

Night to Be Much Remembered

Script adapted from Exodus 1-12

Written by Rebecca Stewart
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CAST

NARRATORATOR
GOD
MOSES
AARON
PHARAOH
ISRAELITES
EGYPTIANS

Narrator: Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.

Moses: I will go over and see this strange sight-- why the bush does not burn up.

God: Moses! Moses!

Moses: Here I am."

God: Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt

Moses: Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?

God: I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you bring the people out of Egypt, you will worship on this mountain.

Moses: Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

God: I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you. The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

Moses: Then what shall I do?

God: Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob--appeared to me and said, I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into - a land of milk and honey.'

Moses: But the elders do not know me?

God: The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you will go with them to Pharaoh of Egypt and say to him, `The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.' But I know that he will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

Moses: What if they do not believe me and say, `The LORD did not appear to you'?

God: What is that in your hand?

Moses: A staff.

God: Throw it on the ground.

Narrator: Moses threw it on the ground. It became a snake, and he ran from it.

God: Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.

Narrator: Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand.

God: This is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has appeared to you." Put your hand inside your cloak.

Narrator: So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was leprous, like snow.

God: Now put it back into your cloak.

Narrator: So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.

God: If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second. But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground.

Moses: O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.

God: Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?
Now Go! I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

Moses: O Lord, please send someone else to do it.

Narrator: Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses.

God: What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you. You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. But take this staff in your hand so that you can perform miraculous signs with it.

Narrator: Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and asked Jethro to allow him to go back to his own people in Egypt to see if any of them were still alive. Jethro wished Moses well and sent him on his way. So Moses took his wife and sons, and started back to Egypt. And he took the staff of God in his hand.

God: When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. Say to Pharaoh, "God says, Israel is my firstborn son, Let my son go, so that he may worship me. But if you refuse to let him go, I will kill your firstborn son."

Narrator: Now, the LORD had said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet Moses." So he met Moses at the mountain of God and kissed him. Then Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and also about all the miraculous signs he had commanded him to perform. Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, and they believed. And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped. Then Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh.

Aaron: This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.'

Pharaoh: Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go.

Aaron: The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, or he may strike us with plagues or with the sword.

Pharaoh: Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their labour? Get back to your work! They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' Make them work harder so they won't heed Moses' lies!

Narrator: So the slave drivers and the foremen went out and said to the people, "This is what Pharaoh says: 'I will not give you any more straw. Go and get your own straw wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced at all.' So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw. The Israelite foremen were beaten and asked, "Why didn't you meet your quota yesterday or today?" Then the Israelite foremen went and appealed to Pharaoh.

Israelites: Why have you treated your servants this way? Your servants are given no straw, yet we are told, 'Make bricks!' Your servants are being beaten, but the fault is with your own people.

Pharaoh: Lazy, that's what you are--lazy! That is why you keep saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.' Now get to work. You will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your full quota of bricks."

Narrator: The Israelite foremen realized they were in trouble when they were told, "You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day." When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them.

Israelites: May the LORD look upon you and judge you! You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.

Moses: O Lord, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble upon this people, and you have not rescued your people at all.

God: Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country. I am the LORD. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God.

Narrator: Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and cruel bondage.

God: Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites go out of his country.

Moses: If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with faltering lips?

God: See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt with mighty acts of judgment and bring the Israelites out of it.

Narrator: Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them. Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh.

God: When Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a miracle,' then say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh,' and it will become a snake."

Narrator: So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. Pharaoh then summoned the wise men and sorcerers, and they also did the same things by their secret arts: Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard, just as the LORD had said.

God: Pharaoh's heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he goes out to the water. Wait on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand. Then say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you: 'Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the desert.' And if he does not listen then tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt--over the streams and canals, over the ponds and all the reservoirs'-- and they will turn to blood. Blood will be everywhere in Egypt, even in the wooden buckets and stone jars."

Narrator: Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood. The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt. But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart became hard. And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water for seven days, because they could not drink the water of the river.

God: Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. If you refuse to let them go, I will plague your whole

country with frogs.' Tell Aaron, `Stretch out your hand with your staff over the streams and canals and ponds, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.'"

Narrator: So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land. But the magicians did the same things by their secret arts; they also made frogs come up on the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh summoned Moses.

Pharaoh: Pray to the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD."

Moses: I leave to you the honour of setting the time for me to pray for you and your people that you may be rid of the frogs, except for those that remain in the Nile.

Pharaoh: Tomorrow.

Moses: It will be as you say, so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God. The frogs will leave you and will remain only in the Nile.

Narrator: After Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the LORD. And the LORD did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the courtyards and in the fields. They were piled into heaps, and the land reeked of them. But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen.

God: Tell Aaron, `Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the ground,' and throughout the land of Egypt the dust will become gnats.

Narrator: When Aaron stretched out his hand with the staff all the dust throughout the land of Egypt became gnats afflicting man and beast. But when the magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, they could not. So they said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hard, just as the LORD had said.

God: Get up early in the morning and confront Pharaoh as he goes to the water and say to him, `This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. If you do not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies on you and your officials, on your people and into your houses. But on that day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that I, the LORD, am in this land. I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This miraculous sign will occur tomorrow.

Narrator: And the LORD did this. Dense swarms of flies poured into Pharaoh's palace and into the houses of his officials, and the land was ruined by the flies. Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron.

Pharaoh: Go, sacrifice to your God here in the land.

Moses: That would not be right. The sacrifices we offer the LORD our God would be detestable to the Egyptians. And if we offer sacrifices that are detestable in their eyes, will they not stone us? We must take a three-day journey into the desert.

Pharaoh: I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the desert, but you must not go very far. Now pray for me.

Moses: As soon as I leave you, I will pray to the LORD, and tomorrow the flies will leave Pharaoh and his officials and his people. Only be sure that Pharaoh does not act deceitfully again by not letting the people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD.

Narrator: Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD, and the LORD did what Moses asked: The flies left Pharaoh but again Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go. Then the LORD spoke to Moses.

God: Go to Pharaoh and say to him, `The Lord God says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. If not, the hand of the LORD will bring a terrible plague on your livestock: horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep, and goats. But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will perish.

Narrator: And the next day the LORD did it: The livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one animal belonging to the Israelites died. Pharaoh sent men to investigate and found that not even one of the animals of the Israelites had died. Yet his heart was hard and he would not let the people go. Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron.

God: Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils will break out on men and animals throughout the land.

Narrator: So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh. Moses tossed it into the air, and festering boils broke out on men and animals.

The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians. But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen.

God: Moses, get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, `This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you.

But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

At this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt. Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every man and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die.'

Narrator: Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. But those who ignored the word of the LORD left their slaves and livestock in the field. Then Moses stretched out his staff towards the sky, the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning. Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields-- both men and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree. The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were. Then Pharaoh summoned Moses.

Pharaoh: This time I have sinned. The LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Pray to the LORD, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don't have to stay any longer.

Moses: When I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to the LORD. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may know that the earth is the LORD's. But I know that you still do not fear the LORD God.

Narrator: So all the flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bloom, but the wheat and spelt were not destroyed, because they ripened later. When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again. He and his officials hardened their hearts.

God: Moses, go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt with the Egyptians and performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD.

Moses: The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: `How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, so that they may worship me. If you refuse to let them go, I will bring locusts into your country tomorrow. They will cover the face of the ground so that it cannot be seen. They will devour what little you have left after the hail, including every tree that is growing in your fields.' Then Moses turned and left Pharaoh.

Court Officials: How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the people go, so that they may worship the LORD their God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?

Narrator: Then Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh: Go, worship the LORD your God. But just who will be going?"

Moses: We will go with our young and old, with our sons and daughters, and with our flocks and herds, because we are to celebrate a festival to the LORD."

Pharaoh: The LORD had better be with you--if I let you go, along with your women and children! Clearly you are bent on evil. No! Let only the men go; and worship the LORD, since that's what you have been asking for. Now get out of my sight!

Narrator: So Moses and Aaron went out and Moses stretched out his staff over Egypt, and the LORD made an east wind blow across the land all that day and all that night. By morning the wind had brought the locusts; they invaded all Egypt and settled down in every area of the country in great numbers. Never before had there been such a plague of locusts, nor will there ever be again. They covered all the ground until it was black. They devoured all that was left after the hail - everything growing in the fields and the fruit on the trees. Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron.

Pharaoh: I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. Now forgive my sin and pray to the LORD your God to take this deadly plague away from me."

Narrator: Moses then left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD.

And the LORD changed the wind to a very strong west wind, which caught up the locusts and carried them into the Red Sea. Not a locust was left anywhere in Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart. He did not let the Israelites go.

Then the LORD told Moses to stretch his hand towards the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt-- darkness that could be felt. So Moses stretched out his hand towards the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days.

No one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived. Then Pharaoh summoned Moses.

Pharaoh: Go! Worship the LORD. Even your women and children may go with you, only leave your flocks and herds behind.

Moses: You must allow us to have sacrifices and burnt offerings to present to the LORD our God. Our livestock too must go with us; not a hoof is to be left behind. We

have to use some of them in worshipping the LORD our God, and until we get there we will not know what we are to use to worship the LORD.

Pharaoh: Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my face you will die.

Moses: Just as you say. But know that this is what the LORD says: `About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt - worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal. Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, `Go, you and all the people who follow you!' After that I will leave.

Narrator: Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.

God: Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbours for articles of silver and gold. You are highly regarded in Egypt by Pharaoh's officials and by the people. I will make the Egyptians favourably disposed towards my people. Pharaoh has refused to listen to you--so that my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt.

Narrator: Then God told Moses how the people were to keep the Passover. They were to choose from their flock a firstling male without any defect and slaughter them on the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight and take the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the door-frames of their houses. They must roast the meat and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs and not leave any of it until the morning. With their cloaks tucked into their belts, their sandals on their feet and their staffs in their hands they must eat it in haste; it was the LORD's Passover.

God: On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn--both men and animals--and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. This is a festival to the LORD--a lasting ordinance for generations to come.

Narrator: Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel.

Moses: Now go. Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. When you enter the land that the LORD will give you, observe this

ceremony. And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'

Narrator: The people bowed down and worshipped. Then the Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron. At midnight the LORD struck down the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, to the firstborn of the prisoner in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. Pharaoh and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead. Pharaoh sent this message to Moses and Aaron.

Court Officials: Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me. Hurry and leave the country. For otherwise, we will all die!

Narrator: So the people took their dough before it was leavened, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing along with the riches the Egyptians had given them and they journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the LORD's divisions left Egypt. Because the LORD kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil to honour the LORD for all generations to come.