

Monday

I Was
There...



Step back into
Egypt's Valley
of the Kings

TUTANKHAMUN'S TOMB

Tuesday

CHAPTER ONE

It was me who saw them first. We'd gone up the mountain to search for treasure. I'd just crawled, bottom first, out of a cave. I hadn't found anything. Either the magician was wrong, or Ahmed had got the wrong cave. Ahmed was doubled up laughing.

"You do look funny!" he said. I stood up, shaking myself like a dog. "It's not funny!" I said. It was always me who got the dirty jobs! All the same I'd been glad when Ahmed had turned up to ask Uncle if I could help him find their lost goat. Anything was better than a day in the field guiding the buffalo round the water wheel. Uncle agreed to let me go at once – goats are precious. It was only when we were halfway up the mountain that Ahmed told me the real reason he'd come to fetch me – we were going to look for treasure!

A famous magician had come to the village a few

days ago to help one of the villagers find the treasure he thought was hidden somewhere on the mountain. He hadn't found it, but Ahmed said he'd told him secretly where it was. I wasn't sure I believed him. Ahmed often makes things up. Like that lost goat.

He poked his head into another cave. "Let's try this one," he said. "It's got to be here somewhere."

There were hundreds of caves on the mountain! It could be in any one of them. I shook my head. "I'm going back," I said. I began to climb over rocks and boulders, dropping down to a goat track. Grumbling, Ahmed jumped down after me. The track was narrow and in places took us very close to the edge. Stones crumbled under my feet and bounced away down the mountain. I kept my eyes on the path. If I slipped, I had a long way to fall.

I walked cautiously over to the edge to see where we were.



I nearly toppled off the cliff! I was looking almost straight down on to the tomb of Pharaoh Ramesses VI!

In front of it men were digging, heaving up big stones and carting them away.

The Valley of the Kings, where the ancient Egyptians had buried their pharaohs, was the other side of the mountain from our village. We'd climbed a lot further than we thought.

I grabbed Ahmed's arm. "Look!" I said excitedly. He shook me off. "What is it?"

Wednesday

“Come and see!”

I’d gone back over to the edge to take another look.

“What? There?” He looked at me uneasily.

I was very near the edge.

“Hurry up!” I was getting impatient.

Ahmed shuffled up to me. A snail would have crawled faster. He peered down cautiously.

“Can’t you see?” I said. “It’s the Valley of the Kings down there. They’ve come back to find the tomb.”

“So?” said Ahmed. He wasn’t as interested in our past as I was. Me, I could name all the pharaohs whose tombs had been found in the Valley.

“There’ll be treasure!” I said, sprinting off down the path.

“Gold necklaces!” Ahmed shouted, bounding after me. You just had to say treasure and Ahmed would be off like an arrow.

Who knew what we might find. Even if it was only bits of old pot, we could sell them. Lots of people came to look at the tombs in the Valley, and they always wanted souvenirs to take home. They’d buy

anything they thought was old.

Last year I’d sold them a pot Mother had thrown out in the rubbish. It wasn’t old. My brother had made it, and I had broken it. We’d made a lot of money from it that day.

There was just one problem. How were we going to get down there? We didn’t dare try the main route – guards patrolled that to keep tomb robbers out. Of course, we could carry on along the goat track. But there were loads of tracks, criss-crossing the mountain. We might not be on the right one.

There was one other way. We could climb down. I went back over to the edge again. We weren’t far to the ground here, and there were plenty of boulders and rocks for us to hold on to. “I’m going to climb down,” I called to Ahmed.

Without waiting for him, I launched myself over the side of the mountain, testing each rock and stone with my hands and feet before putting my weight on it.

I’m a good climber. Grandfather calls me “little goat”. I’d earned the nickname the day he’d caught me

climbing down into an underground tunnel. Mother had been furious when she’d found out. “Never do that again,” she’d scolded me. “You could fall or wake the *afarit*! How many times have I told you about the bad spirits that live underground?”

So I didn’t tell her about the time I’d climbed down the shaft at the back of our tomb home. Our home, like the homes of many of the people who live in the hamlets on the foothills of the mountain, is built out of an ancient tomb. Grandfather says I’m lucky to live there.

“You sleep in one of the tombs where ancient Egyptian nobles were buried,” he’d told me. It was where I’d found the *shabti*. A shabti is like a tiny mummy. Father used to make them before the knife slipped and cut off one of his fingers. The ancient Egyptians put shabtis in the pharaohs’ tombs to serve them in the Afterlife. Father had sold his to tourists who came to see the tombs.

I’d tucked the shabti into a fold of my robe, then climbed up again to show Grandfather. Grandfather

had told me it was thousands of years old.



“Look,” he’d said, pointing at the hoe it was holding.
“See that? This shabti would work for his master in the fields.”

“Like me?” I’d said.

Grandfather had smiled. “Like you, but he would have done what he was told!”

Write out the contracted form:

Can not = _____

Have not = _____

Should not = _____

Will not = _____ (challenge)

I will = _____

Could not = _____

It is = _____

It has = _____

Insert the apostrophes for contraction where they are missing:

On Saturday we went to the zoo and saw lots of animals. There were zebras, lions, elephants, horses, rabbits and monkeys. I wasn't allowed to feed the animals but I didn't mind. My favourite animal was the biggest monkey; its tail was long and fluffy. Its claws were sharp, its really scary! In one weeks time Dads taking me to the circus where I will see jugglers and acrobats. I cant wait!

Thursday

I glanced back. Ahmed had left the path and wasn't far behind me now. Ahmed was a good climber, too. He'd soon catch up with me.

I was about three quarters of the way down when the stone I was clinging to slipped out of my grasp and bounced away down the mountainside. I felt my stomach plummet inside me. In a minute that could be me! Ahmed was just behind me now. I grabbed wildly for his foot as I shot downwards. Next minute we were both rolling down the mountain together. Ahmed slid down on top of me and we bounced down the last few feet.

"That was a stupid idea!" Ahmed grumbled, picking himself up carefully. I got up, too. I felt as if I'd been shaken all over, but it hadn't been a bad fall. We hadn't been that far from the bottom when I slipped.

"At least the guards didn't see us!"

"That's because only an idiot would do what you did!"

I didn't answer. Shielding my eyes from the glare of the sun, I gazed over the Valley, searching for where

the men were digging. I soon saw. It wasn't far.

"Come on!" I said.

We tore across the Valley, our bare toes leaping over the hot sand. Even in November the Valley is hot and airless. In summer it's like being shoved head first into an oven.

It didn't take us long to reach the dig. We walked around the pit they'd dug out, peering down into it to see how far down it went. It was impossible to tell. A dusty cloud swirled upwards, and hid the bottom. Boys ran up and down, removing the rubble in baskets, vanishing and appearing again like phantoms.

I asked one of them what they were doing. Dark eyes peered at me from a face smeared with dust and dirt. "Mr Carter thinks there might be a tomb under one of those ancient huts. See those?" He jerked his thumb at the boulders the men were carting away. "That's them. What's left of them. They were used by the workers who built Ramesses VI's tomb." Grandfather had told me there were still three royal

tombs that hadn't been found – those of pharaohs Smenkhkare, Ramesses VIII, and Tutankhamun. It was Tutankhamun's tomb I wanted them to find. Grandfather had told me that Tutankhamun had been about my age when he became pharaoh. I often wondered what that must be like. To sit on a throne and get everyone to do what you wanted!

"Why does he think he'll find it under a hut?" I said.

"Because he's looked everywhere else!" The boy laughed and disappeared back into the pit.

Howard Carter, a British archaeologist, had come to dig in the Valley year after year. Few people believed he'd find a tomb now.

Next to me Ahmed yawned. "I'm bored," he said. "We won't find anything here. The foremen will see us. Let's look through the dump."

We'd seen the dump as we'd run up to the dig. All the rubbish that was being dug up was piled on to it.

I shook my head. "You go," I said. "I'll catch up with you later." Now I was here I wanted to watch. Besides, I didn't think we'd find any treasure there. Before the

rubbish was tipped on to the dump it was sieved and inspected carefully. Even small bits of pot were taken out and put on one side to be examined.

Ahmed shrugged. "Thought we'd come to look for treasure," he said.

Leaving Ahmed to poke around the rubbish, I settled down to watch, keeping a wary eye out for the foremen. I'd already spotted two. One was watching as the rubbish was sieved. Another was yelling at the basket boys to get a move on. I'd chosen a spot behind a heap of stones near the dig where I could see what they were doing without them seeing me. But every so often a cloud of dust billowed out of the pit towards me and I had to run back, too.

Voices rose and fell from the pit. They sounded cross.

"Where's the water carrier?"

"Mouth's as dry as a tomb."

"I'm thirsty."

The voices were getting louder. I realized it was because they were getting closer. I ducked down just

as one of the diggers reached the top. He looked cross and hot.

"When will we get our water!" The digger threw down his shovel, and wiped his face with his sleeve.

"Be patient!" The foreman looked harassed. "The lad's not here yet."

"Well, where is he then?"

More diggers climbed out of the pit and came to join the group by the foreman. The mutterings increased.

And then I had an idea. I could sneak off and hope he wouldn't spot me. On the other hand...

I wanted to stay, didn't I? Maybe this was my chance. I stepped up to the foreman's side.

"Let me fetch the water, Effendi," I said, careful to add that title of respect. He might be more likely to hire me then.

The foreman wheeled round and stared at me.

"Who are you?"

"Ali, Effendi." I bowed low.

"How will you fetch the water?"

Yesterday you looked at apostrophes for contraction, where the apostrophe shows a missing part of a word when words are squashed, or contracted, together.

Howard Carter was an archeologist who found historical artifacts, which belonged to people in the past; this helped us to understand what life was like in Ancient Egypt. When something belongs to you, it is a possession. A possessive apostrophe is the other reason to use an apostrophe.

Friday

I hadn't got a donkey, but I had my answer ready.



"I can carry it on my head," I said. I hitched up my robe, trying to look bigger and stronger.

The foreman folded his arms. I saw his lip curl. I waited for him to send me packing. I'd been stupid to think he'd hire me.

"Wait!" I heard an amused voice say. Someone was watching us. He was almost as dusty as everyone else but he was no workman. It was Howard Carter, the man leading the search for the tomb.

Sometimes I'd seen him ride his donkey up the mountain on the way to his house. I'd never been there, but men who had talked about a big house with a dome that was cool in summer and warm in winter.

I bowed my head respectfully as he reached us. He gave me a thoughtful look, idly picking at a tooth with his finger.

"He can use my donkey today," Mr Carter said. "The men need water, and there's no sign of the other lad. Tomorrow he can bring his own."

The foreman had opened his mouth to say something but at Mr Carter's words he shut it again. Mr Carter was the boss.

I bowed again, as Carter strode back to the dig. We had a donkey. I was sure Father would let me have it when he knew I had a job.

A donkey was brought up to me, a water jar

strapped to each flank. "Mind you behave yourself," the foreman warned as I climbed up onto its back. I dug my heels into its sides. I'd got a job! What was Ahmed going to say when I told him? And maybe I'd be here when they found that tomb!
