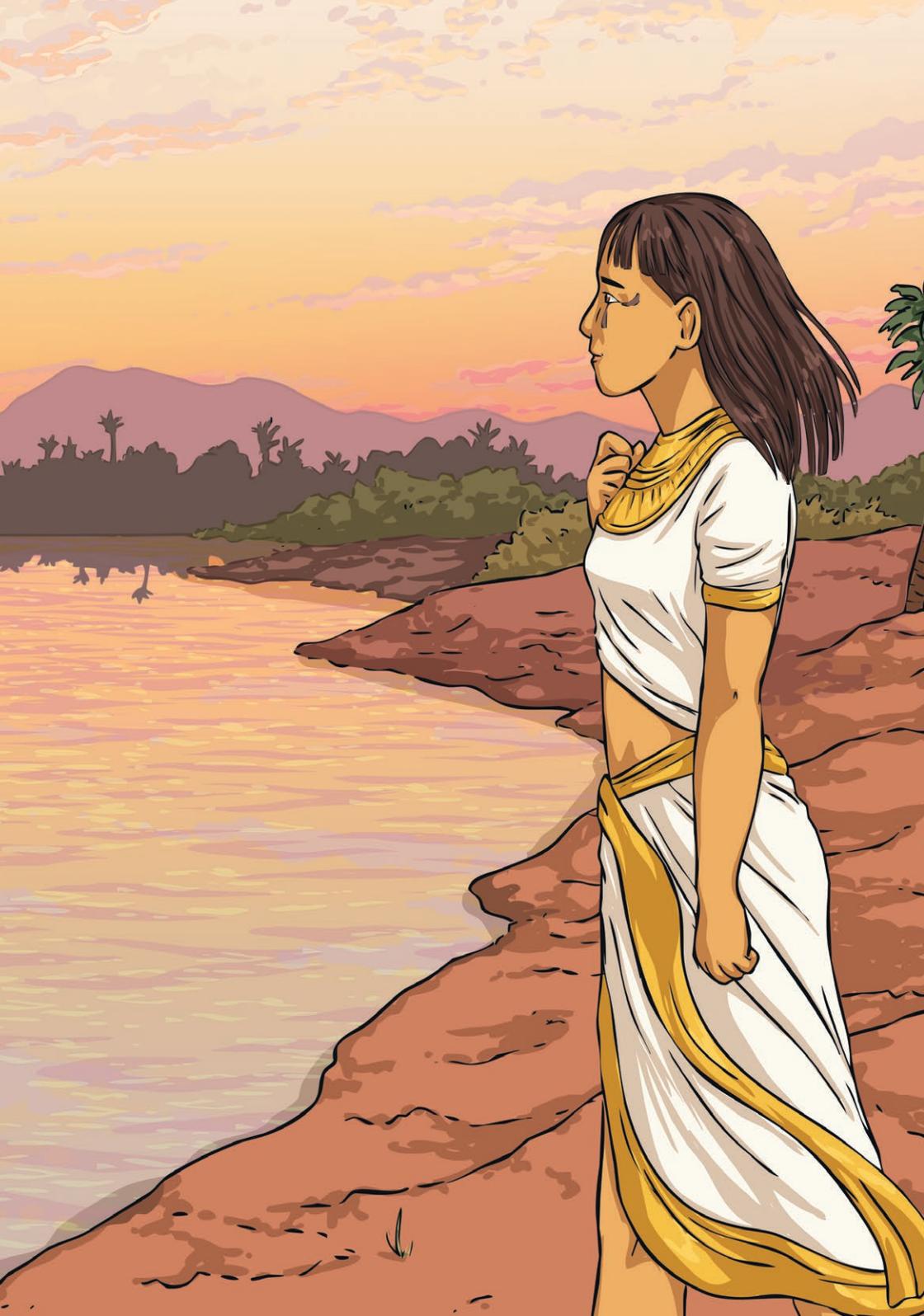


The Story of Osiris







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Chapter One

A Horrid Plan

Ra, the sun god and ruler of all the gods, had many children and, in turn, they had many children. Ra gave them all jobs, ruling over the land. Ra loved all of his children and all of his grandchildren but he had one favourite grandson whom he treasured above all others. Osiris had always been a bright boy. He excelled in everything he did. Ra saw in Osiris all the qualities needed for a fine ruler. His standards were high but he was extremely kind and he showed great compassion for others. It became obvious to Ra who should be the first pharaoh of Egypt.

Osiris was a popular choice for pharaoh. The people rejoiced at having such a strong and moral king. His wife, Isis, shared his commitment to ruling in the best interests of the people and she too, was loved by everyone. Osiris and Isis were blissfully happy and the land prospered under their leadership. Unfortunately, not everyone admired the pharaoh and his wife. Osiris had a brother called Seth, who had always resented his brother's popularity, especially the way that his grandfather, Ra, favoured him. When Osiris became pharaoh, it was as if every festering bad thought Seth had ever had towards his brother overwhelmed him completely. His jealousy of Osiris drove him to set his mind to planning his brother's downfall. The devious Seth came up with a most vile scheme to dispose of Osiris.

Seth took delight in planning every last detail of his hateful plot and each day looked forward to the plan coming to fruition. It was common knowledge that Seth was envious of his brother's position and popularity, but no one would have guessed what this seemingly withdrawn god was capable of. This meant that he was allowed free access to his brother and his bedchamber. One night, when Osiris was sleeping soundly, the single-minded Seth crept into his room. He had with him a measuring tape. Silently and with remarkable attention to detail, he measured his brother's dimensions as he slept. At one point, Osiris even stirred, opened his eyes and looked at Seth, but his guileful brother merely put a reassuring hand on his shoulder and soothed Osiris back to sleep.

Once out of the chamber, Seth hastily recorded the measurements of his brother's body on a scrap of papyrus. The very next day, he contacted the most talented wood sculptor ever known and asked him to make an elaborate chest to fit the dimensions. The sculptor demonstrated his sublime skill in adorning what started as a simple wooden chest with patterns and designs. However, Seth's preparations were not yet complete. He instructed craftsmen to put pure gold on the corners and edges of the chest and he also commissioned a lid of pure gold.

"Who would be able to resist a chest of such beauty and opulence?" Seth sneered to himself.





Chapter Two

Into the Nile!

The next step in Seth's repulsive plan was to invite everyone, gods and humans, to a party. There was music, an abundance of delicious food and the wine was free flowing. Seth stopped the chatter by demanding everyone's attention and he called for his slaves to carry in the valuable chest. There was a murmur of appreciation as the crowd admired the intricate designs on this piece of art and acknowledged how impressive the gold was. Everyone focused on Seth as he announced,

"Whoever can fit inside this chest, will get to keep it. It's a little party game of sorts!"

Gods and humans alike stepped forward from the crowd. They

were all keen to win such a beautiful and intricate prize. Many humans tried and failed to fit inside, so the gods had their turns. Countless gods climbed into the chest and found it was too big or too small for them. Seth urged his brother to have a try.

“For a bit of fun, Osiris. You never know – the box could fit you.”

Isis stroked her husband’s arm and laughed, “It could well be the box for you!”

The people gathered and cheered as the pharaoh handed his distinctive snake-shaped crook to his wife, before giving a playful smile to the crowd and taking his turn. As Osiris climbed in, it became obvious that it was indeed the perfect fit and the party guests clapped enthusiastically.

It was at this moment that Seth seized the lid and, with his angry eyes glaring at the crowd, he pressed it onto the chest making it into a coffin. Instantly, the room was filled with his slaves and they helped him to move the chest out of the palace. The crowd stood aghast, many frozen to the spot with shock.

Isis let her husband’s crook fall to the ground with a clank. She chased bravely after the group who were making with great speed to the banks of the Nile. There, Seth took over and tipped the chest into the water. However, it did not sink straight away. The current was strong and the chest disappeared out of sight very quickly. Isis wanted to fall weeping to her knees or to beat Seth with her angry fists, but she knew her priority had to be to

follow the current and find her husband. She set off down the river, her cheeks wet with tears, her elaborate makeup smeared on her face.

Isis hunted around the banks of the Nile for weeks and weeks. The Egyptian people working on the river were honoured to meet her but they had seen no sign of the chest she described. Wherever she could, Isis begged locals to dive into the Nile to search for the lost trunk but all were unsuccessful and she knew it was impossible for her to search every inch of the river bed. As time passed, Isis found the search more difficult. On top of such long days searching, the queen was pregnant with her first child and, by the end of each day's hunting, she felt utterly exhausted.

Meanwhile, back at the palace, Seth had established himself as the new pharaoh. The Egyptian people hated their new leader and word of Osiris's murder spread. However, the people dared not rise up against Seth. Unlike Osiris, he was a ruthless leader and he did not care about the happiness and well-being of his people. Punishments ordered by Seth were gruesome and unjust. The mighty Ra was filled with anger when he heard what had happened and he ordered for Seth to come to him. Seth refused.



Chapter Three

Found

After weeks of painful disappointment, Isis finally came across the chest she had spent so long hunting for. Isis attempted to remove the lid of the chest but she was unable to. She struggled for hours until, finally, she found a group of local people to help her. Once the lid was off, they left her alone to weep over the body of her poor dead husband, Egypt's first pharaoh.

Isis did not have much time to grieve with her husband's body for Seth's spies were everywhere in Egypt. Seth soon appeared in the area close by. He threatened the locals with their lives and soon located the chest containing Osiris's body. Seth was angry that he had failed to remove Osiris from view and memory. He knew deep down how popular Osiris and Isis still were with the people,

so he resolved to act forcefully to remove any threat of rebellion. In his jealous state, he cut Osiris's body into fourteen parts and, using his magic, he distributed those parts all over Egypt.

Yet again, Isis showed her resilience. She was determined to give her husband a proper burial. She walked all over the land of Egypt in search of every last part of his body. When she eventually had all of the pieces, she called upon her good friend, Anubis, to help her. Anubis was known as a protector of the dead. He had the head of a jackal and was a highly skilled embalmer; he was the only one who had the ability to put together the body of Osiris. Concentrating hard on his intricate work all through the night, he embalmed and mummified the body with the loving help of Osiris's poor widow.

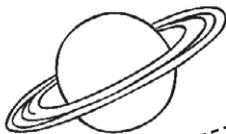
Ra too was distraught at the loss of his beloved grandson and his rage with Seth was now immeasurable. Sadly, even Ra did not have magic powerful enough to bring Osiris back to life so he gave him a new job. When Osiris passed into the afterlife, he became god of the dead. Just as he had been a kind and good-hearted leader in life, he was also a loving and fair judge of the dead. It was to be many years before Isis joined her beloved husband in the afterlife.

A short time after Osiris had passed into the afterlife, Isis gave birth to a son, Horus, who vowed, almost as soon as he could talk, to avenge his father's death by murdering Seth. He succeeded but it took eighty years of fighting and challenges between the two.

Osiris was always in the thoughts of the ancient Egyptians. Pharaohs who ruled after Seth carried a crook carved out of wood, just as Osiris had done. The ancient Egyptians also believed that every time the banks of the Nile flooded, this was in remembrance of the many tears poor Isis shed as she wandered in search of her husband's body.





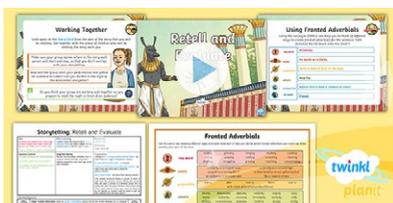


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When the jealous and devious Seth plots to seize power from his dutiful brother, Pharaoh Osiris, events take a shocking turn that will change Egypt forever.

Will Seth succeed in taking control of Egypt and will the determined Queen Isis be able to rescue her beloved husband, Osiris?