

## THE CURSE OF KING TUT'S TOMB



Over 3000 years ago, a young boy became the king of Egypt. He ruled for less than ten years, but he became the most famous **pharaoh** in history. His name was Tutankhamun. But most of us know him as King Tut.

We know a lot about King Tut because his tomb was discovered about 100 years ago. It had been sealed away for almost 3000 years! And to everyone's amazement, it was almost untouched. There were more than 5000 pieces of furniture, jeweled chariots, musical instruments and other **artifacts**. Most fascinating was King Tut's mummy in three solid gold coffins. A beautiful gold and jeweled death mask covered his head.

The ancient Egyptians believed that there was life after death. So the body had to be prepared for the **afterlife**. First, the organs were removed. Even the brain was pulled out using a hook through the nose. But the heart was left in place. The Egyptians believed their hearts did their thinking. Then the body was covered with salt for about 40 days. When the body had dried out, it was wrapped with strips of linen cloth. Then the mummy was put in a coffin, which was placed inside another coffin. Sometimes up to eight coffins were **nested** inside each other. The coffins were put in a large room called a **crypt** with everything the person might need for the afterlife. These things included tools, games, weapons, jewels, food and even **mummified** animals.

Prayers were said and incense was burned. A priest would cut a hole in the mummy's mouth so that the body would be able to breathe and speak in the afterlife. Sometimes spells were cast. A stone was found in front of King Tut's tomb. It said: "Death Shall Come on Swift Wings to Him Who Disturbs the Peace of the King."

Howard Carter wasn't thinking about curses when he discovered the hidden stairway that led to King Tut's Tomb. He was too excited to find this treasure. But just four months later, the man who had paid for Carter's **expedition** died. Within ten years, six of the 26 people who opened the tomb were dead. Was it the curse? Actually, most of the people who were part of the discovery, including Howard Carter himself, lived long and healthy lives. And most of the deaths could be explained by natural causes.

But some people still feel that you shouldn't disturb a burial place. And some still believe that a curse will fall on those who do. Tell that to the millions of people around the world who line up to view exhibits from King Tut's Tomb, even today.



## **BEFORE READING**

The name Tutankhamun is hard to spell and harder to say. That's why he's commonly known as King Tut. Do you know anything about King Tut? Reading is a lot easier when you already know something about the topic. In this passage, you will read about *Egypt*, *tombs* and *mummies*. Do some quick research to make sure you understand these words before you start to read.

## **DURING READING**

This passage is full of fascinating facts. You're sure to learn something new! Put a check mark in the margin beside any facts you already knew. Put a star in the margin beside any facts you learned.

## **AFTER READING**

Things to think about:

1. Do you think ancient burial sites like Tut's Tomb should be left alone? Or should people be able to visit them? Why do you think so?
2. Mummification preserves dead bodies for thousands of years. Why did the ancient Egyptians mummify their dead bodies? Why do you think we don't mummify bodies anymore?
3. Why is King Tut more famous than other Egyptian pharaohs?
4. If you are interested in learning more about King Tut, there are lots of interesting videos for kids. Check out this one from National Geographic: [Live a Day in the Life of King Tut](#). (There might be an ad at the beginning. Just click on "Skip ads.")

## **READING AROUND THE WORD**

One of the things that makes nonfiction hard to read is the number of tricky words. But authors often give you clues. Sometimes you just have to “read around the word” to look for nearby words and phrases that help you figure out a tricky word.

Look for words and groups of words that help you figure out each of the highlighted words in the passage.

<b>Tricky Word</b>	<b>Words that help you figure it out</b>
pharaoh	
artifacts	
mummified	
afterlife	
crypt	
expedition	

**Are you interested in reading a novel about a crystal skull  
that just might be cursed?**

Jordan helps his elderly neighbour bury a mysterious crystal skull that she thinks is cursed. Some guys at school want him to dig it up and steal it.  
Does the curse live on?

[Read more about \*Curse of the Skull\*.](#)

[Click here to read a sample of this book.](#)

