

LEVELED BOOK • U

Don't Wake the Mummy



Written by N. M. Ryan • Illustrated by Brock Nicol

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Chapter One

“To speak the name of the dead is to make them live again,” the tour guide whispered ominously. The class giggled at what they thought to be just another staged part of the tour.

“Throughout the tomb,” he continued, “and especially when we enter the burial chamber, we must refer to the mummy as ‘The King’ or ‘Pharaoh.’ Is that understood?” The group members nodded their agreement as they quickly realized this was not another superstition. I knew the guide had been telling the truth because I had read about it on the Internet in preparation for our class trip. Now here we were, in Egypt, inside an actual pyramid, on our way down to the burial chamber to look at an actual mummy.

"Come along children. Step lively." Mrs. Crabwalk's **shrill** voice rose above the noise, and everyone **obediently** started to file out of the ritual shaft in pairs—everyone except for Simon. I found him at the back of the room trying to decipher the hieroglyphics on the wall. "Simon Montier, what would you do without me?" I teased. "Honestly, sometimes I think you actually want to get left behind." He didn't care; he was curious about everything and wasn't happy unless he had a problem to solve.

"Amy, look! I've figured out what this means," Simon said. I glanced back and checked the progress of the **queue**. Only half of the group had filed out of the room, so I figured we had a couple of minutes left. I definitely wanted to hear what Simon had found out, but I absolutely did not want to get in trouble with Mrs. Crabwalk.



"It says here that they pulled the mummy's brain out through its nose." Simon grinned at the grossness of it all. The guide hadn't mentioned any of the details Simon was describing. I guess the guide thought it would be too scary for our fourth-grade class. I had to admit, it was pretty revolting, yet I found myself listening to Simon translate the entire **mummification** process.

"Yuck!" I wrinkled my face in disgust, turning away from the last picture on the wall just in time to see the last two students leaving the chamber. My **revulsion** was quickly replaced by my need to stay out of trouble, so I grabbed Simon by the shirt and dragged him toward the door. We waited for Mrs. Crabwalk to turn the other way, and then we successfully slipped into the back of the line.

Our classmates stomped and chattered their way up a wide flight of stairs, down a narrow corridor, and into the next chamber. Simon stopped to inspect every insect and object that crossed our paths. I had to drag him back to the line at least three times. Finally, we all crowded into a room where the walls were covered with images of the pharaoh and several gods. The guide motioned for everyone to gather around

one of the images. He launched into an explanation of the relationship between the pharaoh and his people and how the pharaoh was connected to the gods. Of course, I already knew this story, but it was a hundred times more fascinating listening to it while looking at the actual **hieroglyphics** on the walls than reading about it in school. Simon, however, did not find it as interesting as I did and had decided to translate his own story. He stayed close enough to the group, so I decided to leave him alone.

The guide finished his narrative on the life of the pharaoh and made his way to the back of the room. He paused in the doorway and called for everyone's attention. "Before us is the burial chamber where the mummy of the great king



lies.” The room went completely silent. The guide had captured everyone’s interest, even Simon’s. “Enter if you dare!” he shouted and then disappeared into the darkness of the burial chamber. Simon and I agreed it was all very theatrical, but pretty cool. We joined the line and walked, single file, into the tomb.

Exclamations of surprise echoed around the chamber as the red **sarcophagus** came into our view. This room was much smaller than the rest, and we all crowded around, smashing elbows to get a closer view as the guide slowly raised the lid to reveal the full-sized mummy inside. Shrieks arose from a group of girls who scooted to the back, **vacating** prime space in front. Simon and I squeezed our way toward the sarcophagus and looked in awe at the mummy.

A group of boys eagerly pushed themselves between us. I held my spot as long as I could, but there was just too much shoving. I finally managed to squeeze my way out of the tightly packed mass of bodies and went looking for Simon. He was sitting in the corner reading an ancient-looking book filled with hundreds of illustrations. I peered over his shoulder at page after page of strange pictures of pharaohs in boats on journeys to mysterious places.



Chapter Two

"Where are they going?" I asked. "I'm working on it," Simon mumbled. "But I think they're traveling in the underworld." I glanced over my shoulder to check on the others and saw they had already left the tomb. I jumped up in a panic and ran to the next room. "Everyone's gone, Simon!" I shouted from there. I ran back to the burial chamber to get him. "Simon, come on! We're going to get in trouble with Mrs. Crabwalk."

He didn't even look at me. Impatiently, I stomped over and grabbed his arm.

"I figured it out!" he shouted. "The picture relates the journey that King Amenhotep II took in some sort of solar-powered boat on his way to the sun god."

I dropped his arm and felt a look of horror spread over my face.

Simon was immediately apologetic. “I’m sorry, Amy. I didn’t mean to keep us here so long. Don’t worry. Maybe Mrs. Crabwalk won’t notice our absence if we hurry.”

“You said his name,” I whispered.

“Whose name? Do you mean King Amenhotep?”

“*Shhhh.* Stop saying it. Don’t you know that if you speak the name of the dead, you make them live again?”

His eyes widened with **comprehension**. “Oh, no—I forgot.” He slapped his forehead with the palm of his hand. “How could I be so stupid? I read about that, and it even mentions it here in this book,” Simon said as he fumbled with the book. It flipped out of his hands and landed with a thud.

We both looked at the book lying on the dirt floor near the closed sarcophagus in front of us. For an entire minute, we didn’t breathe or blink, but nothing happened. “I guess it really is just a superstition,” I said with a sigh of relief. We headed for the door.



Chapter Three

Then, a low, scraping noise stopped us in our tracks. We turned back and watched in horror as the mummy slowly opened the lid of the red sarcophagus.

“This can’t be happening,” we both squeaked at the same time. I felt as if my feet had grown roots and fastened me to the ground. “Oh, we’re going to get in so much trouble,” I moaned. “How are we going to solve this problem?”

“The book!” Simon exclaimed and ran back into the room to get it.

The sarcophagus was now completely open, and the mummy slowly sat up. He was directly between Simon and the doorway. Simon was trapped.

"Over here!" I yelled, distracting the mummy enough for Simon to escape. He grabbed the book and ran right by the mummy, pulling me out the door after him.

We sped down the stairs and hid behind one of the pillars at the far end of the next room. My heart was beating so fast, I could barely speak. "What...are...we...going...to...do...now?" I gasped.

"Don't worry, I'll figure it out. Just keep an eye out for the mummy while I search this book for answers," he said. So I crouched down and peeked out from behind the pillar, waiting for the mummy to find us. "I think I found something," he whispered. But it was too late. The mummy had entered the room and was coming down the stairs toward us.

"Save it for later. We have to get out of here now," I insisted, yanking Simon up by the back of his collar and rushing him out of the chamber into the long narrow corridor.

"I don't think he saw us," I whispered. But I had spoken too soon. The mummy had entered the corridor and was heading toward us. We made a dash for the next chamber and hid behind another pillar in the back of the room. I resumed guard duty and kept an eye on the door.

Simon quickly flipped through the pages of the book, frantically trying to locate the answers he had just found. "DARN IT!" he shouted. "There's a page missing from this book. This picture only tells us what happens *after* they make him a mummy. But I know I've seen the picture we need somewhere."





Chapter Four

Simon mumbled and started to pace about the room. I couldn't believe it; if Simon wasn't able to solve this problem, we were really going to be in trouble. I started to panic. "Why did you have to be staring at those pictures on that wall instead of listening to the guide's warning?" I grilled Simon. "If you had been paying attention, we wouldn't be in this mess."

Shouting at Simon didn't make me feel any better, and I realized I also had forgotten to tell Simon about the guide's warning. I was just about to apologize when he jumped up and hugged me.

"That's it! The pictures in the ritual shaft. That's where I saw it. Thanks, Amy. That was good thinking." He ran ahead, leaving me all alone in the room with the mummy fast approaching.

"Wait for me!" I screamed, running after him.

Simon was already hard at work when I burst into the room. "Quick, Amy, write this down." I swung my backpack to the dirt floor and pulled out a notebook and pen. I wrote rapidly as he dictated the words from the wall. We were finished in no time.

"What's the plan, Simon?" I turned my head first one way and then the other as I tried to watch the doorway and Simon at the same time.





Chapter Five

"First we have to lure the mummy back into the burial chamber," Simon said. "Once he's there, I'll repeat the chant to make him go back to sleep." It sounded simple enough, and I was beginning to feel confident that everything would work out . . . until Simon added, "Of course, I sure hope he decides to crawl back into the sarcophagus *before* he falls asleep. Otherwise, we're going to have to pick him up and put him there." My confidence faded, partly because I didn't like the thought of having to touch the mummy and partly because the mummy chose that moment to enter the room. And, boy, was he cranky. I guess I couldn't blame him. If I had been sleeping for over 3,000 years and someone suddenly woke me up, I'd be cranky, too.

"He's back," I whispered urgently, cramming my notebook into my pack as we got ready to **initiate** our plan. We waited until the mummy had descended the stairs before sprinting by him, back up the stairs, and into the corridor. I looked over my shoulder and saw the mummy coming after us.

"It worked. He's following us, and he's moving much faster. I guess he's wide awake now," Simon said. We raced down the stairs into the burial chamber and ducked into the annex room off to the left. Simon pulled the notebook from my pack and found the only page with writing. We waited and watched as the mummy grunted and stomped around the chamber, trying to find us. I signaled Simon to begin the chant.



“King of kings
Pharaoh of the land
Lie back down to rest
In the burning desert sand.”

Simon recited the chant from our hiding place. We watched closely to see if it was taking effect. The mummy took a step in our direction. “Quick. Read the second verse,” I said urgently, and Simon resumed the chant.

“In a red sarcophagus you were kept,
Where you spent 3,000 years in slumber.
Return now to the place you slept
And travel back to your time of wonder.”

The mummy stopped and rubbed his eyes. I had to sit on my hands to stop myself from clapping as he turned and headed toward the sarcophagus. The chant was working; the mummy climbed back into his sarcophagus and lay back down. We waited a full minute until we were satisfied he was asleep, and then we tiptoed over, slowly closed the lid, and ran out of the room.

Once we reached the next room, we grinned triumphantly and gave each other a flying high five.



Chapter Six

We had solved one problem, but we still had two more to go. First, we had to find our way out of the pyramid, and second, we had to sneak back into the group before Mrs. Crabwalk noticed we were missing. The map in the guidebook quickly led us through the chambers, down the corridors, and up the stairs into the hot desert air. But slipping back into the group **undetected** was not going to be as easy. We could see that Mrs. Crabwalk had already counted half of the students in the line.

Simon and I ran behind the tour bus, hid in a herd of camels, and finally slipped into the back of the line behind huge Harry and gigantic George. We were just in time; two minutes later she counted us as numbers forty-nine and fifty, the last two in the head count. “Okay, everyone’s here. Let’s get on the bus!” Mrs. Crabwalk shouted, and we all marched forward, two by two.

Off to our left, we saw another tour group heading down into the pyramid. “To speak the name of the dead is to make them live again,” we heard the tour guide whisper ominously. I noticed two kids at the back of the group weren’t paying attention to the guide and wondered if they would soon be experiencing an adventure similar to ours.

Simon and I sat together at the back of the bus reflecting on our **escapade**. We knew all of the kids would be amazed at what we had experienced today. We knew we would become the most popular kids at school once everyone heard how brave and smart we were. But we also knew it would have to remain our little secret if we wanted to stay out of trouble with Mrs. Crabwalk.

The bus finally pulled away, heading off to the next stop on our tour. Simon and I were so exhausted that we promptly fell asleep. We did not hear the excited chatter of the forty-eight other schoolchildren on the bus. We did not hear the tour guide's preview of the upcoming tour, and we definitely did not hear his warning not to look directly into the eyes of the statue of **Anubis**. We continued to sleep peacefully as the bus carried us closer and closer to our next adventure.



Glossary

Anubis (<i>n.</i>)	the Egyptian jackal-headed god who was believed to lead the dead into the underworld (p. 21)
comprehension (<i>n.</i>)	understanding (p. 10)
escapade (<i>n.</i>)	a risky adventure or prank (p. 20)
hieroglyphics (<i>n.</i>)	ancient Egyptian picture writing, using symbols for syllables (p. 7)
initiate (<i>v.</i>)	to begin or start (p. 17)
mummification (<i>n.</i>)	the process of making a mummy (p. 6)
obediently (<i>adv.</i>)	in a matter that obeys authority (p. 5)
ominously (<i>adv.</i>)	with a sense of threat or doom (p. 4)
queue (<i>n.</i>)	a line of people waiting (p. 5)
revulsion (<i>n.</i>)	disgust and loathing (p. 6)
sarcophagus (<i>n.</i>)	a stone coffin (p. 8)
shrill (<i>adj.</i>)	sharp or unpleasant sounding (p. 5)
triumphantly (<i>adv.</i>)	joyously in celebration of success (p. 18)
undetected (<i>adj.</i>)	without being noticed (p. 19)
vacating (<i>v.</i>)	leaving; leaving empty (p. 8)

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