



NEFERTITI'S EGYPT

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Nefertiti rose from her endless sleep and looked down at her mummified body content, spotting no changes in her majestic body. The cacophony of tourists from all over the world irritated her brain.

"Can everyone please be quiet for God's sake? I'm trying to sleep here!" she griped in Egyptian tongue.

Everyone seemed busy with something in their hands which flashed endlessly with a 'click' sound, oblivious to what she was uttering. It has been more than a thousand years—a timespan long enough for the people to innovate and develop things even smarter than themselves, she sighed.

She left after taking one last look at her tomb and her mummified body. "Huh, these kids probably don't even know what mummies are," she pondered. Shuffling along the uneven floor, she reminisced over the importance of mummies in her time.

Egyptians sought to preserve the body after death, fearing that the wandering soul might be lost if it had no corpse to return to. Mummification — preparing the body of the dead by removing perishable internal organs and embalming the remains — was a practice originally confined to royalty and beheld only by the Egyptians and no other civilisation. Poor people buried their dead in the sand, which inhibited decay. In later times, however, many Egyptians were mummified and buried in coffins on which spells were inscribed to ward off the evil and launch the spirit safely on its heavenly journey.

Nefertiti finally managed to get out of the pyramid in which she was buried, wafting past hundreds of tourists. Their fashion sense had also developed widely, she remarked, unlike her time when she was the first person to start the trend of make-up utilities.

She continued walking for a long time, the scorching Egyptian sun well over her head, wondering why she couldn't feel its heat when the funny realisation hit her that she was a ghost. So much had changed, yet so many things remained just the same.

After walking for a few minutes, humongous pyramids appeared over her. "The great pyramids of Giza," her mind echoed, reflecting on the glorious times of ancient Egypt, the place craved by powerful leaders of that time.

The Great Pyramid of Giza, one of the most famous architectural beauties of Egypt located near Cairo, was especially built for the Pharaoh Khufu, and its exotic appearance never fails to mesmerise people from all over the world; it has claimed the position of one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Each summer, monsoon rains swelled the Nile and flooded the surrounding fields, depositing a rich layer of silt, making the Nile valley one of the most fertile places in the world. In prehistoric times, people settled along the river and began cultivating wheat and barley and building rafts of papyrus. Around 3000 BC, a king from Upper Egypt led forces into the Nile delta and conquered Lower Egypt, founding the first of more than 30 dynasties.

The ghost of Nefertiti wandered along the golden Egyptian land until she

reached the Sphinx, the popular half-human, half-lion sculpture. "It is the largest surviving sculpture from the ancient world, built from a single block of stone and representing the Egyptian god Horus," Nefertiti read from the information plate. She was displeased that the uraeus, the nose, and the ritual beard were missing, expecting everything to be intact after many a thousand years. The Sphinx faced the sun, basking in the shimmering golden light. The tourists' devices went clicking insistently. Their eyes shone with wonder, their heads tilted to see the magnificent monuments of ancient Egypt.

In the afternoon, Nefertiti reached the banks of the river Nile. The blue water now glimmered with the sun's fading rays. It carried no egoistic aura of being the longest river in the world, nor did it boast about being the sole witness of the entire evolution of Egypt. It flowed with such humility that any spectator would be forced to bow down before its immensity.

As she continued to explore the new Egypt through her eyes, she spotted a group of young tourists surrounding an information plate that read "The History of Pharaohs".

The pharaohs were another major part of Egyptian history and, like mummies, only belonged to the age-old Egyptian tradition. She read it once thoroughly, but the facts didn't seem quite right to her. In her point of view, pharaohs had a different history, something like this:

"Along the river Nile, irrigation allowed Egyptians farmers to increase the amount of land under cultivation and to produce enough food to support people

involved in other pursuits, including priests and rulers. Powerful men, known as pharaohs—a term meaning 'great house'—collected taxes in the form of grain, drafted troops and labourers for military campaigns, and public projects. Over time, as Nefertiti could now see, the term 'pharaoh' had come to mean both the king and his palace."

The clothing of people had also changed drastically over the years. The ancient Egyptians, both men and women, wore clothes made of linen. All men wore a wrap-round skirt that was tied at the waist with a belt. The women wore full length straight dresses with one or two shoulder straps—the exact kind of dress Nefertiti was wearing. This was also unique in the ancient world, belonging only to the Egyptians.

The sun was beginning to set and Nefertiti's shadow stretched along the lustrous sand. She knew she was exhausted; it was time for her to return to her tomb, her mummified body. But, her eyes hadn't seen enough of this marvellous country because one day is just not enough to delve into the never-ending mysteries of Egypt.

As she climbed in her tomb, before falling into sleep for another century, the staggering views of Egypt materialised before her eyes. The stunning art and architecture, the astounding history, the rich culture and tradition, and the bedazzling natural beauty.

All she could think before blurring out was how prodigious Egypt was and will be...

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