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Opening extract from

Viking Raiders

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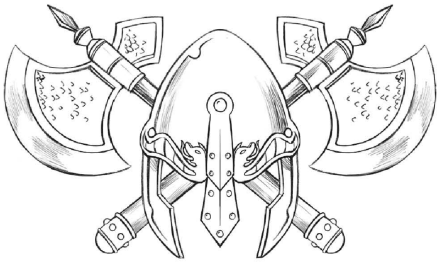
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CHAPTER 1
SCARY MOVIE

"I want to go to the cinema too!" Isis said to Tom over the breakfast table. "Please take me with you!"

Her pet cat, Cleopatra, who was sunbathing on the kitchen windowsill, mewed in agreement.

Tom stared at the mummified princess in disbelief. She was sitting on the edge of the table, right next to Dad, and had

helped herself to a slice of his toast. Loose strands from her bandages drifted down into his porridge. Luckily, Isis was invisible to everyone except Tom. But even if Dad had been able to see or hear her, he was in a world of his own, reading *Archaeologist Weekly*.



No, he simply shovelled the porridge, now flavoured with five-thousand-year-old bits of Egyptian mummy, into his mouth.

"Mmm," Dad said. "Crunchy."

Tom suddenly lost his appetite. He jumped up from his chair and dropped his half-eaten cereal bowl in the sink with a clatter. Returning to the table, he took Isis by her crumbly arm and pulled her into the hall.

"Hey! I've not finished breakfast yet!" Isis grumbled.

"You don't need to eat breakfast – you're dead!" Tom said, letting go of Isis's bandaged arm. "And you can't come to the cinema with me because I know what you're like – you'll mess about and distract me."

Ever since he'd accidentally smashed a statue in his dad's museum, setting the Ancient Egyptian princess free, Tom had

been stuck with Isis and her pet cat. And he'd continue being stuck with her until they found the six amulets that Anubus, the god of the Underworld, had scattered throughout the most dangerous times in history. So far they'd found two, but there were four more to collect.

"If you weren't such a troublemaker, we wouldn't be in this mess," Tom added, reminding Isis that their task was her punishment for cheekily trying to steal one of the amulets from Anubis.

"You've never had so much fun in your life!" Isis scoffed. "All these adventures! Since you met me, you've trained as a gladiator in Ancient Rome *and* met King Arthur! What do you offer me in return? Chess? History books? A GAME OF FOOTBALL?!" She started to make snoring noises.

"You're only saying that because you're rubbish at football," Tom said. He glanced into the kitchen and saw that Mum was busy wiping the worktops and Dad had his nose in his magazine.

Isis waggled her foot at him. "It's not easy kicking a ball when you're wrapped in bandages."

Tom breathed out heavily in frustration. "Do you even know what a cinema is?" he asked.

Isis shook her head sheepishly.

Tom explained that it was a place where stories were told along with moving pictures. "Everything on the screen is about ten times its normal size and the best bit is that it's really, *really* loud," he finished.

"Oh, I love stories," Isis said, clapping her hands in glee. "The priests in Egypt wrote the most amazing ones, with beautiful pictures

on papyrus scrolls. They used to read them to me when I was little. Sometimes, because I was so beautiful…"

Tom spluttered, but Isis ignored him.

"…they wrote me into the stories too!"

Tom hesitated. If he took Isis to the cinema, at least she wouldn't be able to cause mischief at home. He sighed. "All right, then. You can come with me."

Isis shuffled stiffly over to the front door and called out to Cleo. "Come on, Fluffpot! We're going to the cinema!"

Inside the cinema, the screen flickered brightly as the characters in the film blew up an old building containing fireworks. *Kaboom!* Rockets fizzed up into the night sky before exploding in a shower of colourful sparks.