

Osiris and Iris

An Ancient Egyptian Creation Myth

At the start of all time, the earth was just beginning. It was flat and covered in water. The only thing that existed was a single egg that floated in the endless ocean. Eventually, the egg hatched and the god Ra was born. Ra was a falcon god and didn't want to spend his time floating around doing nothing. Instead, he flew up into the sky and took up his place as the sun.

As a sun god, Ra was hot. His heat baked the earth until most of the water had evaporated, leaving behind hills, mountains, rivers and lakes. The seas and oceans were the only large areas of water that he left.

Soon, Ra grew bored. He created a wife for himself named Nut. He also created all of the other gods and goddesses to keep him company. Each god or goddess was given a job to do. Even though they were busy, the gods were allowed to have children of their own. Soon, the world was filled with gods and goddesses.

To Ra, one of these gods was the most important. Osiris was his grandson and had a brother named Set. Ra's preference for Osiris was obvious, and Set soon became jealous. Ra made Osiris the first Pharaoh of Egypt and gave him his wife, Isis. Together, they had a son named Horus. Horus was given the job of the sky god. They lived a happy life of luxury, which only made Set's jealousy worse.

One day, Set had had enough. In the dark of night, he crept into his brother's chambers and killed him. He chopped him into small pieces and threw them to the crocodiles in the River Nile. Set was sure that he had kept his plan secret, but the rushes on the river bank had witnessed his crime. They whispered in the wind, and soon Isis heard of the betrayal.

Heartbroken, Isis set out and recovered the pieces of her husband. She brought them to the god Anubis who managed to put them together again. Alas, he didn't have the power to bring Osiris



back to life. News of Osiris's murder soon reached Ra, who was furious. He too was unable to bring Osiris back to life, but he managed to find a solution. Osiris was given the role of the god of the dead. He guards the underworld but may never travel back to the world of the living.

Back on Earth, Osiris's son set out for revenge and killed Set. Though Isis was grateful to everyone who had helped her, she still mourned for her husband. Each year, she heads to the riverbank where she found Osiris and weeps. Her tears flood the River Nile and bring fertile soil to the land.

VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. Which word or phrase tells you that there was nothing but ocean in the beginning?
2. Find and copy a word that means "cooked or heated".
3. Which word tells you that Osiris and Isis had everything they could need?
4. Which word in the text is a synonym for "Unfortunately"?
5. What does the word "furious" tell you about Ra's reaction to the bad news?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

R

Which job did Ra take on?

I

How might you know that Ra was lonely?

S

How did Isis hear of Set's betrayal?

R

Who killed Set?

S

Why does the River Nile flood every year?

Answers:

1. Endless (ocean)
2. Baked
3. Luxury
4. Alas
5. He was extremely angry (look for understanding of the fact that it is a high level of anger, not just angry)

R: The sun

I: He created Nut and the other gods to keep him company

S: The reeds saw him throwing Osiris into the river, and whispered it on the wind.

R: Horus

S: Isis heads to the riverbank and cries in sadness. Her tears flood the river