

DELIVER US FROM EGYPT

by Hope Auer

The sun was high overhead, so bright and hot that waves of heat rose from the sand and made the air hard to breathe. Jarah sat on the parched ground in front of her little mud hut. Next to her were several broken baskets. In Jarah's lap, a new basket was rapidly being formed. But Jarah's young face was sad and her eyes were red as if she had been crying. She suddenly gave a low cry and raised her hand to her face. The sharp reeds had once again cut open her finger. Blood was dripping onto her handiwork. Jarah put the injured finger into her mouth, sucking on it to stop the bleeding. Tears were filling her eyes again.

"I have to finish this," she whispered desperately. "Mother needs this basket to bring the cloth to the queen. And we're already late again. Mother's been late for three deliveries now."

A harsh voice rang out from the mud hut. "Jarah! I need that basket. Hurry up! Shayna, finish that cloth."

Jarah heard the loom clacking frantically as her older sister rushed to obey her mother's command. Jarah grabbed another reed and started to weave it into the basket.

“Almost done,” she sighed.

Lemuel, her ten-year-old brother, came around the house with a basket full of food from their family’s garden. He was carrying their baby brother, Raphael, on his back, and four-year-old Tirzah followed behind him at a trot, chewing on her thumb. Lemuel’s eyes widened.

“You’re still here? I thought the cloth was supposed to be brought to the palace this morning.”

“It was,” Jarah said tearfully. “Mother isn’t done yet. And remember what the overseer said last time he was here?” she finished, gulping.

Lemuel’s face was grim. He looked so strong, protective, and worried. “We’ve got to hurry.”

“Jarah!” her mother yelled again. Jarah clutched the almost finished basket and darted into the house, followed by her siblings.

Shayna was folding several lengths of cloth as her mother continued to weave. “Jarah, help me!” Shayna ordered. Jarah grabbed the other end of the sheet and helped her older sister fold the cloth neatly.

“I just need to finish this one length... I’m almost done...” Mother muttered under her breath. Jarah glanced out of the corner of her eye and saw her mother bending over the loom, eyes intense, her black curly hair nearly hiding her face.

“Mother.” Jarah heard Lemuel’s hoarse whisper. “What?” Mother barked, not even bothering to look up. “The Egyptian overseer’s here.” Everyone froze. Jarah’s heart was pounding in her ears. That could only mean one thing... Mother’s hazel eyes were full of terror. She suddenly leapt from the stool and shoved the cloth into a basket. She ran towards the door, but it was too late. The Egyptian overseer was already in the open doorway, glowering at them. He was holding a whip.

Mother quickly tried to regain her composure. She straightened to her full height and asked, “What do you want?”

The man stared at her for a moment, then abruptly raised his hand and struck mother across the face. Mother cried out as she fell to the ground. The basket crashed to the floor and the new white cloth spilled out onto the dirt.

“Don’t you dare talk to me like that, you Hebrew slave,” the overseer said between ground teeth.

DELIVER US FROM EGYPT

Jarah slowly backed up against a wall. She saw that Shayna was holding little Raphael and Tirzah close to her side. Lemuel quietly sunk to the ground, picked up the linen, and put it back in the basket. The overseer didn't even notice. His eyes were glued on their mother's pale face.

His hand shot out, grabbed Mother's arm, and yanked her to her feet. "Why are you late again?" he roared.

"Sir, I requested more help in order to complete the tasks given to me. The elderly woman who was helping me has died. No one has filled her place. I can't do this work on my own. I told you this last week."

"Let me make something clear to you," the overseer growled dangerously, moving even closer to her. "Slaves don't request anything from the Egyptians. They do what they're told. And for three weeks now you've failed in your tasks. And now I'm getting punished for it." He turned around and Jarah could not suppress a low gasp. Six terrible, bleeding cuts stripped the man's back. He had been whipped. He had been whipped because of them.

"What do you have to say for yourself?" the overseer yelled, spinning around and catching Mother's wrists.

"I'm sorry, sir. I'll do better next time," Mother gasped out, struggling to get away from his vice-like grip.

A deep, evil chuckle came from the man. "Listen, you good for nothing filth!" He spat the word and a wicked gleam came into his eye. "There won't be a next time. You've had enough 'next times.' And now it's time for you to receive the wrath of the pharaoh!"

He flung mother to the ground. Shayna screamed and cowered in the corner, clinging to Tirzah and Raphael as if her life depended on it. Jarah found herself clutching Lemuel's arm as the evil man drew the whip back and struck their mother. Again and again he struck her. Jarah was crying. Shayna was screaming and pleading. Lemuel was trembling with fear and rage.

"Please, please stop!" Shayna wailed.

Jarah was so scared that her vision became blurry. Everything was spinning. All she could see was her Mother's agonized face. But she didn't cry out.

HOPE AUER

Why won't he stop? Jarah thought. Fear was washing over her like a wave. With every whine and crack of the whip her heart stopped beating. She was so terrified that she felt she might faint. Why won't he stop?

Mother was still lying on the ground. She slowly turned away, trying to avoid the whip. Jarah stifled a scream. Her mother's back was covered in blood. Jarah wanted to help, wanted to do something. But she was frozen to the spot, petrified.

Then the man did something terrible. He threw the whip away and hit Mother with his fists. A wild, inhuman cry came from their mother's shaking frame. Jarah suddenly realized, The overseer wants to kill my mother!

"No! Stop!" she screamed at the top of her lungs. Shayna was shrieking. He hit Mother again. There was another heart-wrenching cry.

Jarah heard Lemuel cry out in rage. He ran and jumped on the overseer's back, punching him with his fists. The overseer slung Lemuel off of his back and threw him into the wall where he lay, motionless. Jarah's jaw dropped as she realized that even Lemuel couldn't save their mother now.

"Jarah! Go find Father and Eitan! Go!"

Jarah heard Shayna's blood-curtailing scream and it forced her into action. Yes! I must find Father! Jarah bolted from the house, away from the blood, the pain, the screams, and the evil man. She ran faster than she had ever ran before. She reached the Nile River in just a few minutes, but her father wasn't there. Panicked, she ran to the mud pits. But he was nowhere to be found.

"Where's my father?" she wailed. But none of the Hebrew slaves seemed to hear her. They just plodded along hopelessly, bent upon their tasks. Through a blur of tears, Jarah hurried to the hay fields to the place where they made bricks, and back to the Nile. Everything was spinning as her feet pounded against the hard sand. Her lungs were heaving for air. Abruptly, Jarah found herself entering her home. But wait... She hadn't found Father! She had to find Father! Then she froze.

Mother lay on the floor. Her face was gray. Her leg was bent at a weird angle. And she wasn't moving.

DELIVER US FROM EGYPT

Shayna was weeping over her body, “Please, no! No! I have to help her! I have to!”

The room was twirling around Jarah. She fell back against the wall. She felt her chest heaving and hot tears were racing down her cheeks. She heard herself sob out, “No! Please Yahweh, bring my mother back!”

Warm, strong arms were now being wrapped around Jarah’s shaking frame. A wet cheek was pressed against the top of her head and she heard Lemuel’s shaky voice say, “It’s all right, Jarah...”

Everything went black.



Jarah heard muffled voices. It sounded like someone was crying. She thought she also heard her father praying...

Jarah struggled to open her eyes but her eye-lids felt heavy. Had she actually opened her eyes? Everything was so dark. Little dots of light started to swim into focus. The light stung Jarah’s eyes and made her head throb. She saw the form of her oldest brother, Eitan, sitting on a stool with his head in his hands. Jarah blinked a couple of times and was able to see Lemuel standing as still as a statue in the far corner. Blood dribbled down his cheek from a cut on his head. Raphael and Tirzah sat on either side of him, each clinging to one of his legs and both sucking their thumbs. Their eyes were huge with fright. Jarah followed the direction of their gaze and drew in her breath sharply. Her Mother’s body was curled up on a cot. A bloody cloth was draped over her. Her leg was tied against a long piece of wood and stuck out straight and rigid. She was very still. It didn’t even look like she was breathing. Shayna was kneeling next to the bed, changing a saturated bandage. Her eyes were red and swollen and her cheeks were pale. Father stood besides her, gently stroking their mother’s curls. He was praying. Then he laid a hand on Shayna’s head and whispered, tremulously, “You’ve done a wonderful job, Shayna.” Shayna choked back a sob and nodded her head slowly, tears spilling onto her cheeks.

What’s wrong with Mother?

Jarah tried to sit up, but the movement made her feel dizzy. She fell back onto the cot with a low moan. Eitan's head jerked up and his deep eyes looked into hers.

"Jarah," he said, softly. He quickly stepped over to the bed and sat down next to her. "Are you well?"

Jarah nodded her head as Eitan helped her rise to a sitting position. "Is Mother all right? Will she get better?" she whispered, looking searchingly into Eitan's face.

Eitan's eyes were brimming with tears. He took a deep breath. "I... I don't know."

Jarah bit her lip. Mother is dying. She knew it. She was too stunned to say anything, too stunned to think. Eitan put his arms around her and drew her close. Jarah buried her head in his chest, hoping in vain to block out the horrible sight and memory of what had happened and what was happening now. Her tears soaked Eitan's tunic, and she realized sorrowfully that Eitan's body was shaking from silent sobs.



“We must take turns watching her. Whenever she wakes up, we must get her to eat and drink.”

Jarah sat outside next to the fire pit. Her father was in the house telling Eitan, Shayna, and Lemuel what to do to help their mother live through the night. No one else was outside. The setting sun painted the sand dunes in front of her bright gold, pink, and brown. The Nile River glowed crimson. Jarah chanced a look at the dark city of Rameses to her right. The towering palace and temples and statues looked gray, evil, and menacing. Evil came from Rameses. Evil men and evil soldiers and the evil Pharaoh who made the Hebrews slaves. Jarah shuddered and drew her knees up to her chest. She couldn't cry any more. Her heart was numb with grief and fear. She didn't want to sleep. Already the horrific scene was replaying itself in her mind over and over and over again. And what if Mother died? Jarah and Mother had never gotten along. Mother was controlling and believed in the scary gods of the Egyptians, not like Father who was loving and kind and believed in Yahweh. But still, Jarah would

DELIVER US FROM EGYPT

never have wanted Mother to die. She didn't know what to think. She didn't know which god to trust. She had been a slave her whole life. Nothing good had ever happened to her.

"No," she muttered, "there can't be a god who cares about me..."

"There is a God who cares, Jarah," a voice said behind her. She jumped. It was Father.

"Yahweh loves you. I know you can't sense that now. But Yahweh is here, looking out for us. One day, maybe sometime soon, He will deliver us. Evil won't win. Whatever happens with your mother – and with us – it's all in Yahweh's plan. And Yahweh always works things for good. No matter how bad it seems, one day it will all become right."

Jarah stared at Father. She wanted to believe him. But right now... she didn't know if she could. She shook her head, trying to sort out her thoughts. She looked up and saw that her father was gone. Jarah sighed, her heart even heavier now than it had been before.

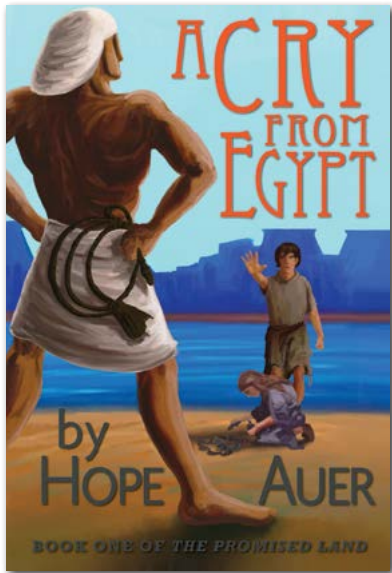
"Yahweh, I want to believe in You. You've given Father and Eitan peace and joy that I don't have. But... I don't understand. Father says you have a plan to free us some day. But if you love us, why are we slaves now? Did we do something wrong?"

The sun had set. The sky overhead was a velvety purple. Jarah saw one lone, bright star shining brightly. She took a long breath.

"Yahweh," she whispered, "if You're really out there... Please, make my mother better. And please... deliver us."

THE END

Want To Read More?...



Want to read more about Jarah and her family?

ORDER *A CRY FROM EGYPT* NOW!

Exciting, High Interest Fiction
Biblically and Historically Accurate
Written and Illustrated by Homeschool Graduates

“I have worked as a writing teacher and editor for my entire adult life. I have read more stories from young authors than I can count, but Hope’s work is the first to make me think of Tolkien, Lewis, and Peretti when I read it.”

– Mrs. B of WritingFoundations.com

“After reading the first chapter with the children, I snuck off to read more. I stayed up late to finish it. That’s how drawn into Jarah’s world I was.”

– Linda B at Homeschooling 6

[Read more reviews](#) or [Order your copy now](#) at
<http://acryfromegypt.com>



GREAT WATERS PRESS
MAKING BIBLICAL FAMILY LIFE PRACTICAL
WWW.GREATWATERSPRESS.COM