

# Echoes in the Dust

## ■■■■■ A Short Story by AI Prompt

### Prompt:

Write a vivid short story (500–800 words) about a futuristic time-traveling detective named **Cass Arden**, who is sent back to **18th Dynasty Egypt** (around 1350 BCE) to solve the mysterious disappearance of a royal scribe.

Include:

- Description of **ancient Thebes** and the **Valley of the Kings**
- A blend of **futuristic technology** with ancient tools and customs
- Dialogue between Cass and an Egyptian high priest or local investigator
- A plot twist involving a **false suspect** and a **hidden motive**
- A conclusion that ties Cass's future tech to solving the ancient case

**Style:** cinematic, immersive, and intelligent—mixing Sherlock Holmes with Stargate.

Thebes was not silent—it pulsed with life even in its golden dawn. Papyrus boats slid along the Nile like silver needles. Priests murmured prayers. And in the Valley of the Kings, the stone whispered secrets beneath the sand. Cass Arden stood alone at the edge of the tombs, her chrono-visor scanning for temporal residue. The lens cast a soft blue glow against the amber cliffs. Her mission was clear: find Menhotep, a royal scribe who had vanished days before rewriting a decree that would shift the line of succession. Cass tapped her earpiece. “No chrono-anomalies. Just heat and dust. Beginning local intel sweep.” A voice responded through static—her AI handler, Juno. “Remember: Do not disrupt the timeline. No direct interference.” “Only footprints, no fingerprints,” Cass replied. She entered Thebes under the guise of a foreign herbalist, her translator implant adjusting dialects as needed. Her first stop was the Temple of Amun, where the high priest Nekka agreed to speak. Inside the cool shade of stone columns, Nekka watched her with a gaze both suspicious and hollow. “Menhotep was a cautious man. He recorded truths, not beliefs. That was his mistake.” “You think he was silenced?” “I think the gods are loud when men whisper too much.” Cass didn’t believe in gods. She believed in data. By midday, she had visited Menhotep’s quarters—no signs of struggle, but his reed pens had been snapped deliberately. A papyrus fragment remained, tucked under his sleeping mat. Cass ran it through her wrist-scanner: thermal traces suggested it had been placed there recently. “Juno,” she whispered. “The ink is mixed with lapis—a technique forbidden to scribes. Only the Queen’s artisans use that blend.” That night, beneath stars older than memory, Cass tracked pigment traces to a hidden chamber behind the artisans’ quarter. There, she found a man cowering—Bek, a potter’s apprentice. “I didn’t kill him,” Bek wept. “I only hid the body.” Cass froze. “You what?” “He came to speak with the Queen’s steward. I followed him, curious. They argued—Menhotep accused him of rewriting

the decree in secret. He threatened to tell the priests." "And then?" "The steward struck him with a ceremonial weight. I panicked and dragged the body into the catacombs. I swear I meant no harm!" Cass's visor confirmed the story. Blood traces. Sand disruption. Timeline stable. "Why confess to me?" "Because your eyes glow with fire, and your words come from the stars." She sealed the tomb. A scribe buried in silence, truth mummified with lies. But Cass wasn't done. At sunrise, she met Nekka once more. "The false steward has fled," she said. "And Menhotep?" "Let the Pharaoh believe he vanished with the gods. Let the real decree stand." Nekka nodded slowly. "Then justice lives. Even if buried." Cass touched her chrono-dial. The air shimmered, the desert hummed. Time folded inward. As she vanished from Thebes, a breeze passed through the Valley, as if history itself exhaled.