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WELCOME TO THE RETOLD WORLD MYTHS

The world is full of variety. Every country—indeed, every locale—has its own language, food, and view of the world. Another very special expression of this variety is mythology.

Myths tell a great deal about a culture. Such stories show how a people explained the mysteries of life and nature. Where did the stars come from? How did the human race spring into being? Why do people die? Myths provide fascinating answers to such questions.

Myths also express a culture's values. The story of a man's quest to save his people shows how heroism, strength, goodness, and wisdom are defined. And along with teaching values, myths teach lessons. For instance, a myth might demonstrate how dangerous it is to insult a stranger.

Finally, myths are simply great stories. Filled with drama, beauty, and even humor, they still attract listeners thousands of years after they were first told.

RETOLD UPDATE

This book presents a collection of eight adapted myths from around the world. All the variety, excitement, and humorous details of the original versions are here. But in the *Retold* versions of the stories, long sentences and paragraphs have been split up.

In addition, a word list has been added at the beginning of each story. Each word defined on that list is printed in dark type within the story. If you forget the meaning of one of these words, just check the list to review the definition.

You'll also find footnotes at the bottom of some story

pages. These notes identify people or places, explain ideas, show pronunciations, or provide cultural information.

We offer two other features you may wish to use. One is a map of the world on the following page. This map locates the region where each of the myths was first told.

You will find more cultural information in the Insights sections after each myth. These revealing and sometimes amusing facts will give you insight into the ancient cultures, the tellers of the myths, or related myths.

One last word. Since many of these myths have been retold often, many versions exist. So a story you read here may differ from a version you read elsewhere.

Now on to the myths. Remember, when you read the *Retold World Myths*, you bring each story back to life. We hope you'll discover the beauty and excitement of these stories from around the world.

The Death of Osiris

A myth from Egypt

*The kingdom of Egypt
is wisely ruled by the powerful
gods Osiris and Isis.
But even the gods aren't safe from
the jealous schemes of others.
Osiris' evil brother, Set, wants the throne
for himself. And he's figured out a
way to get it—by offering his
brother a special "gift."*

Osiris¹ closed his eyes and sighed wearily. Would the party never end? All this drinking and laughing and joking was giving him a headache. He was ready to go home.

Osiris looked around him. No one else acted like they were ready to leave. He sighed again. "I'll stay just a few more minutes," he said to himself. "Then I'll go home to my wife. I don't care if I *am* the guest of honor."

Osiris was Egypt's pharaoh.² But he was no ordinary king—he was also a god. He was the great-grandson of Ra, the god who had created the earth.

¹ (ō sēr'us)

² (fā' rō) Pharaoh was the title of the ancient Egyptian kings.