

two mummies safe and sound. Open the coffins!' The old mummy-cases were thrown open and Mr and Mrs Lightspeed bundled inside. The lids were slammed shut.

'There!' cried Grimstone, turning to the Pharaoh and levelling the old blunderbuss at his ancient heart. 'Now, let's have that treasure map.'

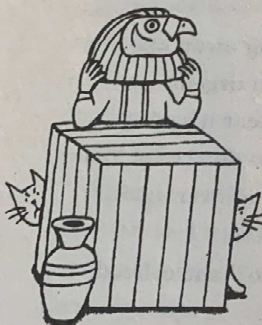
Grimstone and Jelly were so busy playing about with mummy-cases and bandages that they didn't notice the store-room door quietly inch open. Ben and Carrie peeped round the edge, with Rustbucket pushing her small head between them. The two children crawled silently into the room and hid behind a pile of packing-cases. One by one, the cats followed and spread themselves around.

Ben's heart was thundering away like a talking-drum, beating out an urgent message. He could almost hear it saying 'Help! What are we going to do? Help! What are we going to do?' over and over again. Carrie must have heard it too.

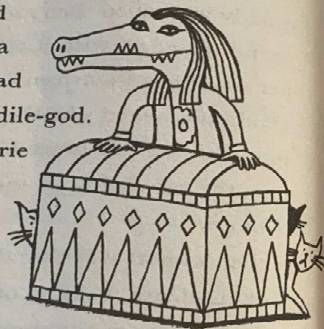
'What are we going to do?' she echoed. 'He's got a gun!'

'Tell me about it!' hissed Ben. 'We can't just sit here and do nothing.' He glanced at the packing-cases. Some were lying on their sides. They were stuffed with paper and straw, and inside were several masks of the Ancient Egyptian Gods.

Ben grinned and quietly pulled out a very impressive head of Sebek, the crocodile-god. He passed it to Carrie and she put it on.



'Big improvement!' he muttered. 'It suits you.' Next he pulled out the falcon-headed god, Horus. 'This will do me



nicely,' he whispered and promptly crawled off to the far end of the store-room. His heart was pounding even harder and all it seemed to shout now was 'Help! Help! Help! Help!' Ben struggled to overcome his fear. This was their only chance. He cleared his throat and stood up.

'I am the God Horus!' cried Ben, feeling his knees trembling. 'Throw down your weapon. It is useless to resist!'

'Horus!' Sennapod was overjoyed. 'You have come to my aid!'

Grimstone and Jelly stared stupefied at the god. 'What is it?' asked Jelly hoarsely.

'Don't panic,' warned Grimstone, his eyes flitting back to the parchment in Sennapod's wrinkled hand. 'Give me the map!' he commanded, but a cry from behind made them whirl round.

'I am Sebek, the crocodile-god!' yelled Carrie, hoping she sounded as fierce as she

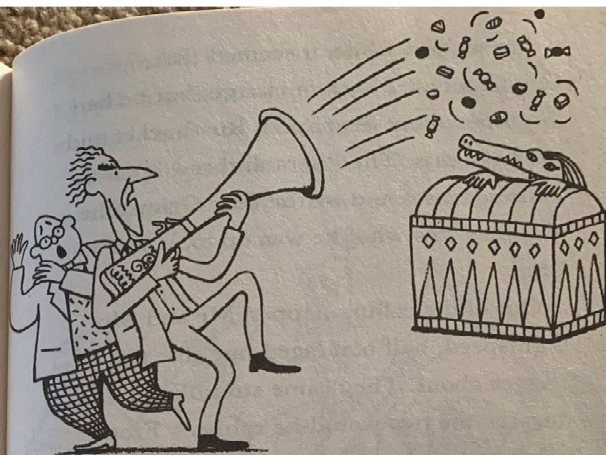


looked. 'Release your prisoners or I will chew you up and spit out your bones like - um - grape pips.' She grinned to herself. She liked that bit about the grape pips.

Professor Jelly went to pieces. 'The gods are attacking us!' he screamed. 'It's The Curse of Anubis! We should never have opened the coffin!' Grimstone grabbed Jelly's arm.

'Get a grip on yourself, you fool. Find me some ammunition for this gun, quick!' He poured gunpowder down the huge barrel, while Jelly frantically searched for something suitable, but all he could find in his pockets were handfuls of chocolates. He threw them down the barrel.

'Stand back!' yelled Grimstone, wildly aiming the gun at Sebek. There was an enormous bang, smoke puffed grandly from the blunderbuss and the crocodile hastily ducked as a swarm of gaily wrapped



chocolates buzzed angrily overhead.

'Yee-hah!' cried Grimstone, rapidly reloading. 'Death to the gods!' He spun round like a gunslinger, grinning madly. 'Eat chocolates, sucker!' he bellowed and fired at Horus. Thirty-eight chocolates peppered the wall behind Ben's head. The soft-centred ones made a very satisfying SPLAT noise, and stuck there.

For a short while, it seemed that Grimstone was back in charge, but he had forgotten about Sennapod, Rustbucket and the forty cats. The Pharaoh threw open the mummy-cases and by the time Grimstone and Jelly saw what he was up to, it was too late.

Out of the coffins stepped Mr and Mrs Lightspeed, half bandaged but able to stagger about. They came stumbling towards the two would-be robbers. From either end of the store-room came Sebek and Horus. Sennapod was rather startled to see that Horus was a lot shorter than he expected and was wearing Ben's jeans and trainers. From all sides, cats stuck out their angry heads, fur on end, tails flicking and tiny teeth glinting.

'Run for it!' yelled Grimstone, throwing his gun to the ground. The two men made for the door, hotly pursued by one Ancient

Egyptian Pharaoh, two not-so-ancient Egyptian gods, two mummies (or one mummy and one daddy), and forty-one cats.

The thieves didn't get far. Rustbucket quickly put herself in their path and they

