



Tomb Raider

The tombs that sit beneath the ancient pyramids at Giza were designed with one thing in mind: to keep the deceased buried. They weren't built to be opened, and they certainly weren't constructed to allow keen adventurers to go rummaging around trying to find the treasures contained within.

None of this was going to deter Anna Jones, a reckless archaeologist, fresh out of university. She'd grown up watching heroes enter the catacombs and reemerge weighed down with troves of gold. She wanted that. She wanted the riches and the adventure that went along with it.

So far, things had been going to plan. She'd avoided the pit just inside the entrance and wedged a piece of wood into the sliding block that threatened to trap her forever. Now it was simply a case of finding the blasted burial chamber.

In a way, this was part of the fun: wandering aimlessly along pitch-black corridors, finding nothing but empty disappointment in room after room. In another, more real, way, it was infuriating. Nobody ever told you about this bit. As she kicked yet another mark in the sand outside yet another empty chamber, she cursed her bad luck.

Then, she corrected herself. Even though she considered herself a very sensible, down-to-earth kind of person, curses were not something to be taken lightly in the tomb of an Egyptian Pharaoh. There were rumours that any soul who entered the burial chamber would leave a shadow of itself, unable to enter the afterlife. Anna reassured herself that such things were nonsense and carried on along the corridor.

Further along the passage, her weak torch illuminated a large pile of rubble. She scrambled to the top but couldn't find anywhere that it had fallen from. "This looks more promising," she muttered. She jumped slightly at the faint echo of her own voice. She knew that tomb-builders would often block off the main chambers with piles of rocks.

Desperation took over and Anna started to claw at the stones, throwing them behind her as she

tried to make a hole through to the other side. Her fingernails split and bled, but she was too close now to care. Suddenly, she stopped. She held a large stone in her hand. Listening carefully, she tossed it into the darkness. The expected echo reverberated around the stone walls, but there was something else. A tapping sound.

She threw another stone. Again, the echoes died away, and then the tapping sound followed. It sounded like something tapping rhythmically on the hard floor, like drops of water, or a walking stick. She strained her ears and heard a second sound. This one was more like something heavy being dragged or scraped along the floor.

A renewed sense of urgency gripped Anna: she was stuck. Should she continue on into the chamber, or head back towards whatever was making the sound? She turned back to the pile and pressed on. Stone after stone flew behind her; the tapping and scraping grew closer.

With her last ounce of strength, Anna clawed away the final stone and fell into the chamber beyond. A look of terror etched itself on her face, and she screamed silently. Somebody was waiting for her.

RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. Where are the pyramids in the story?
2. What does the language used tell you about Anna Jones?
3. What was Anna scared of?
4. How could she see where she was going?
5. What happened to her hands when she dug the stones?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

What does the word desecrated mean?

S

What traps had been set to deter robbers?

I

What does the phrase “empty disappointment” tell you about how Anna felt when she went into each room?

P

Why do you think Anna was kicking marks into the sand outside each door?

P

Why do you think Egyptians spread rumours of curses? Do you think they were real?