

# *THE SECRET* **EXPLORERS**<sup>®</sup> *AND THE* **TOMB ROBBERS**



## Chapter One

# BACK IN TIME



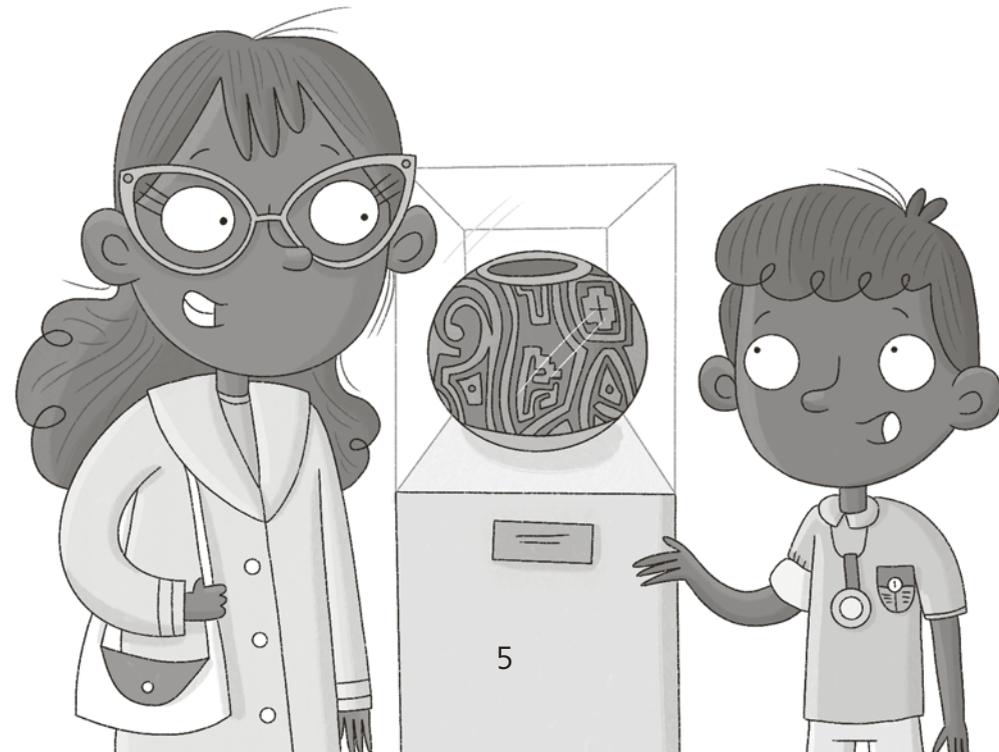
*I love it when the museum is busy!* thought Gustavo. All around him, people were admiring statues and peering into glass cases full of amazing objects from the past. He straightened his “Volunteer” armband.

“Excuse me!” called a cheery woman in a blue jacket. She pointed to a globe-shaped vase. It was black and decorated with cream

swirls. “Do you know how old this is?” she asked.

“It’s probably about a thousand years old,” Gustavo replied. “It was made by the Marajoara people. They lived on an island at the end of the Amazon River, right here in Brazil.”

“That’s really interesting,” said the woman. “Thanks for your help!”



“No problem,” said Gustavo with a grin.

The museum was close to his Rio de Janeiro home, so he’d been coming as long as he could remember. He knew so much about the objects on display that he could answer any question the visitors asked! He loved history and enjoyed helping to care for the artefacts other civilizations had left behind. *It would be so amazing to go back in time, Gustavo thought, and see these objects being used by real ancient people!*

Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed a light shimmering. Gustavo’s heart leaped. *Could it be...?* He turned around. On the lift door was a glowing circle with the letters N, E, S and W. A compass!

Gustavo knew what it meant – a new mission for the Secret Explorers!

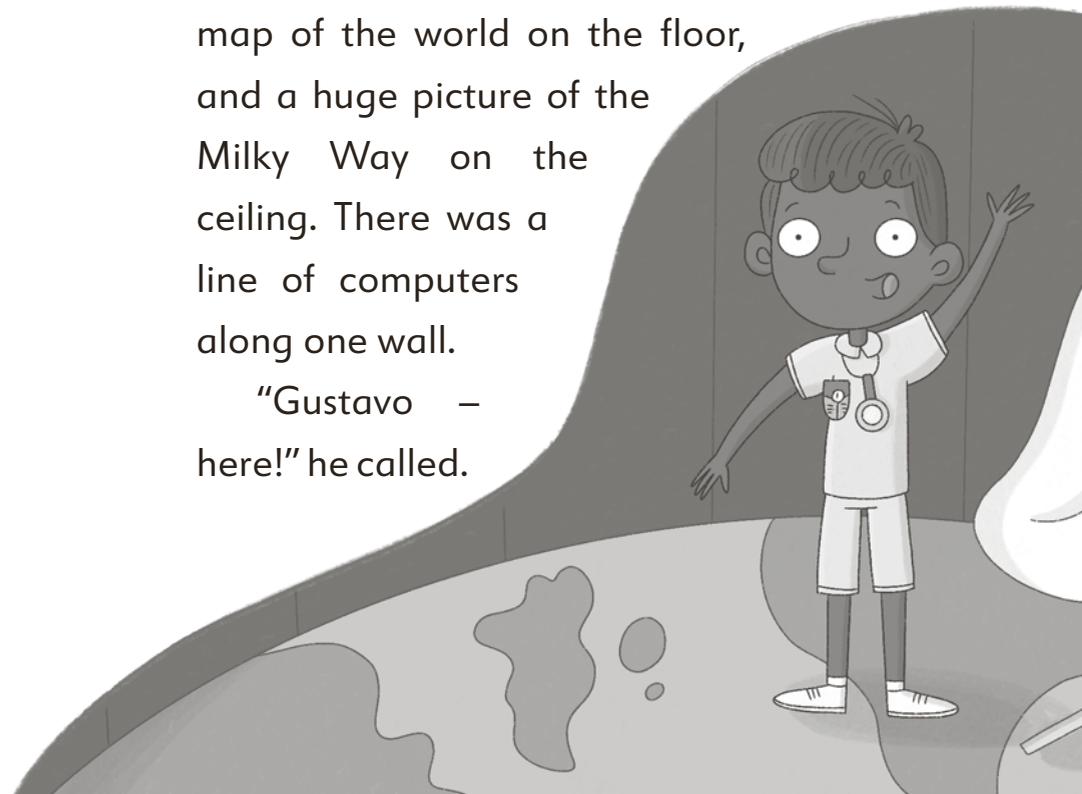
He hurried to the lift, tingling with

excitement. The doors slid open by themselves and Gustavo stepped inside. All around him was a brilliant white light.

Wind whipped around Gustavo. It made him feel as if he was whizzing through the brightness. Then a moment later the light faded. Gustavo was back at the Exploration Station!

It had gleaming black stone walls, a map of the world on the floor, and a huge picture of the Milky Way on the ceiling. There was a line of computers along one wall.

“Gustavo – here!” he called.



A girl wearing a leaf-green T-shirt and a boy with red hair jumped up from a squishy sofa. They both grinned.

"Hi Leah," said Gustavo. "Hi Ollie!"

"I was just showing Ollie my new book about beetles," said Leah. She was the Biology Explorer, and knew all about plants and animals. Ollie was wearing a shirt with a parrot pattern – he was the team's rainforest expert.

Soon the other Secret Explorers arrived through the white glowing doorway, one after the other.

A girl skateboarded in. "Kiki – here!" She was the Engineering Explorer, and had made the skateboard herself.



"Cheng – here!" He was passionate about rocks and volcanoes.

Next came a girl with short dark hair who knew everything about dinosaurs. "Tamiko – here!"

"Roshni – here!" said the Space Explorer. She glanced up at the Milky Way on the ceiling.

"Connor – here!" said the ocean expert.

They all gathered excitedly around the map on the floor. Gustavo felt a swirl of



excitement in his middle. The Exploration Station would soon tell them about the mission!

"Where will it be?" Cheng wondered. His eyes sparkled as he watched the map.

"There!" Connor pointed. "Near the Mediterranean Sea!"

A pinpoint of light had appeared on the map. It grew and shimmered.

"The mission's in Egypt!" said Gustavo. "Right beside the River Nile!"

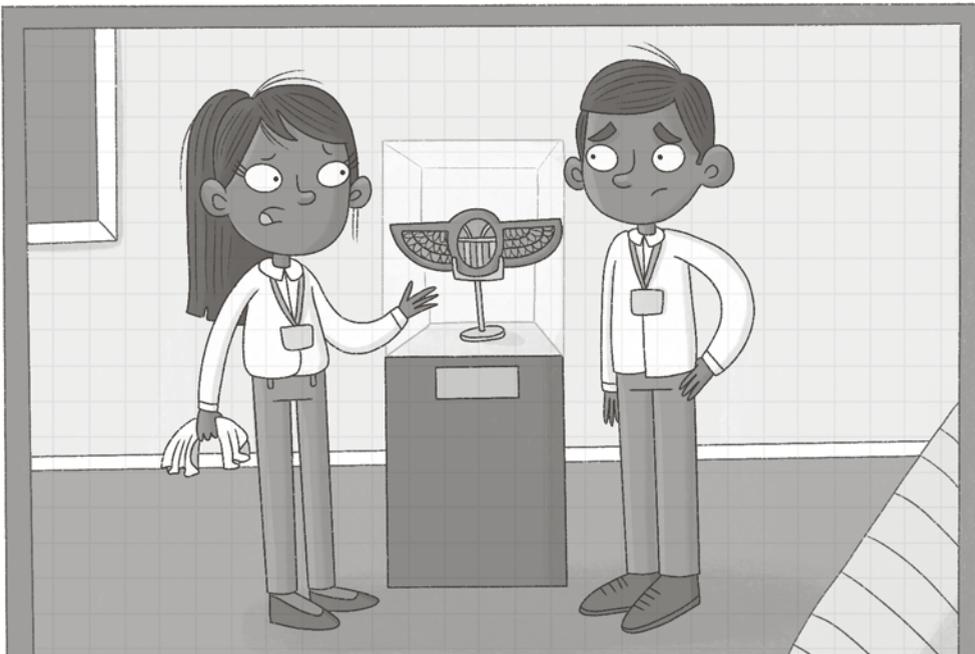
A screen projected up from the map. It showed the inside of a museum, and a man and woman in smart uniforms. *They must be the curators who work there*, Gustavo thought. He listened eagerly to what they were saying.

*"We just don't get enough visitors,"* the woman said sadly. She dusted a glass case containing a scarab beetle made of blue stone. *"This amulet from Pharaoh Khufu's pyramid is our only real treasure. But it's not enough to bring people in."*

The man sighed. *"You're right,"* he said. *"If only Khufu's treasures hadn't been looted by tomb robbers, we'd have a much better display."*

*"We don't have any choice,"* the woman said. *"We'll have to close down the museum..."*

The screen disappeared.





The Secret Explorers looked at each other, wide-eyed.

“Our mission must be to save the museum,” said Ollie.

Roshni pointed to Gustavo. “It’s your mission! Your badge is glowing.”

Gustavo felt a rush of excitement. He adored museums. *We can’t let the one in Egypt close down!* he thought.

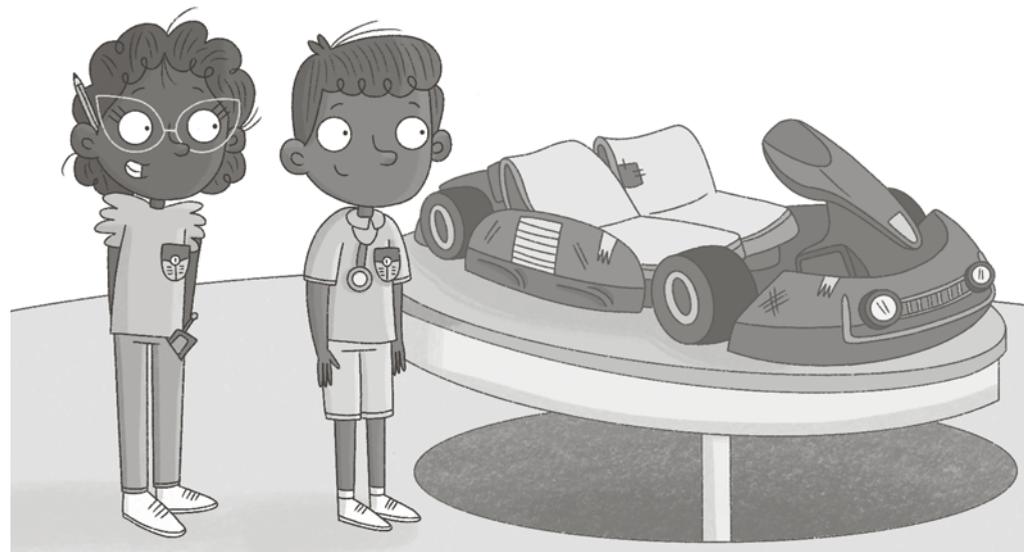
“That makes sense,” said Tamiko. “You’re the History Explorer, after all.”

“Hey, my badge is glowing,” said Kiki. “I wonder how engineering can help the museum?”

“We know the Exploration Station always chooses the right team,” said Leah.

“True!” agreed Kiki. She went over to the computers and pressed a button. A hatch in the floor opened and up rose the Beagle. It looked like an old go-kart, with two battered seats and a wonky steering wheel. *But it won’t stay like that,* Gustavo thought.

The Beagle was named after the ship that carried a famous scientist, Charles Darwin, on a voyage of discovery. What were he and Kiki going to discover? Gustavo couldn’t wait to find out!



Everyone took their places at the computer screens while he and Kiki climbed onto the Beagle. Gustavo pressed the “GO” button. The Beagle shook and rattled as if it was falling apart. The wheels disappeared and wooden panels rose around them. In a flash of light, the Beagle jerked forwards. Gustavo clutched the sides. They whooshed

through dazzling whiteness, then after a few moments the light faded. The Beagle was bobbing gently up and down – on water!

“It’s transformed into a boat! We’re on a river!” said Gustavo.

Kiki’s eyes shone. “It must be the Nile!”

Gustavo shaded his eyes from the hot sun and looked to shore. Two gigantic, triangular



white shapes gleamed in the heat. "You're right!" he gasped. "Those are pyramids!"

"Wow!" said Kiki. "They're bigger than I ever imagined! It's almost like they're touching the sky."

Gustavo's eyes grew wide. "Hang on, there are supposed to be three pyramids... and one of these is only half finished..." His tummy did a flip. "Kiki... we've gone back in time – to ancient Egypt!"



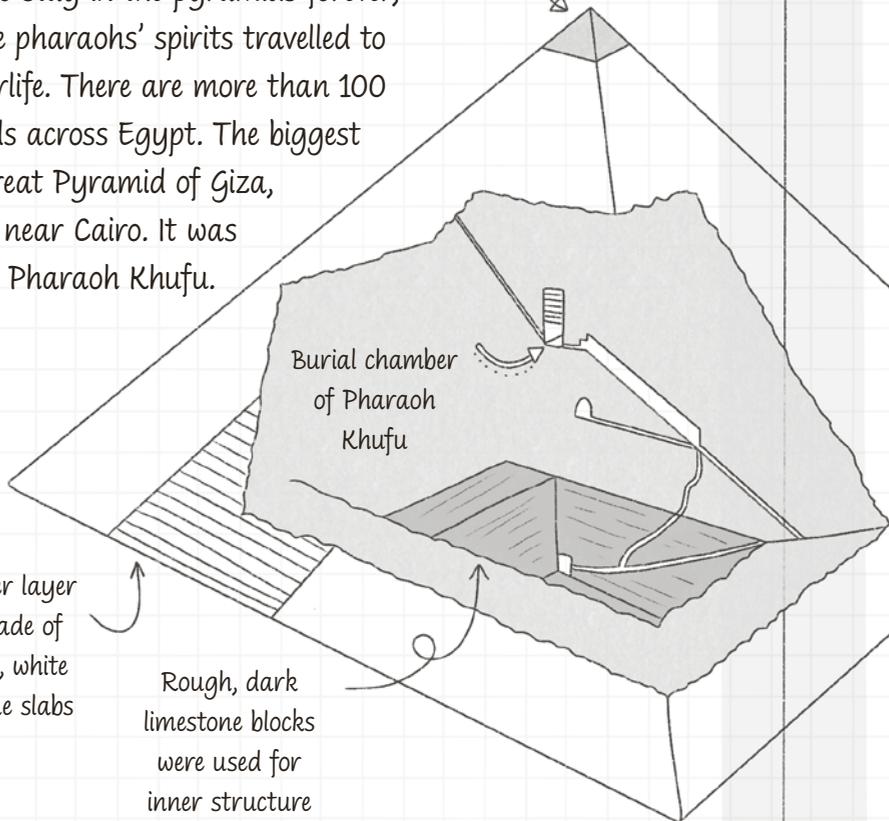


# GUSTAVO'S MISSION NOTES

## THE GREAT PYRAMID OF GIZA

The ancient Egyptians believed that life continued after death. They built pyramids to contain the mummified bodies of their kings – the pharaohs. The mummies were meant to stay in the pyramids forever, while the pharaohs' spirits travelled to the afterlife. There are more than 100 pyramids across Egypt. The biggest is the Great Pyramid of Giza, which is near Cairo. It was built for Pharaoh Khufu.

The stone at the top of a pyramid is called the capstone



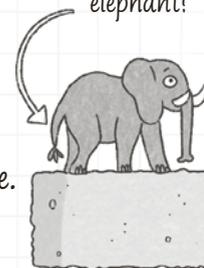
The outer layer was made of smooth, white limestone slabs

Rough, dark limestone blocks were used for inner structure

## FACT FILE

- △ Like all the other important tombs of ancient Egypt, it was built on the west bank of the River Nile. The Egyptians believed this was the land of the dead.
- △ The Great Pyramid was built in 2589 BCE – that's more than 4,500 years ago!
- △ The Great Pyramid is 147m tall and made of 2,300,000 blocks of limestone.
- △ It took 20 years to build.

Each block weighed as much as an average elephant!



## WHO WAS PHARAOH KHUFU?



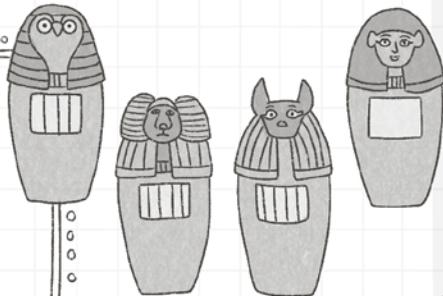
Khufu was famous for building the Great Pyramid, which is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. But apart from this, we know very little about him. He was the son of Sneferu and Queen Hetepheres I, and is believed to have had three wives.

Khufu had the biggest pyramid, but the only surviving statue of him is tiny – just 7.5cm high.

## HOW TO MAKE A MUMMY

The Egyptians believed in an afterlife where they would be reborn as spirits, but only if their bodies were preserved as mummies. Only very rich people could afford this, and it took at least 70 days to mummify a pharaoh. Before reaching the afterlife, the spirits of the dead were thought to travel through an underworld called Duat.

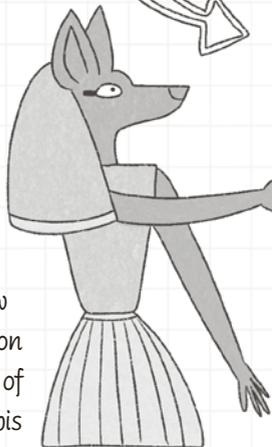
**STEP 1** The body was cleaned using water and salt. The internal organs were taken out and placed in special jars.



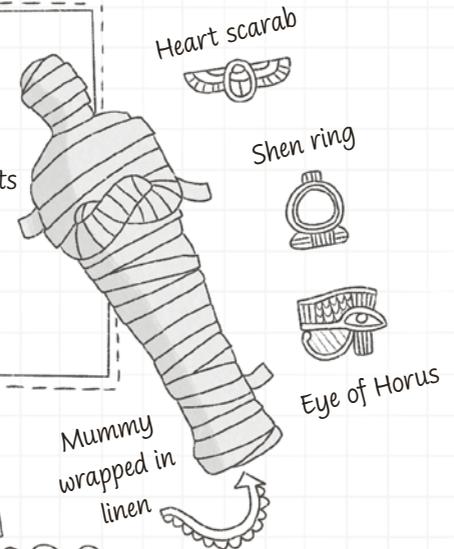
Canopic jars with the heads of Egyptian gods

**STEP 2** The body was filled with bags of salt and left for 40 days to dry out. After, it was stuffed with bandages and spices.

The priests who oversaw mummification wore a mask of the god Anubis

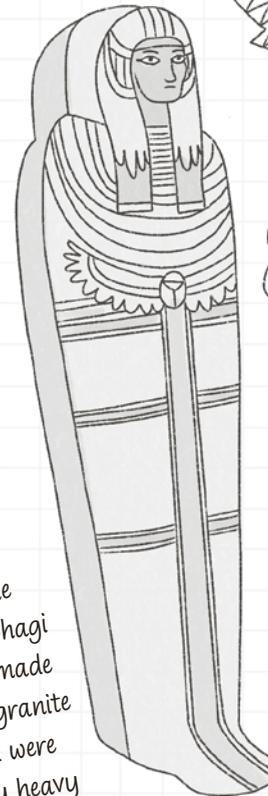


**STEP 3** The body was then coated with gum and wrapped in linen strips. Tucked among them were special objects that were meant to protect the dead person in the afterlife.



**STEP 4** The mummified body was placed in a decorated stone coffin called a sarcophagus. The sarcophagus was placed inside a tomb.

Some sarcophagi were made from granite and were really heavy



## ANIMAL MUMMIES!

The Egyptians mummified animals too, including cats, crocodiles, fish, baboons, and birds. These animal mummies were offerings to the gods, but were also to make sure beloved pets would journey to the afterlife.

# GODS AND GODDESSES

## Atum-Ra

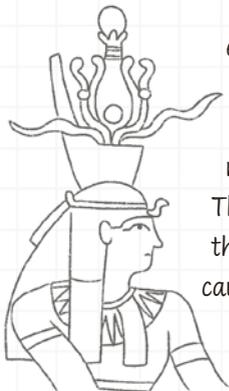


The father of the gods. Egyptians believed that Atum-Ra created himself and then everything else. He was also one of the gods of the Sun.

GOD OF CREATION

## Geb

GOD OF EARTH



Geb represented the earth. He was often shown lying flat to support Nut, who represented the sky. The Egyptians believed that earthquakes were caused by Geb laughing.

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## Tefnut

GODDESS OF WATER

The daughter of Atum-Ra. Tefnut represented precious water. She was fierce and had the head of a lion.

## Horus

GOD OF KINGSHIP

Each new Egyptian pharaoh was believed to be Horus in a different form. He was shown with a falcon's head wearing the crown of Egypt.



Ancient Egyptians worshipped gods and goddesses. Some had the heads or bodies of animals. All of the forces of nature, such as the Sun, storms, and floods, were represented by a god or goddess.



## Osiris

GOD OF THE DEAD

Osiris was Egypt's first king. When he died, he became ruler of the dead and decided who could join him in his underworld kingdom.



## Isis

GODDESS OF LIFE

Isis was a powerful magician and one of Egypt's most popular goddesses. She represented magic, fertility, motherhood, death, healing, and rebirth.



## Nut

GODDESS OF THE SKY AND STARS

Nut's body was home to the stars and the Sun. She was usually shown stretched above Geb.

## Anubis

GOD OF EMBALMING



Anubis looked after the bodies of the dead. He created the first mummy, from the body of Osiris. He had the head of a jackal, a type of wild dog.

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