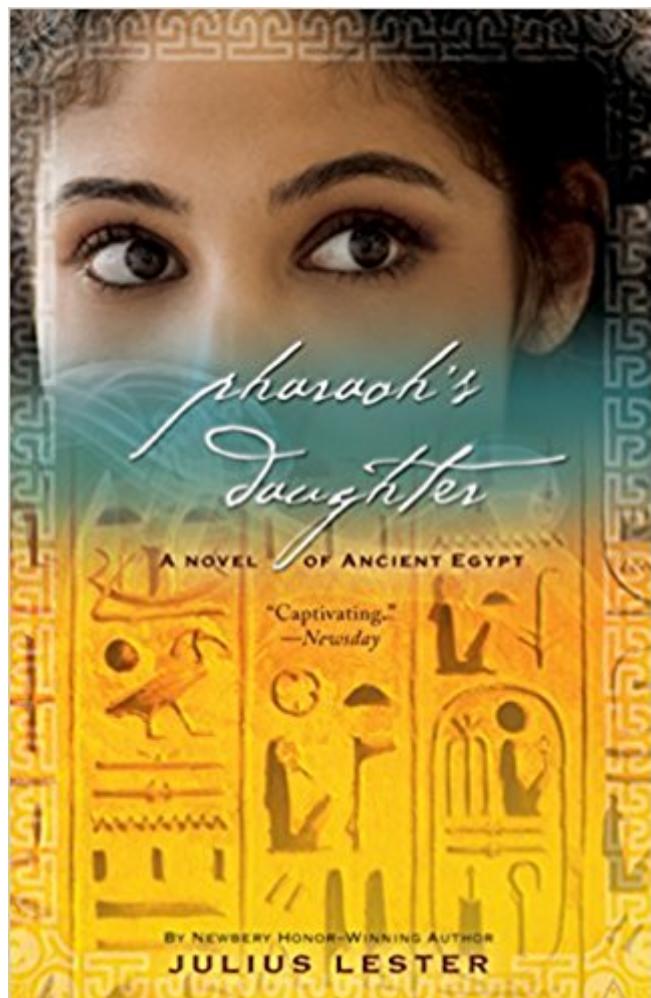


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# Pharaoh's Daughter: A Novel Of Ancient Egypt



## **Synopsis**

Born into slavery, adopted as an infant by a princess, and raised in the palace of mighty Pharaoh, Moses struggles to define himself. And so do the three women who love him: his own embittered mother, forced to give him up by Pharaoh's decree; the Egyptian princess who defies her father and raises Moses as her own child; and his headstrong sister Almah, who discovers a greater kinship with the Egyptian deities than with her own God of the Hebrews. Told by Moses and his sister Almah from alternating points of view, this stunning novel by Newbery Honor-author Julius Lester probes questions of identity, faith, and destiny.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 182 pages

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (54 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

As I was searching some Listmania lists for young adult fiction (looking a novel to assign my class), I happened to come across this one. The premise sounded great: telling a familiar Bible story through the eyes of a minor character. However, I was disappointed in some aspects of the book after actually reading it. Julius Lester does some very good things in this novel: he stays true to the Bible AND comes as close as he can to presenting the actual historical period. When reading the author's notes at the end of the book, he explains some of the things he included (or avoided including) to make the book as historically accurate as possible. I also very much like the "God is orchestrating things; He has a plan" theme that runs through the book. It believe it would lead to some very good theological discussions. The rivalry (and reasons behind it) are revealed so that the

Biblical story of Moses is put in an easily imaginable historical context. Finally, Lester's characters are highly developed and quite interesting. Although this book is excellent for many reasons, I have decided against assigning to my students (5th) in the Lutheran school I teach in. One reason is that one of the main characters (a twelve-year-old) talks about her breasts too much for the boys I teach to feel comfortable with. Furthermore, being a male teacher, I don't think either the girls or I would feel comfortable reading such passages aloud in class. I know that as girls become women, the size of their breasts are important to them, but it seems as if the majority of the young adult novels I read need to have the main character harp on her breast size and her menstrual cycle.

The Bible does not name the sister of Moses who watched him while he hid in a basket on the Nile, but the Hebrew word used describes a woman of marriageable age. Could Moses have had another sister? Julius Lester uses the viewpoint of this imagined--but very possible--sister to tell the story of the Habiru (Hebrew) and Khemetian (Egyptian) peoples during the time of Mosis' (Moses') upbringing in the court of Ramesses II. The author uses ancient Egyptian and Hebrew words and names whenever possible to remove images of The Ten Commandments and Prince of Egypt from readers' minds. He asks us to consider that the story we've been told was from the viewpoint of the Hebrews, embittered by years of slavery; he asks us to consider the Egyptians anew. The author attempts to give an historically accurate view of the New Kingdom of Egypt. In order to keep the story as authentic as possible, he has Mosis speak in an unusual way, attempting to create his "heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue" description from the Old Testament. Stories are even more subtle than non-fiction and evoke even more emotion and can therefore be even more persuasive, especially to young minds that have not moved into the final stages of development, so this book should only be read by children who have entered the third and final stage of mental development (as discussed in [The Well-Trained Mind](#)). To Christian parents, this is a Biblical story told from a non-Biblical perspective. The point-of-view for most of the book is Mosis' sister, Almah, who embraces the gods and goddesses of Egypt, even becoming a priestess of Hathor. There is nudity in religious circumstances and lust is discussed briefly.

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