



加拿大教育部编写的经典语文教材

Canadian Readers

# 加拿大语文读本

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## HISTORY OF JOSEPH

## 约瑟的身世

THE particular favorite of Jacob among his twelve sons was Joseph, the eldest child of his beloved Rachel. This circumstance was perhaps sufficient to excite the envy and hatred of his brethren, but these feelings were increased by the reports of their misconduct which he carried to his father, and by two dreams which he had, indicating his future greatness.

So strong did their dislike to him grow, that having gone to feed their flocks in a distant part of the country, and Joseph having been sent to inquire after their welfare, they determined when they saw him approach to put him to death. From this bloody purpose they were dissuaded by Reuben; but they sold him immediately after to a company of merchants who were traveling with spices from Gilead to Egypt.

To deceive their father, and to keep him ignorant of what had been done with his favorite child, they dipped Joseph's coat of many colors in the blood of a kid, and, when they returned home, showed it to him saying, "This have we found; see whether it be thy son's coat or not?" Jacob knew the coat, and exclaimed with great anguish, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is surely torn in pieces." Then, rending his clothes and putting sackcloth upon his loins, he mourned for Joseph many days. The rest of his family attempted to comfort him, but he refused their consolation saying, "I will go down to the grave unto my son mourning."

In the meantime Joseph is carried down into Egypt and sold as a slave to Potiphar, the captain of the king's guard. But Divine Providence watches over him even in the land of the stranger. He soon gains the confidence of his master, who entrusts him with the charge of his whole household. After some time, however, being falsely accused by his master's wife, he is thrown into prison, where he obtains the favor of the keeper, who commits all the other prisoners to his care. Among these are the chief butler and the chief baker of the king. Each of these men has a dream in one night, by which he is greatly perplexed. Joseph interprets the dreams, and his interpretation is verified by the event. Notwithstanding, from the forgetfulness of the chief butler whose

restoration to favor Joseph had predicted, he continues in prison for two full years.

About the end of that time Pharaoh the king has two dreams in the same night, which his wise men are unable to interpret. The chief butler then remembers Joseph, who is instantly brought from prison into the royal presence. He explains to Pharaoh that the seven fat kine and the seven full ears of core, which he saw in his dreams, signify seven years of great abundance; and that the seven lean kine, and the seven thin ears of corn, are seven years of famine, which are to follow. He also recommends to the king to seek out a wise and discreet man, whom he may set over the land with the power of appointing officers to lay up corn during the plenteous years, as a provision against the years of famine.

The proposal meets with the approbation of the king, who appoints Joseph himself governor overall the land, arrays him in fine apparel, puts a ring upon his hand, and a gold chain about his neck, causes him to ride in his own second chariot, and bids all his subjects bow before him. Thus he whom his brethren sold as a slave, and whom his father still continued to mourn as dead, is raised in the course of a few years by one of those rapid changes by no means uncommon in Eastern countries to the highest office under the king in the land of Egypt.

The years of plenty come according to Joseph's prediction, and by his directions abundance of corn is laid up in store-houses. The years of famine next arrive. All countries flock to Egypt for bread. Among others Joseph's own brothers, with the exception of Benjamin who is kept at home by his father, repair thither. Joseph instantly recognizes them and recollects his youthful dreams, but perceiving that they do not know him, he speaks roughly to them, pretending to mistake them for spies. In vain they assert that they are true men and no spies; in vain they inform him that they belong to a family in Canaan, in which there had once been twelve sons, of whom the youngest was then with his father, and one was not. He still affects to disbelieve them, having indeed no reason to trust them as to what they said of Benjamin, and insists that, in proof of the truth of their story, one of them shall go home and bring his brother, while the rest remain in Egypt. After keeping them in confinement for three days, however, he contents himself with detaining one of them a prisoner, and permits the others to depart to bring down Benjamin.

On the way home, they stop at an inn or caravansary, and are filled with astonishment and alarm, when one of them, on opening his sack, to give food to his ass, finds the price of the corn in the mouth of the sack. At length they arrive at their father's home, and tell him their singular story. Jacob is filled

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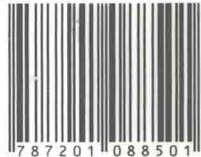
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