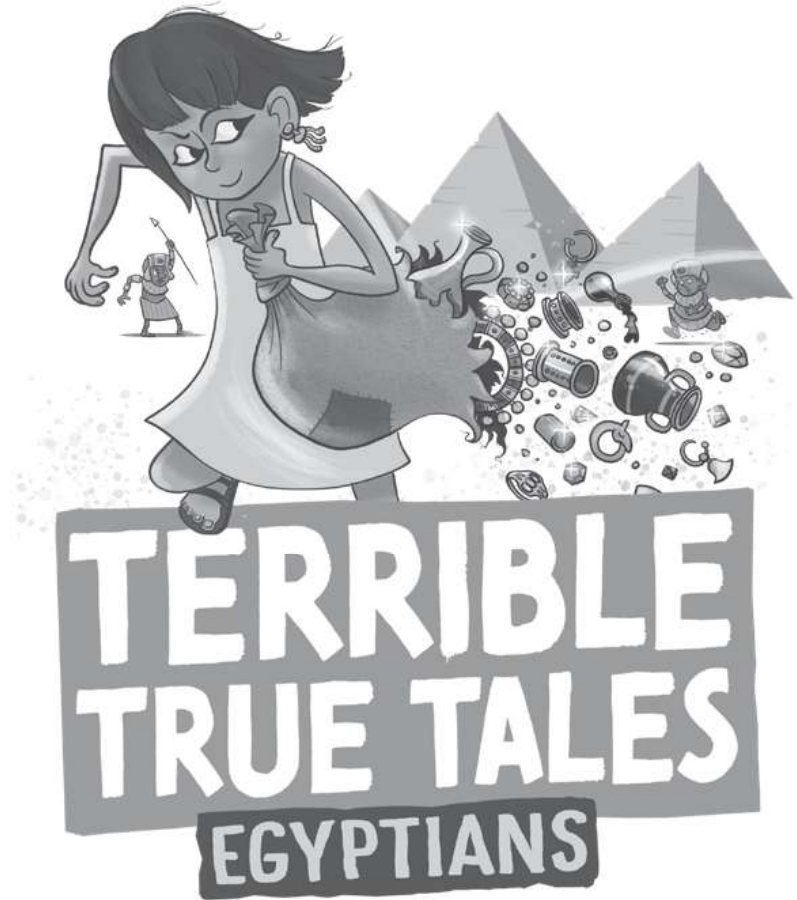


FROM THE BESTSELLING
AUTHOR OF **HORRIBLE HISTORIES**
TERRY DEARY



Inside illustrations by Helen Flook

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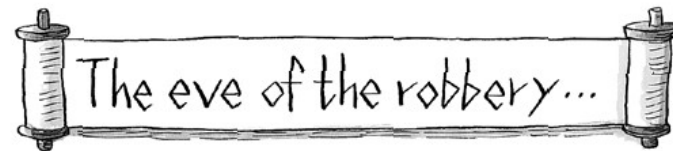
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THE GOLD IN THE GRAVE



CHAPTER 1

The Perfect Plot

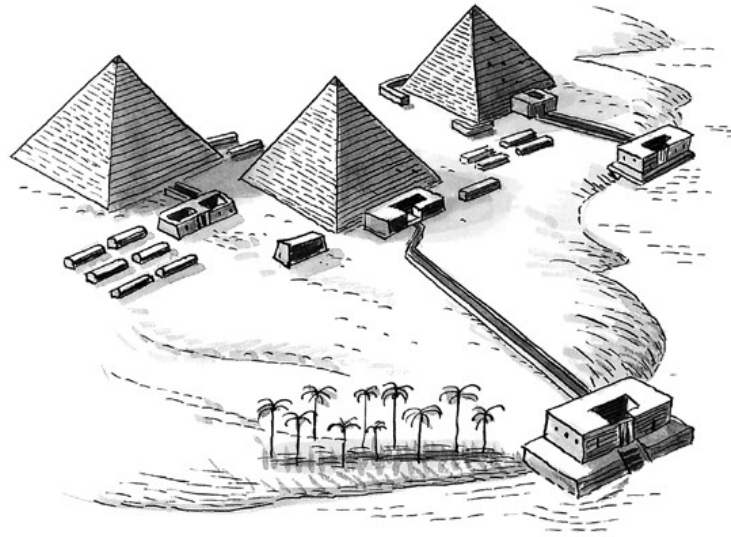


The water clock dripped. It was the second hour of the afternoon and time to go. Time to carry out the greatest robbery in the history of the world.



There were four of us in the room. Four grave robbers. And we had the perfect plot.

They had been burying kings in Egypt for thousands of years. Burying them with gold and jewels to spend in the Afterlife.



And people had been robbing those kings for thousands of years, to spend the fortunes in *this* life. Kings were buried in pyramids to guard their gold.

It didn't work.

No one used pyramids any more. They were too easy to rob. Now the kings were buried in tombs. Deep in the rocky cliffs near Thebes. There was only one way in – and that was guarded.

Dalifa was the temple jeweller who made ornaments for King Tutankhamen's tomb.



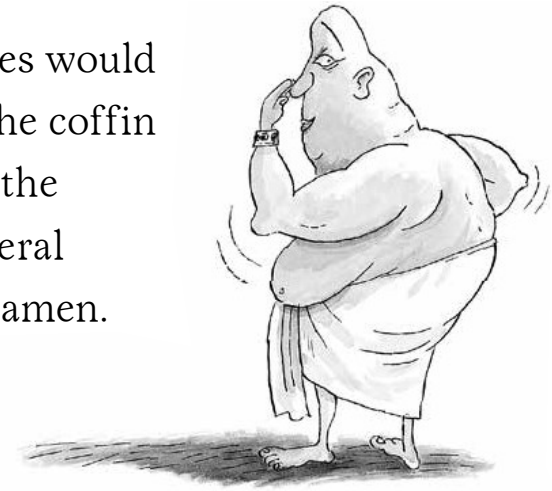
Antef was the master thief, the greatest tomb robber in the world.

“I have saved a lot of money,” he said. “Now I am going to risk it all to win the biggest prize of all. And you are going to help me.” He chuckled and showed his black and yellow stumps of teeth.



At least that was the idea. If we could rob the tomb of King Tutankhamen then we would be rich as kings. If we failed then our punishment would be horrible – so horrible it gave me nightmares.

Big Kerpes would be one of the coffin carriers at the sunset funeral of Tutankhamen.



Tutankhamen had been dead for seventy days. Days spent in turning his holy body into a mummy. From the first day of the king’s death, Antef had been plotting the perfect plot.

Kerpes told me, “If they catch you they’ll cut off your nose.” He rubbed his own flat, broken nose. “If you are lucky.”

“And if I am unlucky?” I asked.

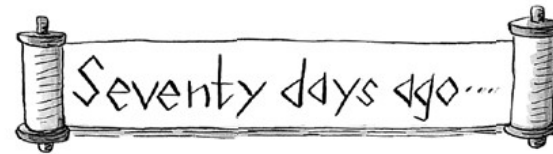
“Then the new King Ay will have you crucified – nailed to the walls of Thebes city. He will show the world what happens

to grave robbers.”

“I don’t want to be nailed to the wall, Kerpes,” I whispered.

“Then don’t get caught,” he grunted.

Me? I am Paneb. In those days I was the poor son of a tavern owner. I wasn’t very clever and I wasn’t very brave. But I was very, very skinny. And that’s why they wanted me.



Antef had come to me in my father’s tavern where I was gathering pots. He knew I was a thief. I would steal anything – from washing on the riverbank where it was stretched out to dry, to food in the temple laid out for the gods.



“The plan is simple but brilliant,” he told me. “The king’s tomb is waiting for him in an underground cave across the river. He will be buried there with his fortune in seventy days time.”



“And guarded,” I said. “We can’t get in.”
He gave his gap-toothed grin again. “We don’t have to. We just have to get out!”

“Uh?”

“The king will be placed in the tomb and then the door will be sealed. But *you* will already be in there. On the inside. Hiding,” he said. “We’ll slip you in before the funeral.”

I shuddered. “I’ll be trapped in the tomb – in the dark – with the dead king and all the spirits? The door is a huge slab of stone. I won’t be able to break out. I’ll die.”



He shook his head. “I have friends in the stone quarry. They have made the door. One corner has been cracked and put back with weak mortar. You can’t see the fault unless you know it is there. You smash open the corner and pass out the king’s fortune.”

It was a clever plan. “How do I get in?”



“You go to the scribe school by the temple. The scribe master is a friend of mine. He will train you as a scribe, and you will be sent into the tomb to paint the prayers on the walls. The guards will get used to seeing you,” he promised.

“So, after the funeral, I have to pass the treasure out through the corner of the door. You’ll be waiting in the passage?” I asked.

