

FORGOTTEN IN UNKNOWN WATERS



FAYZA SADIA

Year 1977. Sunlight hit his eyes as he got off the ship.

"Evan."

"Doctor Rasmussen."

"I believe you're there now? Where are you heading?"

"I'm currently traveling to Luxor, where I will be meeting Mitchell," Evan cleared his throat. He was in Suez Port. He tried to be as secretive as possible as he eyed the several other people on the dock. He didn't come off as too suspicious, did he? He's just a six-foot-tall tourist visiting Egypt. Totally normal.

Doctor Rasmussen said something, but it came in fragments. "Doctor? You're breaking up—"

An ear-splitting static noise.

"Ouch!" Evan roared. He then embarrassedly looked around as passersby stared wide-eyed at him. "Sorry," he muttered, looking uneasily at his phone. It had shut down. After being freaked out for a second, Evan shook the matter off by rationalizing it as just a weird occurrence.

Evan looked around the port one last time, and then he set out towards Luxor.

As Evan walked on, he noticed almost no tourists. He figured it was because of the hot weather. It also hit him that he couldn't continue in this torrid afternoon heat. He scanned the area he was in,—there were three minivans parked in the side street. He made his way to the second one, squinting to see the driver.

A middle-aged, bearded man appeared from the darkness of the vehicle, and in a strong Arabic accent, he asked, "You

tour? Cheap price."

Evan sighed, thinking he should've brought more money. He shrugged and sat on the passenger seat; at least this was better than being fried under the flaming sun. "Can you take me to Luxor, sir?"

"Here. That will be 100 pounds."

Evan handed the money to the driver absentmindedly, immersed in the sight in front of him— hundreds of cat-like statues on both sides of the path, everything in shades of a gloomy yellow. There were a few date trees scattered here and there, and before Evan stood two huge ruins of the ancient Egyptian temple. And again, there were absolutely no tourists present at the moment. It was insane to think that thousands of years ago pharaohs and countless other people trod the same path. Evan imagined himself back in time as he touched one of the sandstone statues. A strange feeling settled on his stomach as he stared at the statue, its eyes were—

"Mister Pearce! You're here!". An excited shove broke his trance, and he turned around and blinked at a blonde blue-eyed man, who was grinning widely. Then it struck him, this must be Mitchell, but it didn't come to his mind that there was no one around just a few minutes ago.

"Mitchell. Nice to meet you." They shook hands, and Mitchell nodded curtly.

"Alright, I'll cut to the chase. You see those small windows? We get in through there. Then, we investigate the place where everyone has sighted the unnatural figures, and we videotape the evidence if

we see them too. That way we'll have proof."

"Okay, but how do we get in? I mean—"

"That's where ladders come in."

Evan felt beads of sweat drip down as he slowly and steadily ascended the shaking ladder. As he stood on the opening, the soil seemed like it was about to give away with him standing on it. Evan jumped down into the temple, dust erupting as his feet hit the ground. Thank god he had brought a mask, or else he would've died inhaling the bacteria in this thousand-year-old temple.

"Mister Pearce?" Mitchell called out tentatively. "I... seem to have forgotten my video camera ... please explore while I go get it."

Panic flooded him. "Wait! Give me the ladder!"

No answer. He heard footsteps fading out. Mitchell was gone. The doors were sealed to avoid tourists getting in the temple. He had no way out.

Evan switched on his flashlight and examined the surrounding area, which was clouded with dust and various insects who probably built countless nests inside. He was alone and terrified, for the first time in an investigation. And yet, he didn't lose his composure. He was going to be perfectly fine.

The temple possessed no wood, no nothing—just bare walls and the occasional statue of a cat or some other weirdly disfigured animal. Abruptly, Evan stepped into a room with stone pillars, each placed very near each other. Evan shone his flashlight on the pillars and

saw indented text on most of them.

Tap. Tap. Tap.

Evan whipped his head around, his heart skipped a beat. His fear was back again, stronger this time. He suddenly felt insignificant in this vast monument. If a creature of some sort sneaked up on him and attacked, he would be dead in a flash, his mind cruelly reminded him.

"This is the room in which we saw it."

"Your claim states that you saw skeletal remains floating about, is that true?"

"Yes."

This is the room. THE room. And now—

Evan shook his head. Calm down. *Breathe in. Breathe out.*

A rather harsh tap against one of the stone pillars startled him. He jumped from his standing position and tried to clear his throat, which was as dry as the desert. "Hello?" His voice came out in a whisper.

The silence answered back. With a sigh of momentary relief, Evan walked further into the room, with no light entering it except for his flashlight. There was a clearing, with a stone cat statue in the middle. Evan went ahead and stood beside it, deciding this should be the spot he and Mitchell will be meeting.

Out of the blue, his foot was pulled and he crashed onto the sooty floor. Evan couldn't scream and the last thing he saw before he blacked out was feet—brown, rotting feet—and a guttural voice screaming, "Humans shall be taken to Ra and Set!"

The writer is a student of Class 8 at Sunnydale School.