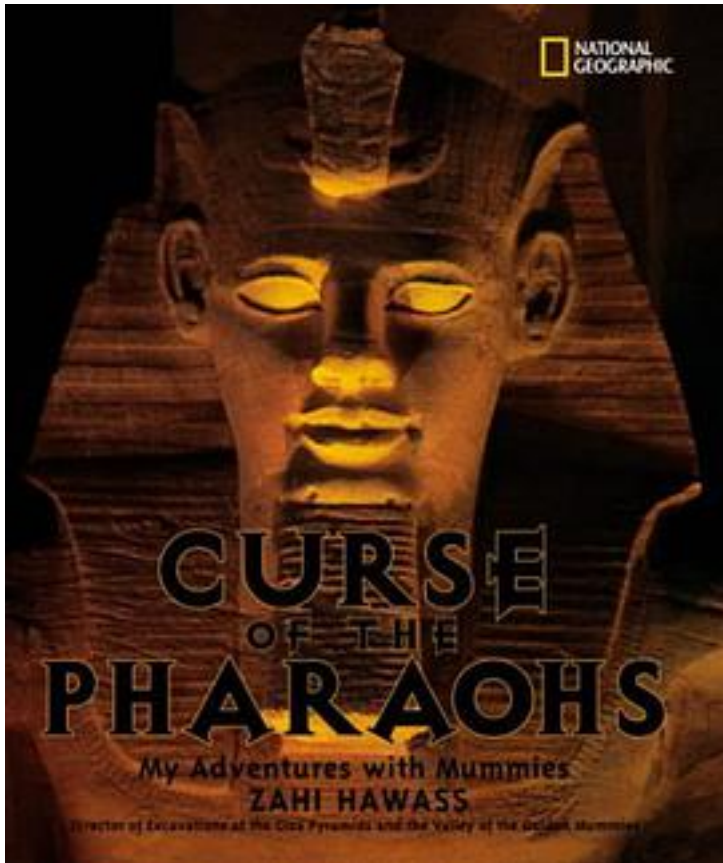


The Curse of the Pharaohs



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In this highly readable first-hand account, world-famous Egyptologist and spellbinding storyteller Dr. Zahi Hawass shares some of the many intriguing tales about the legendary "curse of the pharaohs"-including several of his own experiences with it. Also known as the "curse of the mummies," this spine-tingling legend-still believed by many people-claims that anyone who disturbs the rest of the ancient Egyptian dead will be

haunted or harmed by their spirits. Often blamed when things go wrong, these ancient spirits are given credit for accidents, illnesses, and even deaths. Many strange things have happened to Dr. Hawass during his years as an archaeologist in the field and he delights in telling about them. For example: o?He tells of the exciting discovery of beautiful statues found in the tomb of a man called Inty-shedu and of the bizarre circumstances-including an earthquake and then his own heart attack-that prevented him from publicly announcing the discovery.o?After he excavated the mummies of two small children in the Valley of the Golden Mummies and arranged to have them transferred to a museum, the children began haunting his dreams every night, following him in his travels around the world. After several months of sleepless nights, he realized that the children didn't want to be separated from another mummy-a grown man, perhaps their father-that had been buried with them. So he had that mummy moved to the museum, too, and the nightmares stopped!o?During exploration of another tomb, he was knocked unconscious by an electric shock from the frayed wire of the lamp he held. The fact that he survived these incidents seems proof to him that if there is a curse, it probably helped him. He says, "The greatest desire of the ancient Egyptians was that their names would live forever. We as archaeologists dedicate our lives to bringing the names of the ancients back to life.o?So you see, though I do excavate tombs, the spirits of the dead should be pleased with me." Dr. Hawass also delves into the fascinating background of the curse, telling readers how it became famous all over the world after the discovery of the tomb of the pharaoh Tutankhamun, also known as King Tut, in 1922. Shortly after the discovery of the tomb, seemingly inexplicable misfortunes began to occur, ranging from a pet canary being devoured by a cobra to the illnesses and deaths of several people involved with the excavation of the fabulous tomb. Rumors quickly spread that an ancient curse had been awakened. In a later chapter, Dr. Hawass makes clear that there are simple, natural explanations for most of the disasters linked to the curse of the pharaohs-such as ancient, infection-causing germs, for example. In another chapter, he explains that ancient Egyptians did believe in curses and magic, and he tells how they carved curse inscriptions on their tombs to warn off robbers. (It didn't work. Neither did trying to hide the tombs.) Overflowing with beautiful 4-color photographs, Curse of the Pharaohs not only explores the legendary curse but also introduces readers to the thrills and dangers of archaeology and to the fascinating world of ancient Egypt. A valuable reference tool for school reports, the book's extensive back matter includes a timeline, glossary, index, bibliography, and further reading list, as well as fun and informative sections on how mummies were made, animal mummies, hieroglyphics, the archaeologist's tools, and Dr. Hawass's tips for budding archaeologists.

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