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PROLOGUE



Five thousand years ago

Princess Isis and her pet cat, Cleo, stood outside the towering carved gates to the Afterlife. It had been rotten luck to fall off a pyramid and die at only ten years of age, but Isis wasn't worried – the Afterlife was meant to be great. People were dying to go there, after all! Her mummy's wrappings were so uncomfortable she couldn't wait a second longer to get in, get her body back and wear normal clothes again.

"Oi, Aaanuuubis, Anubidooby!" Isis shouted impatiently. "When you're ready, you old dog!"

Cleo started to claw Isis's shoulder. Then she yowled, jumping from Isis's arms and cowering behind her legs.

"Calm down, fluffpot," Isis said, bending to stroke her pet. "He can't exactly woof me to death!" The princess laughed, but froze when she stood up. Now she understood what Cleo had been trying to tell her.

Looming up in front of her was the enormous jackal-headed god of the Underworld himself, Anubis. He was so tall that Isis's neck hurt to look up at him. He glared down his long snout at her with angry red eyes. There was nothing pet-like about him. Isis gulped.





"'WHEN YOU'RE READY, YOU OLD DOG?'" Anubis growled. "'ANUBIDOOBY?'"

Isis gave the god of the Underworld a winning smile and held out five shining amulets. She had been buried with them so she could give them to Anubis to gain entry to the Afterlife. There was a sixth amulet too – a gorgeous green one. But Isis had hidden it under her arm. Green *was* her favourite colour, and surely Anubis didn't need all six.

Except the god didn't seem to agree. His fur bristled in rage. "FIVE? Where is the sixth?" he demanded.

Isis shook her head. "I was only given five," she said innocently.

To her horror, Anubis grabbed the green amulet from its hiding place. "You little LIAR!" he bellowed.

Thunder started to rumble. The ground shook. Anubis snatched all six amulets and tossed them into the air. With a loud crack and a flash of lightning, they vanished.

"You hid them from me!" he boomed. "Now I have hidden them from you – in the most dangerous places throughout time."

Isis's bandaged shoulders drooped in despair. "So I c-c-can't come into the Afterlife then?"

"Not until you have found each and every

one. But first, you will have to get out of this..." Anubis clicked his fingers. A life-sized pottery statue of the goddess Isis, whom Isis was named after, appeared before him.

Isis felt herself being sucked into the statue, along with Cleo. "What are you doing to me?" she yelled.

"You can only escape if somebody breaks the statue," Anubis said. "So you'll have plenty of time to think about whether trying to trick the trickster god himself was a good idea!"

The walls of the statue closed around Isis, trapping her and Cleo inside. The sound of Anubis's evil laughter would be the last sound they would hear for a long, long time...





CHAPTER 1

ISIS MAKES A SPLASH

"Tom! Are you listening?" a deep voice shouted. "Or maybe you're too busy talking to yourself?"

Tom looked up at his swimming instructor. His face was red. His T-shirt was red. Even the knobbly knees sticking out from under his shorts were red. "I am listening, sir."

"Four lengths, front crawl," the instructor said, swinging his arms in big circles to show the correct technique.

Tom nodded and tried to stop his teeth from chattering. He caught a glimpse of Princess Isis Amun-Ra standing by the poolside with her cat, Cleo. The Ancient Egyptian mummy was cheekily swinging her arms round, imitating Tom's swimming teacher.

"And Tom," the instructor said, "next length, *keep your head in the water*!"

Tom clung to the side of the pool, shivering as the cold water lapped over his ears.

"I really wish I could go for a swim," Isis said, standing with her toes curled over the edge of the tiles. "You're so lucky. I *love* swimming."

"No! Don't even think about it," Tom said. "Your bandages will get all soggy." He gulped at the thought. "The pool's yucky enough as it is. And what would you do with

Cleo? She hates water!"

"Alice, go! Veejay, go! Tom, go!" the instructor shouted.

Tom pushed himself forward and started to swim down the lane. Every time he lifted his head to the side to gasp for air, he could see Isis strutting along beside him, holding her mummified cat.

"That's right, Tom! Kick your legs!" she shouted.

Tom put his head back in the water. *I'm so glad nobody else can see or hear her,* he thought. *She's so embarrassing!*

Two strokes later, he came up for air again.

"You're too slow!" Isis yelled.

When his instructor was looking the other way, Tom started to tread water. He glared up at Isis.

"Who made you a swimming expert?" he said.

Isis held Cleo to her chest and put one hand on her hip. "I learned to swim in the River Nile, I'll have you know," she said. "And if I'd swum as slowly as you do, I'd have been eaten by the crocodiles!"

"Oh, really?" Tom said, pushing his wet hair out of his eyes. "Well, why don't you just go back to Ancient Egypt and jump in the Nile right now?"

Isis let out a sigh of irritation. "I would if I could," she said. "It's your fault that I'm here!" She pointed a finger at him. "You were the one who smashed the statue and released me and Cleo!"

"Yes, but it was your attitude that got you stuck in the statue in the first place," Tom said. "The fact that you can't get into the

Afterlife until you've found the amulets has nothing to do with me. I just got roped into all this by accident!"

"Tom! No slacking!" the instructor's gruff voice echoed across the pool. "Backstroke now!"

Tom turned over and started to swim on his back. He looked up at the ceiling, trying to ignore the mummy walking along the edge of the pool.

Suddenly, Tom was hit in the nose by something spongy.

"Aargh!" he yelped.

Next, he was hit in the shoulder. Isis was standing beside a stack of swimming floats. One by one, she hurled them at Tom. They hit the water with a *plop*!

Breeet! The instructor's whistle piped shrilly across the pool area.