

21) Ancient

It was said the Ancient Tomb of the Great Senusret was cursed. Indeed, as you trekked through the abandoned, yet barely untouched corridors of the pyramid, passing by paintings depicting dramatic scenes of Gods and men, you saw the engravings carved and painted into the side of the wall. Being an experienced archeologist at this point, you could easily translate the text ‘Cursed be the impure who trespass into this holy ground. May they be judged by Thoth and bound by their greed, only able to look upon that which they may never touch.’

Of course, being an experienced Archeologist, you also knew these engravings were mostly hogwash. There was no true threat to be found here after so long, besides potential cave-ins or the reawakening of some long forgotten disease from the mummified corpse. But you weren't here to go corpse hunting. No no. Like the best of your peers, you sought to bring back some ancient artefact or priceless pottery to show off in a museum.

As you continued onwards, through the painted walls of the tomb, you found it, the burial chamber. And on either side of the sealed door, two large statues, one's head a Jackal, the other an Ibis. Anubis and Thoth. Well, this must be the ‘judgement’ it had been talking about...

Now, normally the door for these tombs was actually ornate, and not actually capable of being opened. Instead there was usually a hidden side passage that priests would use to bring offerings or perform rites... you began lightly tapping the wall, listening and feeling out for anything unusual that would give away the location of the true entrance.

Ah, this section of the wall felt loose. It must be the way through. You pressed down on it, But instead of the wall moving back... your hand sunk into it?!

A loud rumbling shook the corridor, turning your attention away from your hand, if only for a moment. The statue's heads had turned to face you, their eyes glowing red, something you knew couldn't be possible, as like being tugged by a lasso, your arm was slowly drawn into the brick as well, flattening against your eyes into the sandstone. And with that, you were able to witness the limb coming out the other side wasn't exactly... the same. Your arm was dark, almost pitch black, with clawed fingers and gold jewellery decorating its length. But more pressingly, the entire limb was numb, immobile. Frozen in place; like all the other figures littering the walls, you quickly realised.

Attempting to resist by pushing against the wall with your foot and other hand only exacerbated the problem as they too were promptly absorbed as well, the light of the lantern vanished as it was drawn inside, becoming a golden ankh grasped in your clawed hand, while your shoe completely vanishing as the fabric hardened into gold rings around your ankles, exposing clawed feet.

Further and further your body was dragged inside, your other foot soon joining the first, soon both your legs, then your hips, the fabric of your pants fusing together and flaring out into a white shenti, a short black-furred tail slipping out from the folds.

Your heart beat faster as your waist was drawn inside, before freezing as your chest soon followed, shirt vanishing to give way to a furred chest.

Finally, your head, no matter how hard you tried, was absorbed as well, your face pushing out into a canine muzzle while your ears became dark triangles atop your head. Your hair vanished, replaced by a khat, as black fur and gold markings decorated it, completing its change into that of a Jackal.

Now that you were inside, you couldn't help but realise how odd it was, how... flat everything felt. Though you could move your limbs, the lack of a third dimension made it impossible to rotate them or turn around. You were stuck facing forwards. Towards the painting of the Pharaoh before you. Well, now you knew what the inscription meant, bound in gold, and unable to do anything but stare at the Pharaoh, who due to your current predicament, you would never be able to reach the tomb of.

Against your will, your body was forced to kneel down, bowing to the image of the Pharaoh, before hardening into lifeless paint. Just another Soldier of Anubis to guard the Pharaoh for all eternity, indistinguishable from all the others that had come before you.