

JOSEPH'S DREAM

Brothers are supposed to look out for one another.

My dad and his brother? Hate each other's guts. My grandpa's named Abraham. When my uncle got born, my grandpa left him and his mother in the middle of the desert without any food or water. And when my dad came of age, my grandpa placed a sharp blade on his neck. And if a goat hadn't suddenly fallen from the sky he would have taken his head off. And that's just the beginning of my family's craziness. You'd think my dad and my uncle would bond over this shared trauma. Let it draw them closer together. But they never talked about it. Just let it fester. And they both had a bunch of kids. Like their pain could only be directed to new generations of pain. Which is weird because when I'm alone with them they can both be really cool. My dad is super spiritual. Always praying and crying and giving me wise advice. Always hoping for goats to fall out of the sky. Which is nice.

Growing up I wasn't supposed to hang out with my uncle... he was a reckless type. But hella fun. Taught me to hunt and fight. It made me strong. Gave me all the things my father grew to love about me, ironically. My brother Ben and I would sneak out of our beds and ride our donkeys out into the desert moon chasing adventures with my uncle into the night. I loved Ben. He was my full brother. We had the same mom. And she was beautiful. So we were beautiful too. More beautiful than our other brothers. So our dad loved us more. Any parent who says they don't have favorites is a fucking liar. They always love the prettier kids. My brother Ben and I, we were my dad's favorites. The apples of his eye. We looked out for one another.

But it cost us. One day I had this dream. The dream was that there were eleven stars, a sun, and a moon. And they all prostrated themselves before me. The eleven stars were my brothers. And the sun and moon were my mom and dad. I told my dad about this dream and it made him happy. Because to him it meant I was going to be like my grandpa. I would be a prophet of god. But I didn't want to be like my grandpa. Doing all this crazy shit just because god told me to. Still, it felt pretty good to be chosen... you know? Anyway, dad told me not to tell my brothers about this dream. Because he knew that would be the last straw. As jealous of me as they were already they'd get so jealous about this dream that they'd might want to hurt me. People always want to snuff greatness out of the world if they know it'll never touch them. So I didn't tell anyone.

Actually that's a lie. I kind of bragged about it. Mostly to my brother Ben. I tried not to make the others hear but a part of me almost tried to make them hear it. I couldn't help it you know. Maybe they heard me say it. But maybe they didn't. Either way my brothers somehow made up their minds that they were going to hurt me. They took me out for a hunt without inviting Ben and were about to kill me when my brother Judah intervened and suggested they toss me in the nearby well instead. Maybe some caravan would come by and put me on the slave market. I mean I am a fine specimen. Perfect for a slave market. And god bless Judah for talking a bit of sense into my brothers... but damn, like, either kill me or condemn me to slavery? My own brothers wanted to do that? I know it's kind of offensive but I'll say it anyway: Most slaves in history were forced into it by their own people. I know it's a nice story we tell ourselves... oh, we are so oppressed and resilient. But it's our own brothers and sisters that enslave us. Our own families and people. Ourselves. We wouldn't be slaves if our own people didn't allow it. And

that's just the truth.

But whatever. They took my shirt from me and stained it with ketchup to show to my father and pretend that I got eaten by a wolf while they weren't looking. They forgot to tear holes in it though... so I think my dad probably saw through it a bit. Still he got so sad at the idea of me being gone that he went blind.

I was alone in the well for a few days. Or weeks. I couldn't keep count because there was no light or dark in the well. Just wet and cold. And this skull I started talking to. I even gave this skull a name. I called them Sammy. Sammy and I shared stories and I would suck on some of the mud for nutrients and jerk off. Sammy mostly just listened and watched though. Every once in a while I'd pray, but barely, because I never liked that, I just knew it was important. One day just after I was done praying I decided I'd give myself a quick wank as a reward and while I held my wet dick in my hand a bucket thumped me on the head and I looked up and there was an Egyptian looking down at me waving. A caravan had found me after all. It took ten guys to pull me up. Because I was still pretty damn big and strong. When I finally got out of the well they looked at me like I was some prized peacock. "*We hit the jackpot,*" one of them said.

Hundreds, maybe thousands, of people came to see me being auctioned off. It was like they had never seen a Hebrew before. I mean, they'd seen plenty of Hebrews. But none like me I guess... I mean, I was destined to be a prophet. Not that they would know it. The auction went on for days... people kept buying up. Until finally the Aziz of Egypt, who was like the assistant to the King, topped them off and brought me home to the king's palace where he introduced me to his wife, the Aziza.

I'll admit. It was a good life. In some ways I was living better than the Aziz himself. Because I got to eat whatever I wanted and go wherever I wanted and accompany the Aziza on her errands. And everyone just loved to talk to me and hang out. They all said I had this sort of quote unquote "glow" about me. Whatever that means. But you know, it was flattering. The Aziza... I can't remember her name. I never remember women's names. I see so many of them they just sort of cross fade in front of me into this giant blur. But she was kind of obsessed with me. She would make me accompany her for no reason. I mean, I didn't complain because it was no work at all. And she was kinda hot. I mean, really hot actually. But like way too old for me. And I wouldn't have dared to make a move on her because she was the Aziz's wife, you know? And she could have any man she wanted. But she was always faithful to him.

One day though, things got pretty weird. The Aziza called me into her room. And she'd never done that before. She didn't ask for wine or nothing. Part of me could smell something was up, but I wasn't going to say no... it was my job. So I go to her room. And she's wearing this long silky night gown. That isn't too revealing but you can see her neck and her calves. Which is like... wow. I mean. This woman is *beautiful*. She more or less propositions me. And for a minute I'm ready to go for it. Like I'm gonna pounce on her like a rabid dog. I had never had sex before but it was like the whole Kama Sutra just downloaded into my brain in that instant. But something in me just felt wrong. Just enough of me felt that this was wrong. I can't just stick my dick into anyone. I've got to be ready to have a child with this person. And if I was gonna be this great prophet like my grandpa, I had better start acting like one. But damn, I had never seen anyone look so hot as the Aziza did in that moment. And after that split second of seemingly indomitable lust all I could say was "*sorry, but no.*" And I turned away to head out the door.

But when I turned I heard this loud shriek and I felt her grabbing onto my shirt and she pulled at me hard and she tore the shirt off. She did what my brother's fake wolf couldn't do and actually tore off my shirt. This woman was more deadly than a wolf. And there I was all shirtless and sweaty. And my chest was heaving. Cock at the ready. And I swear the look I saw in her eyes was like all the angels and all the devils conjoined to create a rainbow of pure desire in her. And in me too. I wanted it. I'll admit that. I fucking wanted it. But just before we were going to ravage each other, the Aziz and some other dude walked in all like *"we heard a shriek and just wanted to make sure you were ok."* And they saw me with my shirt off. And they saw her in her silky gown. And for a moment everything was just suspended in thin air. All thought and action. It was like time just stopped before the Aziza finally screamed, *"help, he's trying to rape me."*

About three weeks into my prison sentence, the Aziza had me released to be a part of a banquet. See, even though the law took her side, word was going around that she was kind of a slut. Which didn't make sense because she was always a faithful wife. Except this one time, and even though she was wrong and enough people believed I was trying to rape her to put me in prison, I felt kinda bad. So I didn't really complain.

She wanted to prove to all the other noble women how apparently irresistible I was. She had such a high position in the palace. It was an absolute embarrassment to be considered a slut, so she wanted to throw their words back into their faces. And it was sort of a rule that no one would talk about me. I was like this taboo subject. Everyone wanted a piece of me but no one wanted to admit it. But the Aziza, she brought me up, to everyone's shock, and said something like *"that Joseph, can you believe how close I was to having him all to myself?"*

They had their dinner and their wine. And when the ladies started cutting their fruit for dessert, the Aziza brought me in. I kept my head down because I was embarrassed and my dad had always taught me to lower my gaze with women. This might have been the one time I actually listened to him. But when the Aziza called my name, I looked up and when all the women at the banquet saw my face, they practically cut their wrists open they were so stunned with desire. And finally they were all *"we get it Aziza, we get it, a man like this should never be let loose into the world. We noble women would lose all of our power! Just look at him!"* And so the Aziza's reputation was restored, but I still had to go back to prison. Egyptian women. Fucking crazy.

When I went back to prison, there were two other guys there. A cook and a cupbearer. And we got pretty close. Like Sammy the skull and I when I was in the well. Except these guys could talk back. And they weren't so down to watch me jerk off. They started to trust me so much they were telling me their dreams. And I don't know what it is, but something made me feel like I knew what those dreams meant. I mean, it was something my dad could do too. He told me what my dreams meant. So I thought I'd pay it forward you know? Shine a bit of light in this cold forgotten corner of the world. The cook said they had a dream that they were standing with bread on their head and two birds were eating the bread. The cupbearer told me they had a dream that they were serving the king wine. For some reason the cook's dream made me think that they would be crucified, and the cupbearer's dream made me think they would go back to their old job of being the king's cupbearer. And both those things turned out to be true, unfortunately for the cook. I hope people remember the cook as having been a good cook. Crucifixion seems like it sucks.

Soon enough the king had his own dream. And it was about seven lean cows eating seven fat cows. And when all the king's experts couldn't find an answer, the cupbearer told the king that I was able to find out the meaning of their dream. So the king came to me and asked me what his dream meant. And I told him it meant that Egypt would have seven years of abundance and after that they would have seven years of famine. So in the seven years of abundance they should probably store up enough to hold them through the seven years of famine. And when the dream came true and the king followed my advice, I was released from prison and made finance minister. And life was good again.

But this is when shit gets crazy. Because in all this time I'd never thought I'd see my brothers again. One day a group of ten brothers from Canaan came to the palace hoping to purchase some provisions. As finance minister, it was my duty to deal with them. And the ten men turned out to be my brothers. All were there except Ben. My father didn't want to lose him like he had lost me. So he didn't let him go with my brothers. My brothers didn't recognize me. And they wanted to take home supplies enough for eleven men. But I told them they need all eleven men in order to get the supplies. Because I wanted them to go back and bring Ben. I just wanted to see my brother again.

So they went back and convinced my father to let them bring Ben. And they brought him. And when they came, I insisted they stay for a banquet. All my brothers were so ecstatic to be a part of this royal Egyptian banquet. But my brother Ben was just sad the whole time. I sat next to him and asked him why he was so sad. And he looked at me and looked away. And he said, *"My brother Joseph would have loved it here. I miss him. He looked after me."* And I couldn't help it, I just started crying. And Ben looks at me, not knowing it's me, all googly eyed, and just says *"what's the matter bro?"* And I say, *"come with me, I want to show you something."*

And I take Ben to a private room, and I don't know why but I just say, *"If you really need a brother, one who will look after you, I could be your brother. I like you. Don't you like me?"* Ben smiled and said, *"I think you're cool and all, but no one can replace my brother Joseph. No one."* And finally, assured of his love, I told Ben *"What if I told you that I am the Joseph that your brothers dumped into a well? That I was found by a caravan and sold into slavery? That all of Egypt fell in love with me? That a powerful woman's desire for me was so great it got me thrown into prison? And still I rose to a position in this land second only to the king himself? What if I told you this, oh brother of mine? It is the truth. It is the absolute truth."*

And when Ben knew the truth, he broke down weeping. Because he had his brother again. And we hugged like no brothers had ever hugged before. And Ben almost ran out to tell everyone else, but I stopped him. I still couldn't trust my other brothers. So I wanted to keep it a secret. I had to test their loyalty.

During the banquet, I had slipped the king's prized gold chalice into Ben's purse. And before my brothers made it outside the city the palace guards stopped them for a search, suspecting the chalice had been stolen. And they found the chalice in Ben's purse. And they arrested Ben. And my brother Judah said, *"well if you're taking Ben, you'd better take me too."* And they arrested Judah too.

Of course, I could have had Ben and Judah released any time. But I needed to know if their brothers would look after them. So I told their brothers to come back with a ransom. And you know what? They did. They went back to mom and dad, got the ransom, and came back and

Ben and Judah were set free. And at last I revealed myself and my perfect story to my whole family. And my father regained his sight at the sight of me. And we all wept with joy and they all fell prostrate before me, like the eleven stars and the sun and the moon in my dream. A humble cacophony of light.

That's how I would like for things to turn out for me anyway. Instead of being inside this well for the rest of my life. But I don't know, Sammy the Skull, maybe this story I just told you now is more truthful than anything I have experienced or could have experienced outside this well. I mean... do you think it's any good? I think I'm going to call this story *Joseph's Dream*. Because it's my dream. And it's how I'd like my life to go despite it all. It's how I'd like to be remembered. What do you think? You're one of the main characters, you know, Sammy the Skull! I mention you several times! I hope you like the story Sammy the Skull. Because I think there is a whole lot of truth in it. A whole lot of truth. Even though it's not real. Because the truth is, Sammy, brothers are supposed to look out for one another. But the reality is, not a single one of my brothers ever looked out for me, Sammy. Not a single one.

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