*Spanish Beach takes place about five months after the start of Arts of Sekhmet*

Elanor was dozing in the shade of a beach umbrella. Even though she had brown skin, she wasn’t someone who sun-baked. She had spent several hours in the water, swimming, body surfing the one meter waves, and showing off by seeing how far she could swim under water on one breath.

She was here on holiday with her companion Luke, her daughter Sarah and Sarah’s husband and children, Elanor’s grand children. They’d all gone for ice-cream, leaving Elanor dozing and minding their spot on the beach.

Elanor was drowsily listening to the waves, bird cries, voices and excited cries of children playing. “Wake up! You are needed. Walk to this spot in the dunes as quickly as you can.” The voice was mellifluous, impeccable English of a BBC announcer. A picture flashed into her mind of a place she recognized, where the sand dunes were higher and hard packed.

Instantly Elanor was wide awake. There was no one nearby. One of the guides must have communicated with her, invisible until she activated her sorcerous sight.

“Yes. Please hurry, children will die.” There was no emotion in that voice, it might have been reading the news.

Getting to her feet, she tapped her right hand against her left palm, and watched as the lines of the world became visible. The guide was a featureless, narrow, metallic grey cylinder about three meters high and twenty centimeters in diameter floating near by.

Elanor slung her bag over her shoulder then spread her hands toward all their belongings. “Guard and protect. No one but us can touch them.” A sparkling shimmer encased the patch of beach. She turned to face the guide. “Tell Luke at once.” Then she set off across the sand at a run.

The destination wasn’t far. As she neared the spot she spied children playing in a tunnel dug into the dunes. “Children! Come out of there! It’s dangerous!”

Two scrambled into the tunnel, another stopped at the entrance and made faces. A moment later there was a dull rumbling and the tunnel collapsed. The child at the entrance was buried up to his shoulders, and began screaming in terror.

*I can pull him free, but what about the others?* Elanor thought. *How many are buried and how do I free them before they die?*

The guide’s voice answered her “There are four boys including the one at the entrance. You must use sorcery.”

Right. I’ll know what to do, Elanor thought. She grasped the shoulders of the screaming child, commanding “Come free of the sand.” There was a surge of warmth through her arms and hands, and with a jerk she pulled the child free. She wanted to comfort the child, but there wasn’t time, the others would die. Instead she set him down away from the tunnel entrance and turned back. What now? How to shift the sand?

“Use your power to shift, use your hands to guide.” was the guide’s response.

Elanor straddled the collapsed tunnel and thrust her hands into the warm sand. It was cooler around her fingers. You can do this, she told herself. Holy mother, help me to get the children out alive and unhurt. There was a stronger surge of warmth and several wheel barrow loads of sand flew between her legs. A pair of bare feet became visible.

Elanor stepped forward another meter and tried again. Half the boy’s body was visible now and she leaped into the trench and dragged the boy free. He coughed and then screamed, reassuring her that he would survive. Elanor leaped back onto the dune to continue digging. By the time she had the third boy free people had started to collect. Several women grabbed the children and attempted to comfort them, two men tried to help with the digging.

“Are there any more?” one asked.

“One more, I think.” They were digging at the face of the dune, and would be engulfed when she sent more sand flying. “Please get on top.” That was an order, not a request. Now that she was doing something, Elanor felt in charge. She leaped back to the top of the dune. “Stand clear!”

A large quantity of sand went flying, and Elanor sank into the dune as a hollow space partly collapsed beneath her. She regained her balance and bent to put her hands into the mound when a child scrambled past her legs and out into the open.

Elanor turned to the gathering crowd. “Does anyone know if there are any more inside?” Then she looked at the guide.

“That is all.” The guide replied.

One of the boys shook his head, and a woman relayed his answer. “He says they are all out. It’s a miracle no one was hurt.”

“They were very lucky I saw them playing. They would have died if we hadn’t dug them out straight away.” Pass the responsibility around, and no one would remember that she had shifted prodigious quantities of sand with each stroke. Luke was right, perform sorcery but give people a plausible explanation, and they would rationalise away the sorcery.

Now they were all free she took time to study each child’s luminous energy field to verify each was unharmed. As far as she could tell there were no signs of harm, but she needed Luke’s experience to be sure.

She spied Luke, her daughter and grand children. “Luke! You missed the excitement.” If he were here, then he had already checked the children for injury, and she could stop being concerned.

“Not quite. I am very proud of you. Now the children are safe, no one will remember how quickly you dug them free, only that you dug them free. We should leave before the police or the press arrive.”

The grand children were agog with excitement over the rescue, her daughter was shaking her head. “That’s my mum, always rescuing people. If we hadn’t left you to mind our things, they would have died.” Then she remembered. “Oh, here’s your ice cream. It will melt if you aren’t quick to eat it.”

“We’ll help Grandma!” the grand children volunteered. They walked back to the umbrella, still talking about the rescue.