

Sons of the Sphinx

Cheryl Carpinello

The Prophecy

Behold, when the last boy pharaoh is awakened, he will have one chance to right the wrong. United with a spirit vessel from the future, he must seek to find the one robbed of his reign who will lead the way to the tomb of his lost queen. There must the confrontation with the usurper be held and the presentation of his confession to the old priests be given. If the usurper holds his tenth Jubilee and is allowed to acknowledge his son as his successor, the wrong will not be righted, and the queen will remain lost to her pharaoh forever.



Chapter 1

I don't see dead people. I hear them. I talk to them. Boy, you should try that. Talk about people looking at you like you've got two heads. That will do it. I used to look in the mirror after talking to them to see what others saw. All I saw was me, Rosa, an ordinary fifteen-year-old girl. Well, not so ordinary. I do have my father's emerald eyes, but no glowing auras, no ghosts on my shoulders, only my sun-streaked blond hair usually in need of a trim.

It would be one thing if I talked to famous dead people. You know, like that Elvis Presley guy my mother still drools over? I mean, really? The guy would be, like, ancient today! Anyway, if I talked to him, I could give my mom a personal message like, "Sorry we never got to hook up." That would be worth a few extra bucks for allowance, don't you think?

No, the dead people who talk to me are just dead nobodies. Nothing exciting to say. Nothing going down. They're just hanging out, waiting for—I don't know—to be more dead, I guess. Or to see how much trouble they can get me in.

Take today in math class. We're taking this test, see. I'm concentrating real hard on this problem trying to figure height or something. Then I hear this:

"Hey you."

I jerk up in my chair, searching for the guy doing the talking. I glance at the kids on either side of me. Nothing. I look up at the teacher. He's glaring at me.

"Great," I whisper. "He probably thinks I'm trying to cheat." I bow my head and focus on the problem again.

"You, I'm talking to you."

I shake my head in hopes of tossing out that voice. I know now. Some dumb dead guy wants to talk to me.

"Would you be quiet? I'm trying to take a math test."

"Oh sure, that's okay for you to say. I'll never take another test again." His voice breaks up like bad

radio reception.

“Not my problem.”

“I died too soon, I really did.”

“Look, I haven’t talked to one yet who didn’t say that. Kind of goes with the dead part. Now leave me alone. You’re going to make me fail this test.”

I hear him snort like he has to blow his nose, if the dead can actually do that. Then comes the kicker.

“I just want another chance. I promise I’ll do better.”

“I’m going to say this one more time. Not my problem. Now leave me alone.” I form three exclamation points in my head so if he is reading my thoughts as well as listening, he will get the picture.

“But it isn’t fair,” he whines. *“It just isn’t fair.”*

Okay. I’m fed up with this guy. I can’t even remember the formula for the problem I’m trying to answer. I am definitely going to fail if he keeps on yapping. I try to ignore him and concentrate on remembering the stupid formula.

“Not fair.”

My brain is fried, and I’ve had enough. I slam my pencil on my desk and stand up. “Bud, I don’t give a damn if it isn’t fair. Just shut the hell up so I can get this test done!”

Did you get the part where I “stand up and yell”? Yep, that earns me an F on the test AND a trip to the AP’s office. I can’t even defend myself. What am I going to say? “Excuse me, I’m sorry I blurted out loud in the middle of a test, and I’m sorry for cussing, but you see, this dead person wouldn’t shut up.” Yeah, that would go over well. Nope, I just sit with my head down, my face burning from embarrassment, and whisper, “It won’t happen again. Had to be the stress over the test.” You get the picture.

The rest of the day I endure the strange looks and whispers by shrugging and mumbling something like “Idiot dead people.” The kids will avoid me for the next few days. I think they’re afraid whatever I have will rub off on them, or that I’ve gone bananas or something. Understandable.

All this comes from my grandmother. When I was little, Nana lived with us, and it was like Halloween every night. She told the most amazing stories about spirits that visited her. Nana said I would inherit her gift, except it’s not a gift. It is definitely a curse. Because of it, I had the first and last sleepover at my house in the third grade when Nana decided to share one of her

stories with my best friend Rachel and me. In the years since Nana passed away, I've been laughed at, shunned, and avoided, especially after an incident like today.

When my parents get home and hear what happened...Well I might be the one shouting "It's not fair."

So now I sit in my bedroom trying to work on a history project. You know, the kind where the teacher puts you in a group, and then no one in the group does anything? Yep, that's my luck. This is due the day after tomorrow, and no one except me has done anything. I'll probably fail if it's not finished. My eyes wander around the room instead of focusing.

"Roosa."

Without thinking, I blurt out, "It's Rosa, not Roosa. And I told you to get lost. Now." I jump to the door and slam it shut. Do the dead have no respect?

And just who is THIS guy? It's not the same person who got me in trouble at school. That's nice. Now I have an army of dead people invading my brain. Too bad they can't do this project for me.

"Roosa."

Who is this idiot?

"Listen. This is my room, my space. These are my things, and I refuse to share them with dead people!"

I jump on top of my bed; I'm just getting warmed up. It has been a stressful day.

"These are my favorite books on this bookcase. See, my marked up copy of *The Once and Future King*. Here is my *Black Stallion* series. And, here, my Grandpa's National Geographic magazines where I first read about King Tut. All mine!"

I think I'm going nuts. Who rants and raves at the dead? Shaking with frustration, I jump down and sit at my desk. The stupid history project stares back at me. At least it's on ancient Egypt. Something I'm interested in.

"Roosa."

Will this guy never give up?

We're supposed to chronicle the reigns of the 18th Dynasty and evaluate the successes/failures of each pharaoh. I chose King Tutankhamen. Mom took me to the Tut exhibit when it toured the US. Talk about magnificent! I still have my ticket stub pinned on the wall above my desk.

"Roosa."

“I hear nothing.”

King Tut ruled Egypt at the age of nine over three thousand years ago. It wasn't until 1922 that Howard Carter discovered his hidden burial site.

Next to the Tut ticket is my favorite picture of Ankhesenamun and Tut. You know the one: it's on the back of the Golden Throne. He's sitting in the throne; she's standing facing him, one arm outstretched, touching him. I'm not a romantic—well, maybe a little. The point is, in that picture, the love they feel for each other is so obvious. I'm going to use it for the presentation. It's the one item that shows them as real people, not just a part of history.

I like looking at that picture. Sometimes I even imagine myself as Ankhesenamun. I know, I have no life. You try being in tenth grade and living with a curse. See how many boyfriends you have.

Sometimes I think they are discussing their future. You know, how many children they'll have, and how they'll raise them. Maybe they talk about what's happening in Egypt, and she shows her support with a simple touch on his arm. They could also be talking about where they'll be buried. They did that, you know. Had their burial chambers ready years before their deaths.

On days like today when I'm feeling depressed—the curse will do that to me—it could be Ankhesenamun is saying goodbye to Tut as he dies. She assures him they will meet in the afterlife. What would it be like to wander the earth looking for my husband's spirit or *ba*? Does Tut look for hers?

“I do, Roosa.”

I turn around and scream.

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Grateful acknowledgment to William Shakespeare and his creative genius for writing a story with so many memorable lines: Romeo and Juliet.

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*To Connor Joseph
Enjoy all the adventures in your life.*

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**Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty
(1550-1295 BC)**

Ahmosis	1550-1525 BC
Amenhotep I	1525-1504 BC
Tuthmosis I	1504-1492 BC
Tuthmosis II	1492-1479 BC
Hatshepsut	1479-1457 BC*
Tuthmosis III	1479-1425 BC*
Amenhotep II	1427-1397 BC
Tuthmosis IV (great-grandfather of Tutankhamen)	1397-1387 BC
Amenhotep III (grandfather of Tutankhamen)	1387-1349 BC
Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (father of Tutankhamen)	1349-1333 BC*
Smenkhkare/Neferetti (wife of Akhenaten)	1335-1333 BC*
Tutankhamen	1333-1324 BC
Ay	1324-1321 BC
Horemheb	1321-1295 BC
*denotes co-regency	

Ancient Egypt

