The British Museum



THE CURSE OF THE TOMB TO THE CURSE OF THE TONSE OF THE TOP THE

AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN PUZZLE MYSTERY

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For Isla and Etta - A.S.

For Mabli Clem, with all my love - J.W.L.



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THIEVES IN THE DESERT

"It's just SO hot here," said Nub, the desert sand burning under his bare feet.

"I know, but can't you feel how special this place is?" replied Iteti. "My father said that hundreds of important people are buried here - priests and scribes and palace officials."

"I'm not surprised they died, coming out here."

"Oi!" cried Iteti. "Don't make fun of the dead! They might be listening." Nub was about to say sorry when he heard voices. Clambering to the top of the hill, the two friends peered from behind a rock. Across the narrow valley, a group of men were hurrying over the sand, carrying jars and decorated boxes.

"Are you thinking what I'm thinking?" asked Iteti.

"Tomb robbers!" whispered Nub, shaking with anger.

on the ancient Egyptians believed that when a person died, their spirit would travel to a place called the underworld, where they would have to pass a series of tests to get into paradise. To help them on their journey, the dead person's family would bury useful objects with them, such as furniture, precious jewels and even food.

Nub and Iteti watched, horrified, as the men loaded their plunder on to two donkeys and headed out of the valley. But as the thieves left, Nub saw one of them drop a small scrap of papyrus.

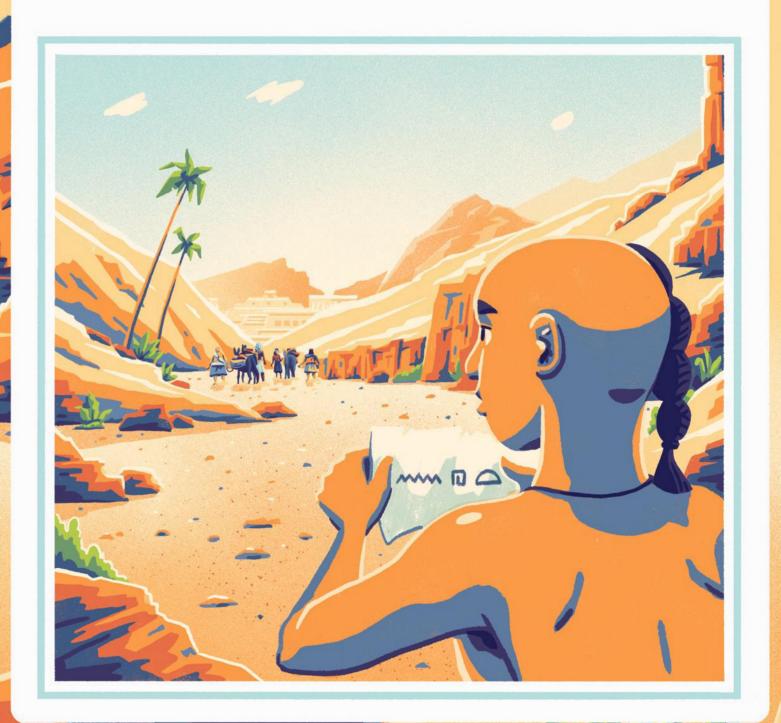
Carefully, Nub and Iteti edged down into the valley and picked it up.

"Look, there's a message on it!" said Nub.

PUZZLE What does the message on the scrap of papyrus say? It is written using signs called hieroglyphs. Use the guide at the back of the book to crack this ancient Egyptian code and discover the secret word the robbers left behind.

CODE CLUE

Many of the signs the ancient Egyptians used stand for sounds. In this case, each sign represents the sound of a letter.







CROSSING THE NILE

The mighty River Nile stretched out before them, 500 metres wide and alive with activity. There were boats of all kinds, fishermen, traders carrying goods and people drawing water along the banks. Nub asked a farmer collecting water with a shaduf where they could get a ferry across to

the pyramids.

"Just there," said the man, pointing at a wooden jetty. "But you'll have to pay for it."

Why are

we going into the reeds again? Iteti looked at the bracelets on her arm. "I could trade some of my jewellery?" "Phew, good idea," replied Nub. "It's better than half an onion." Soon they were on the windy river in a small wooden boat. The two friends were thinking the same thing: would they cross safely and what would they do if they caught up with the gang?

PUZZLE

There is only one safe route across the river for Nub and Iteti's little boat. Can you find it? Can you also spot the two mischievous stowaway monkeys?

Yikes! Which way do we go, Nub? Careful, that crocodile is HUNGRY!

DID YOU KNOW?

The River Nile was remarkably important to the ancient Egyptians. It brought them food by watering and enriching the farmland, allowed trade with other people, made travel easier and provided fish and water all year round. It did have its dangers: strong currents, floods, hippos and child-eating crocodiles!