

MYTHS, MUMMIES
AND MAGIC

IN

ANCIENT EGYPT

STEPHEN DAVIES
NÚRIA TAMARIT

COMIC
STRIP
MYTHS

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To Xena, our much-missed cat. – S.D.

For Maria and Raquel and special thanks to
Ventura and Cairo Comix. – N.T.

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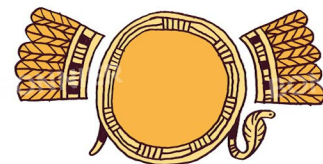
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BY

STEPHEN DAVIES
NÚRIA TAMARIT



B P P

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WHO WERE THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS?

The ancient Egyptians lived thousands of years ago along the banks of the River Nile in North Africa. They were very clever people, skilled in maths, medicine, art and astronomy. Ancient Egypt was ruled by kings and queens called pharaohs, who the Egyptians believed were representatives of the gods themselves. This ancient civilization left behind many clues about their way of life, from giant temples and pyramids to statues, paintings and picture writings called hieroglyphics. These writings include some of the oldest and most exciting stories ever told – fantastical tales of gods, goddesses, magic, monsters and pharaohs. We call these epic stories the ancient Egyptian myths.

Beneath the scorching desert sands of Egypt lie ancient tombs whose walls are covered in paintings. These glorious pictures provide us with information about everyday life in Ancient Egypt, and about the people who told and retold the myths in this book.



The ancient Egyptians were very hard workers.

Many were farmers, working in fields along the banks of the River Nile and looking after their livestock. Once a year, while their fields were flooded with water from the Nile, the farmers worked on special projects for their pharaohs, building glorious pyramids and temples in their honour.

At home, the ancient Egyptians enjoyed relaxing with their families. They kept cats and dogs in their houses and gave them names, just like we do. They ate, drank, danced, played board games, listened to music and told each other stories. One of the most important stories the ancient Egyptians told was about how the world was first created...



THE CREATION STORY

A creation myth is a story about how the world began. Ancient civilizations had all sorts of weird and wonderful creation myths, and the Egyptians had four of them! This is the oldest (and craziest) story.

In the beginning, there was nothing but watery darkness called the Nu. Floating in the Nu were the seeds of everything that would one day exist.



The moment Atum dragged himself out of the Nu, he became the sun god Re. Although, confusingly enough, he was also still Atum.



At Re wept, something extraordinary happened. Each one of his tears became a human being!



Re took charge. He positioned Nut high above everything...



...Geb low to the Earth...

Also floating in the Nu was Atum, Lord of the Universe.



A beautiful sight, I'm happy tonight, flocking in a watery wonderland...

Re sneezed, and out of his mouth came Shu (the god of the air) and Tefnut (the goddess of the rain).



Tefnut and Shu created two gods of their own: Geb (the god of the earth) and Nut (the goddess of the sky). Geb and Nut were very affectionate. They spent most of their time cuddling each other, which Re strongly disapproved of.



Out of the Nu rose an astounding mound, the first signs of Earth.



A magical mound! It'll call it 'dry ground'.

Tefnut and Shu went off exploring, but Re felt very lonely without his children. When they finally returned, he began to weep.



Got a tissue?

IT'S TEFNUT AND SHU!

I'm separating you two!

Right, that's it!

I'm separating you two!

Geb and Nut had four children: two gods, Osiris and Seth, and two goddesses, Isis and Nephthys.



But as Re got older, the humans got mean. They started doing evil deeds...



In the meantime, Re carried on creating. He made gods, goddesses, animals, plants, and a marvellous river called the Nile. He ruled on Earth as king of all creation, and for a while, everything was perfect.



...and they made fun of Re for being old and weak.



Re's candles cost more than his birthday cake!

When you're Re, every day is a weak day!

Re was furious with the humans. With one terrible glance, he created Sekhmet the Destroyer, the fiercest goddess you can imagine. Humans had been created out of Re's eye, and now he would use the power of his eye to destroy them.



Sekhmet rampaged throughout the land, killing the humans and drinking their blood. Re's heart was filled with pity, but he was powerless to stop the rage of Sekhmet. Suddenly, he had an idea.



Take this to the humans!

Dear Humans, Sorry about Sekhmet. She does tend to bite when she's excited. If you want to stop her, you need to brew seven thousand jars of bright-red beer. Love, Re x

Sekhmet the Destroyer came to a field of blood, and drank it all up in a horrible frenzy. Except it wasn't blood at all - it was beer! Almost at once, Sekhmet began to feel tired of her rampage.



I've been a bad kitty.

Sorry, humans! I love you, really.

I don't feel too good.

I'm going to take a nap now.

Re decided he was too old for these shenanigans. With a sigh of relief he ascended into the heavens and left the younger gods to rule on Earth.



Goodbye, Grandpa!

We'll miss you!



Now the fun can REALLY begin.

MEET THE GODS

The ancient Egyptians believed in over a thousand different gods and goddesses, which were often shown as humans with animal features. It was believed the gods controlled every aspect of life, from the movement of the Sun across the sky to the flooding of the River Nile. Here are some of the many gods and goddesses you will meet in this book.



RE was the god of the Sun. He was associated with the creation of the world.



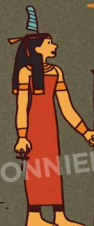
Ibis-headed THOTH was the god of wisdom and writing. He was occasionally depicted as a dog-headed baboon.



Cat-headed BASTET was one of Re's daughters. She was a fierce warrior goddess.



AMON was the god of the air, and his name means 'the hidden one'. He was usually represented as a man wearing a crown with two vertical plumes.



MAAT was the goddess of harmony and justice. On her crown, she wore a single ostrich feather. This feather was used for a very special purpose...



ANUBIS was the jackal-headed god of mummification and the afterlife. His most important job was to weigh the heart of people who had recently died, to decide if they were worthy to enter the afterlife.



NUT was the goddess of the sky. She was usually depicted as a woman bent over Earth with her head in the west and feet in the east.

OSIRIS was the ruler of the world of the dead. The Egyptians believed that those who had lived good lives would be rewarded by joining Osiris in the afterlife.

Depicted as a falcon or as a man with a falcon's head, HORUS was god of the sky and was associated with war and hunting.



Scorpion goddess SERKET was known for being skilled in magic and healing.



SETH was the god of chaos and was associated with violence and storms. He was often depicted as a human with the head of an animal. But we can't figure out what animal he's supposed to be! He's usually shown with a long snout and long ears.



Crocodile god SOBEK was the god of strength. He used his razor-sharp teeth to protect the people of Ancient Egypt.



It was believed that the flood god HAPI was responsible for causing the Nile to flood every year.



ISIS was the goddess of healing. As the wife of Osiris, she was also one of the main deities concerned with rites for the dead.



SETH AND OSIRIS

Osiris was the grandson of Re, the god of the Sun. He was clever and extremely kind.



Osiris loved to travel. He went all over the world, singing songs and making friends.



One night, Osiris's brother Seth threw a party in honour of Osiris. The palace was full of guests, musicians, dancers, jugglers and fire-breathers.



The chest was made of cedar wood from Lebanon and ebony from the Land of Punt. It was decorated with emeralds, rubies, obsidian, carnelian, garnet and lapis lazuli. It was the most beautiful object Osiris had ever laid eyes on.



When Osiris became king of Egypt, he ruled fairly and wisely. He taught the people of Egypt how to grow barley and grapes, and how to make things out of copper.



Whenever Osiris went off travelling, Queen Isis ruled Egypt in his place. She taught people how to make barley into bread and grapes into wine.



Isis went to bed at midnight, but Seth persuaded Osiris to stay for one last game. Seth clicked his fingers and six servants entered, carrying a beautiful chest.



Seth proposed a challenge. The exquisite chest would be awarded to whoever who could fit inside it most perfectly! One by one, the guests climbed into the chest and tried to lie down.



After many failed attempts, Osiris decided to have a go himself. He lay down in the chest and it fitted him perfectly.



Seth had always been jealous of Osiris's power and popularity. He laughed triumphantly as his servants nailed down the lid of the coffin and filled the cracks with molten lead, so Osiris could not escape. His evil plan had worked!

SETH'S EVIL PLAN TO TAKE THE THRONE...

1. Sneak into Osiris's bedroom at night and measure him from top to toe, shoulder to shoulder, and ear to ear while he is sleeping.



2. Pay the finest craftsmen in the land to make a jewelled chest the exact size of Osiris.



3. Recruit 72 evil helpers to help trick Osiris.

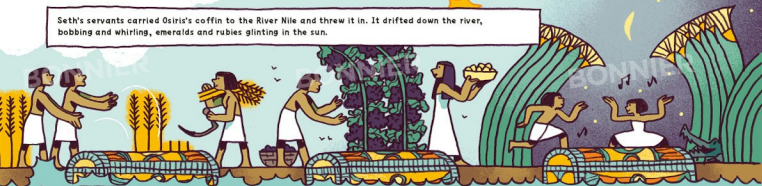


4. Buy balloons, cake, sweetsies, a hammer, nails and molten lead.



5. PARTY TIME!

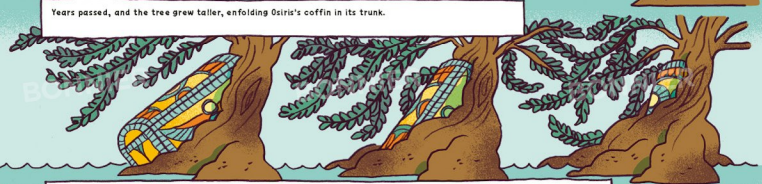
Seth's servants carried Osiris's coffin to the River Nile and threw it in. It drifted down the river, bobbing and whirling, emeralds and rubies glinting in the sun.



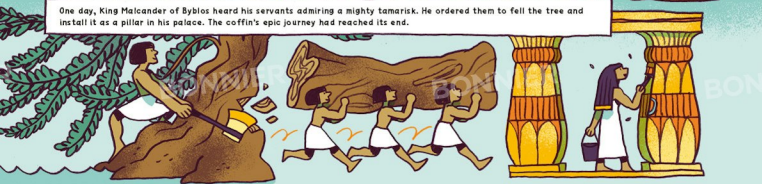
Through the mouth of the Nile and out into the sea, the coffin journeyed on, buffeted by wind and tossed by waves, until it came to rest beside a tamarisk tree in the Kingdom of Byblos.



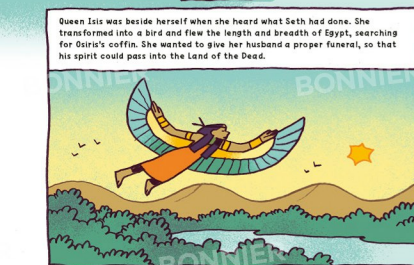
Years passed, and the tree grew taller, enfolding Osiris's coffin in its trunk.



One day, King Melchander of Byblos heard his servants admiring a mighty tamarisk. He ordered them to fell the tree and install it as a pillar in his palace. The coffin's epic journey had reached its end.



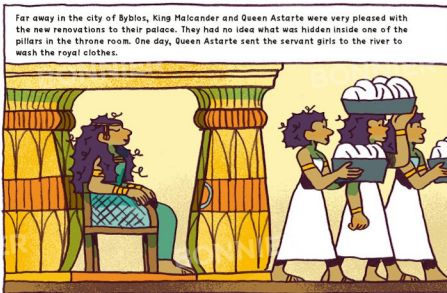
Queen Isis was beside herself when she heard what Seth had done. She transformed into a bird and flew the length and breadth of Egypt, searching for Osiris's coffin. She wanted to give her husband a proper funeral, so that his spirit could pass into the Land of the Dead.



After countless years of searching, Isis heard a rumour that the coffin was inside a pillar in the palace of Byblos, in Syria.



Far away in the city of Byblos, King Melchander and Queen Astarte were very pleased with the new renovations to their palace. They had no idea what was hidden inside one of the pillars in the throne room. One day, Queen Astarte sent the servant girls to the river to wash the royal clothes.



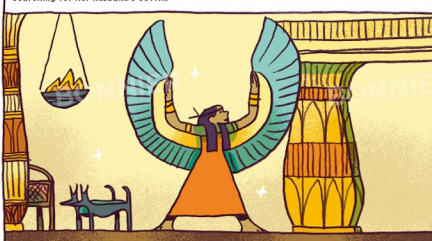
When they returned, the servant girls looked strikingly different. No one in the kingdom had ever thought to braid their hair before! to wash the royal clothes.



The queen was jealous of the servant girls, so she sent for the old woman to come and braid her hair, too.

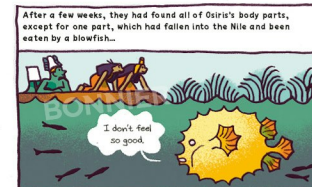
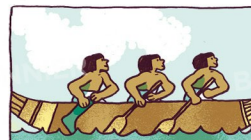
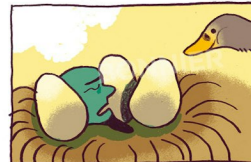
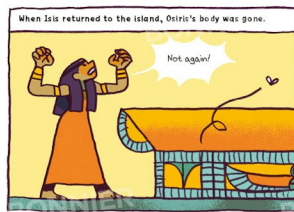
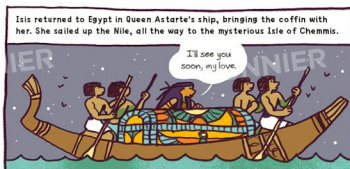


The queen went to show the King her new hairdo. As soon as she was out of sight, the old woman transformed into a bird. It was Isis! She took off around the throne room, searching for her husband's coffin.



When Isis found it, she let out a shriek so loud that it shook the whole palace.

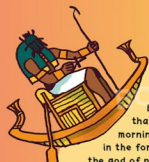




HOW THE EGYPTIAN MYTHS EXPLAINED THE WORLD

In Ancient Egypt, people's lives were full of mystery. No one knew why the Sun came up every morning and went down every evening, whether there would be a good harvest, or how to heal themselves from sickness.

The ancient Egyptian myths weren't just stories told to entertain children. Before scientific explanations, the myths provided ways for people to understand the world around them.



The ancient Egyptians believed that the Sun rising every morning was **KE**, appearing in the form of **KHEPRI**, the god of new life.

The hot midday Sun was **RE** in all his glory, sailing across the sky. He brought life and warmth to the world.



Every evening, **RE** appeared in the form of the creator god **ATUM**.



At night, **RE** sailed through the afterlife, giving light to all the blessed souls who lived there. Here he was reunited with **Osiris**, the god of the dead.

NUT was the goddess of the sky. She was often depicted as a woman arched over **Geb**, the god of the Earth. The ancient Egyptians believed that Nut swallowed the Sun in the evening and gave birth to it again every morning.



The ancient Egyptians believed that all of their pharaohs were descended from the god, **Horus**. It was quite clever really – if you were descended from the gods, people would always do what you say!



Victims of sickness or disease used to recite spells to the gods, hoping they would help them to recover. Others wrote the spells on charms and amulets and wore them for protection.



The River Nile provided people with water for drinking and washing. The river was also used to transport stone for building projects, and its annual flood ensured fertile land for growing crops every year. The ancient Egyptians honoured **KHNUM** as the guardian of the river's source and **HAPI** as the god of the flood.



GEB was the god of the Earth. He was also god of fertility and farming, and was associated with the life cycle of all living things. It was believed that Geb produced crops from his body, and when he laughed it caused an earthquake!

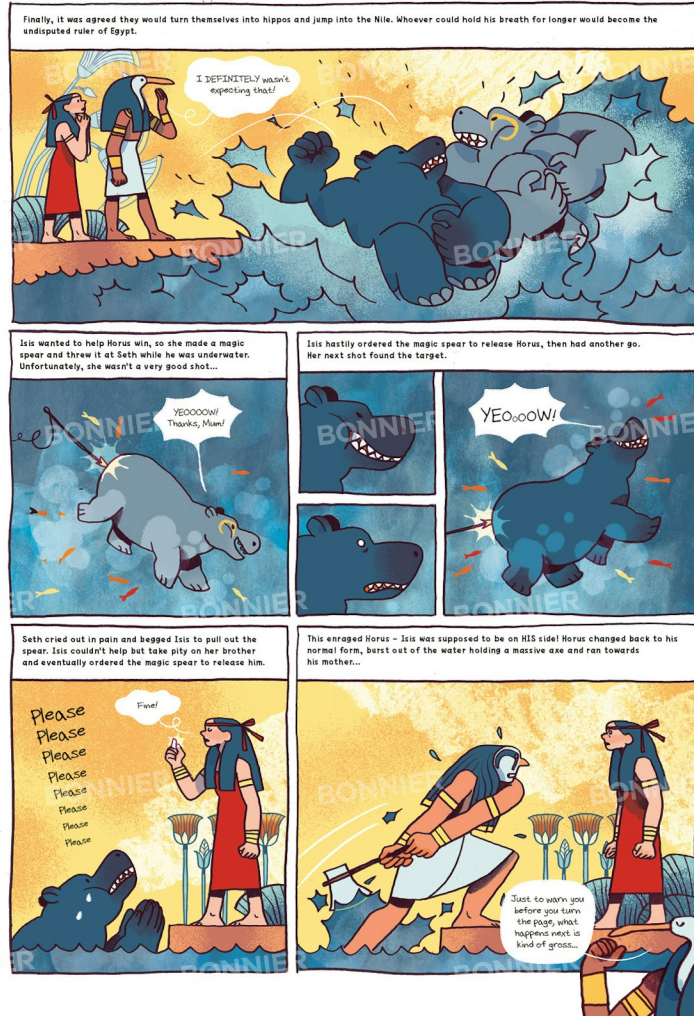
GEB - GOD OF THE EARTH

HORUS AND SETH



THE DEBATE CONTINUED FOR 80 YEARS...







Horus picked up his mother's head and ran away with it. Thankfully, Thoth had the perfect solution.



Seth cut the top off a mountain, turned it upside-down and began to carve a boat out of it.



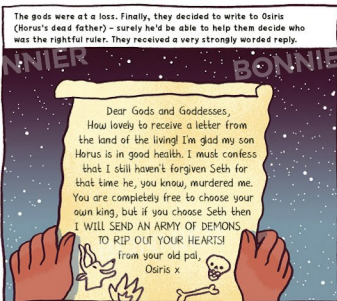
Since the breath-holding contest had ended in disaster, Seth proposed another challenge. He and Horus would have a boat race, with boats made of stone - obviously...



Horus decided it would be easier to cheat. He took a normal wooden boat and covered it with grey plaster.



The boat race began. Horus's boat scudded along, its sails fat with wind. Seth's boat sank like a stone, because that was what it was. In desperation, Seth transformed himself into a hippo again and took a massive bite out of Horus's boat.



Famously enough, the council of the gods was convinced. At long last, they put the White Crown of Egypt on Horus's head and sat him on the throne of Egypt.



As for Seth, he was sent to live in the sun boat with Re. Every night, Re's boat gets attacked by the evil serpent Apep, who wants to kill the sun god and cancel sunrise.



And every single night, Seth slays Apep, enabling the sun boat to begin yet another journey across the sky. Has Seth earned Horus's forgiveness yet? You decide!



MUMMIFICATION AND THE AFTERLIFE

The ancient Egyptians believed that when a person died, they would live on in the afterlife. They thought that if a person was buried with everything important to them in this life, they could carry those things with them into the next. They used a process called 'mummification' to preserve dead bodies so that people could use their bodies again in the afterlife. Mummification was a long, expensive process and it was only available to those whose families could afford it.

1. To start, one worker made a long cut below the person's chest and another worker reached in and removed the person's insides. The vital organs were preserved in special jars: a jackal-headed jar for the stomach, a falcon-headed jar for the intestines, a baboon-headed jar for the lungs, and a human-headed jar for the heart. The rest of the organs were not as important and were left in place. The person would be needing that later for a very important ceremony.

2. The body was dried out with a special salt called natron. Then the embalmers got to work. They stuffed and perfumed the body and wrapped it in long strips of linen. Sometimes they hid jewels and other treasures in the body. In the end, the 'Master of Secrets' was charged, wearing a mask of jackal-headed Anubis, the god of death.

3. A craftsman made a beautiful, painted mask for the person's face. This was made of papier-mâché, or a mixture of mud and straw. Once the mask was complete, the body would be placed inside a coffin and taken to the burial chamber of a tomb. The whole process took around 70 days to complete.

THE AFTERLIFE

Once the mummified person was safely buried in a tomb, its spirit could leave its body and embark on its journey to the afterlife. The ancient Egyptians believed that the spirit had a map and a list of spells to guide it on its perilous journey. The spells were often painted on the inside of the coffins.

3. Waiting at the exit of the maze was dear old Seth. It was time for the 'weighing of the heart' myth. If the heart was heavier than the feather, you passed the test. If it was heavier, the spirit would be considered unworthy to enter the afterlife. Instead, it was gobbled up by a monster called Ammit.

4. If the spirit passed the test, it could continue on its journey. It travelled down a canal past yet more guardians and gatekeepers.

5. Finally, the spirit was greeted by Osiris and welcomed into a paradise known as the Field of Reeds. Phew!

2. If the spirit survived this, it arrived at the Mansion of Rostau, where it entered a mind boggling maze called the Paths of Confusion.

1. The spirit followed a winding road beside a lake of fire, past many fearsome watchers and guardians. It got past these by reciting the correct spells in the correct order.



IMHOTEP AND KING DJOSER



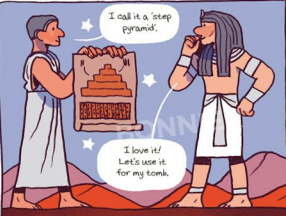
In the early days of ancient Egypt, there lived a very clever boy called Imhotep. He was top of the class in maths, hieroglyphs, history, geography, geology, botany, astronomy, art and religious studies.

Imhotep's best friend was a young prince called Djoser. Imhotep loved Djoser so dearly, he even let Djoser copy his homework.

Careful, Tipl! Your ka-bird is wonky!



When Djoser became King, Imhotep became his chief priest, chief advisor and chief architect. He designed and built many monuments, including the first ever pyramid.



Imhotep was also an expert in medicine and magic. When King Djoser started to go blind, Imhotep healed him by using an enchanted baboon.



During the reign of King Djoser, a terrible drought befell the kingdom of Egypt. Hapi, the god of the Nile's annual flooding, had failed to arrive for SEVEN years in a row.



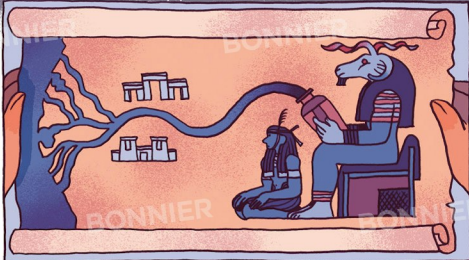
King Djoser was as upset as everyone else about Hapi's absence. Finally, he asked Imhotep the question that had been nagging him for years.



Imhotep did not know the answer, but he knew where to find it. He hurried to the Temple of Thoth and entered the secret library where the oldest, most sacred writings were kept.



Imhotep searched high and low... and at last, he found what he was looking for.



Imhotep told Djoser everything he had discovered. The Flood God, Hapi, came from Yebu, the dwelling place of the Creator God, Khnum. It was Khnum who poured the Nile from his water jar and controlled Hapi's comings and goings.

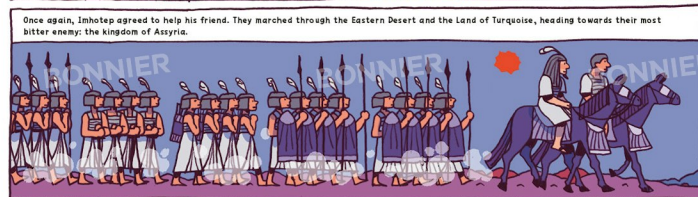


Djoser commanded Imhotep to find the island of Yebu and to pacify the great god Khnum. Imhotep set sail in the royal ship, which was laden with bread, beer, oxen and fowl.



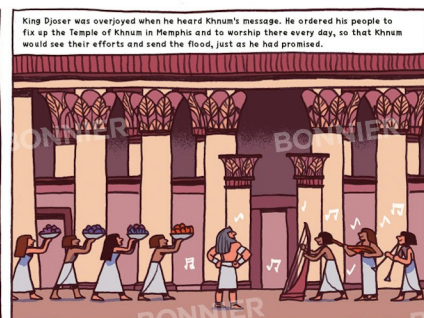
Imhotep sailed for twenty days and twenty nights and had many adventures.





When they arrived on the border of Assyria, they were met by the evil King Mandarou and his army. Mandarou did not want to give the statues back.

The two armies fought for days on end. When King Mandarou realised that the Egyptians were winning the battle, he called for his Grand Sorcerer to be brought before him.



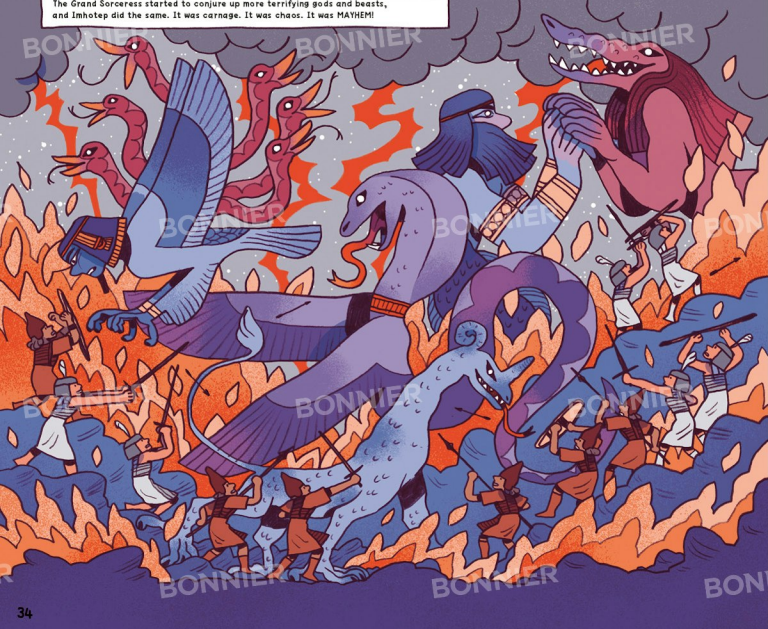
The Grand Sorceress took some wax and made a tiny model of the god of the Earth, Geb.

She cast a spell on the model, and - SHAZAM! Giant Geb gave a terrifying roar and began to fight on the Assyrian side.

When Imhotep saw the danger, he took some wax and made a model of his own - the goddess Nut. She belatedly with rage and began to fight on the Egyptian side.



The Grand Sorceress started to conjure up more terrifying gods and beasts, and Imhotep did the same. It was carnage. It was chaos. It was MAYHEM!



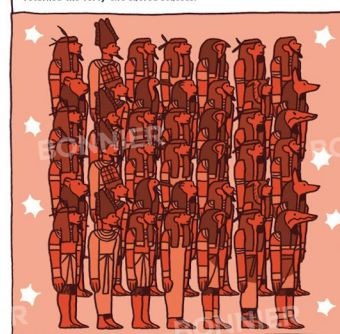
Finally, Imhotep and the Grand Sorceress came face to face in the middle of the battlefield...



...and Imhotep prevailed.



King Mandaru submitted to King Djoser and - reluctantly - he returned the forty-two sacred statues.



The cry "Hooray for Imhotep!" echoed down the ages. Hundreds of years later, people even started worshipping Imhotep as a god. Maybe one day archaeologists will find his tomb and will discover even more about this incredible, brainy, magical man.



THE PHARAOH HALL OF FAME

The word pharaoh means 'great house' and refers to the all-powerful ruler of Egypt. Pharaohs made laws, collected taxes and acted as a spokesperson for the gods. The ancient Egyptians believed that the god Horus was the first pharaoh, and that all the pharaohs who came after him were somehow 'Horus in human form'.

NARMER

The first human pharaoh of Egypt was Narmen. According to legend, one day Narmen was beside a lake with his pack of dogs when they turned and attacked him. It was said that he jumped on the back of a passing crocodile and escaped across the lake!

That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

All right, 'Imhotep built it, but it was my idea.

DIOSER

Dioser was best known for saving Egypt from famine, and for designing the very first pyramid.

Is that a false beard you're wearing?

HATSHEDSUT

Hatshepsut was very clever and ambitious. She sent hundreds of ships across the Red Sea and they came back laden with gold, ebony and spices. She made Egypt very wealthy!

Why of course! All pharaohs wear one.

How THAT'S immortality.

KHUFU

Khufu was best known for his tomb, the Great Pyramid of Giza. It is one of the 'Seven Wonders of the Ancient World' - and it is the only one still standing!

Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!

What score would you give our new religion?

A ten!

AKHENATEN

Akhenaten was still a teenager when he became pharaoh. He married a woman called Nefertiti, who was considered to be the most beautiful woman in the world. Together, they abolished Egypt's ancient religion and declared that only one god should be worshipped: Aten, the Sun. This made Egypt's priests extremely cross!

No one will remember me!

TUTANKHAMUN

The son of Akhenaten was just nine years old when he became pharaoh. He was small and thin, and found it hard to walk without a stick. He brought Egypt back to its old religion, honouring all the gods instead of just one. He died very young, at just nineteen years old.

RAMSES II

Ramesses the Great reigned for 66 years! He erected more monuments and statues than any other pharaoh.

Shakespeare even wrote a play about me!

CLEOPATRA

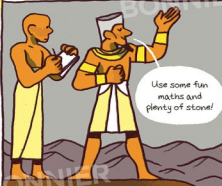
Cleopatra was famous for her intelligence, her razor-sharp wit and her irresistible charm. Two powerful Roman rulers, Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, both ended up falling head over heels in love with her.



THE PRINCE AND THE SPHINX



Long, long ago, there was a pharaoh called Khufu. He wanted to have the most magnificent tomb ever, so he asked his builders to create something spectacular.



Use some fun maths and plenty of stone!

The pyramid was covered in polished limestone blocks, which shone dazzling white in the sun. This had never been done before!



Arggh! Maybe we should have invented sunglasses first.

The pyramid was so awesome that Khufu's son Khafre used the same design for his own tomb. He dared not make his pyramid taller than his father's, but he built it on slightly higher ground so that it looked taller!



Hee hee, that'll do nicely.

Khafre also had a plan for the colossal outcrop of rock near his pyramid. He made a statue with the body of a lion and a face that looked very like his own. This lion with the head of a king was intended to stand guard over the pyramids, terrifying tomb robbers into staying well away!



Every morning for many centuries, that stony face gazed towards the sun as it rose over the River Nile. But over time, sand storms raged across the plain and covered the monument.



Hello?
Anyone?

Thousands of years later, the Greeks would name this kind of creature a 'Sphinx', but the Egyptians never used that word. They just called it 'Hor-em-akhet' - which means 'Horus on the Horizon'.



A THOUSAND YEARS PASSED.

A pharaoh called Amenhotep II came to the throne. He was so strong, it was said he could row a boat faster than two hundred men and shoot an arrow through a solid pillar of copper.



I don't like you - I LOVE you!

Amenhotep II had eight strong, honest sons - and one sly, secretive son called Tuthmosis. Tuthmosis was the third in line to the throne after his brothers, Amenhotep Junior and Kamweset. He would almost certainly never be king.



While his family feasted and partied at the palace, Prince Tuthmosis went off hunting in the desert.



Stupid family.

Stupid feast.

Unlike his father, Tuthmosis wasn't very good at hunting...

Ugh... stupid jackal.

Ugh... stupid gazelle.

Ugh... stupid arrow.



After a disappointing session, Tuthmosis was hot and tired.



Stupid Sun.

Then he spotted something... an ancient monument near the pyramids of Giza.



What? What's that?

Tired and cross, Tuthmosis sat in the shade of the monument...



It's just rest, my eyes a while!

That evening, the party at Memphis Palace was in full swing, when Prince Tutmosis burst in, wild-eyed.

Something wonderful has happened!

HAPPY NEW YEAR

I made my bed beneath the altar and divided off to sleep.
When suddenly... Great snakes arose!... the Thing began to speak.

My name is Hallelujah, of a thousand years' renown. Restore me to my glory, son, and you will wear the Crown...

My name is Horemakhet
of a thousand years'
renown. Restore me to
my glory, son, and you will
wear the Crown...

My princely robes were drenched in sawdust,
my godlike strength was sapping.
I spied a ruined monument, whose shade
looked good for rapping.

Inspired by his vision, Prince Tutmosis hired a thousand builders and set them to work restoring the great monument.



He made his last wishes in the tomb and drifted off to sleep...

Save myself! Please save myself!

Slow down!
Please slow down!

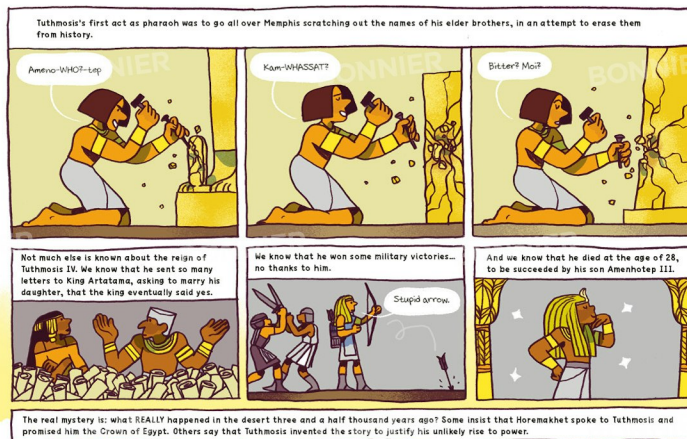
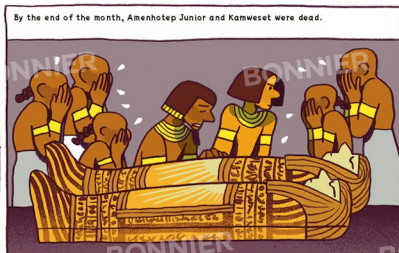
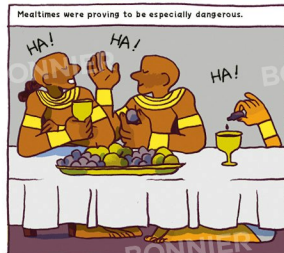
The builders made a little temple between the front paws of Horemakhet. Tutmosis placed the Dream Stone at the front of the temple, so that everyone could read it.



Wow! What does this mean?

HA!

Back at the palace, Amenhotep Junior and Kamweset (the first and second sons of the pharaoh) noticed that their day-to-day lives had become much more perilous...



MYTHICAL MONSTERS

The ancient Egyptians tried to live quiet, ordered lives on the banks of their beloved River Nile. For who knew what ghastly creatures might roam in the vast expanses of desert to the east and to the west?



AND CREATURES

Travellers from afar told tales of monsters with terrible jaws and terrible claws, and the ancient Egyptians believed every word. They drew these nightmares on their tomb walls, coffin floors and amulets – and they prayed to the gods for protection against these terrifying creatures.



The king of the mythical monsters was the **GRIFIN**. With the body of a cat and the head, wings and talons of a falcon, griffins lived in the desert, guarding their troves of priceless treasure.

The **TESH-TESH** was a fierce griffin with sharp horns on its head and feathers all over its body. One kind of tesh-tesh is said to have a human face sprouting out of its back. Ugh!

Another desert dweller is the **SERPAPARD**, which has a long, serpentine neck attached to the body of a leopard. Leave these creatures in peace and they are quite gentle, intertwining their necks to show friendship. But if you threaten them in any way, you had better watch out!

The road to the afterlife was fraught with dangers, including **INTEP** and **IKENTY**. Intep was a fierce, doglike baboon and Ikenty was a demonic bird with the head of a cat. It was believed Ikenty could grab you with its talons and bite off your head!

A **SAGET** was a tame griffin, that could be used to pull the pharaoh's chariot in times of war. You could even take it for walks on a lead!

With the body of a lion and the head of a man, a **SPHINX** was a powerful guardian for a tomb or a temple.

TAWERET was a hippopotamus with a crocodile tail. The ancient Egyptians initially thought Taweret was a monster, but eventually started to worship her as a god.



Some ancient Egyptians believed in a magical kingfisher called **BENNU**. It existed before anything else and it helped Atum to create the world.



THE BOOK OF THOTH



In the city of Memphis there lived a prince called Naneferkaptah, or Nane for short. Prince Nane loved reading and every day he went out looking for hieroglyphs to read.

He read plaques.

He read coffins.

He read obelisks.

He even read graffiti.



His wife Ahwere and his son Merib wished that he would not read quite so much.



One day, as Prince Nane was reading in the Temple of Ptah, a priest came and asked him why he was reading boring old inscriptions when there was a party going on.



The priest whispered to Prince Nane that if he was truly thirsty for knowledge, he should read the Book of Thoth. The priest explained how Thoth, God of Knowledge and Writing, had come down to Earth long ago and had written a very special book...

The Book of Thoth contained two spells. The first spell would enable the person who recited it to understand everything that animals were saying.



The second spell would enable the reciter to see the gods themselves!



Thoth re-read his work. If anything, it was 100 good. The spells in his book would make any human reader dangerously powerful.



No one must ever read my book.

Thoth put the book in a box, put the box in another box, and put that box in yet another box. He took the boxes to an enchanted island in the middle of the Nile, and instructed a snake, a scorpion and a crocodile to guard it.

Howling for?
For all eternity.



Prince Nane begged the old priest to tell him exactly where along the Nile he might find this enchanted island.



Prince Nane prepared the royal sailing boat and set off with Ahwere and baby Merib.



As they neared Koptos, Prince Nane threw a handful of sand into the water and a beautiful island appeared out of nowhere!



In the centre of the enchanted island was an iron box, guarded by a snake, a scorpion and a crocodile, just as the priest had said. Prince Nane picked up a big stick and set to work.



Prince Nane opened the iron box ever so carefully, and took out... a copper box.



He opened the ebony and ivory box and took out... a silver box.



He opened the copper box and took out... a wooden box.



He opened the silver box and took out... a golden box.



Having defeated all three guardians, Prince Nane unlocked the iron box.



He opened the wooden box and took out... an ebony and ivory box.



He opened the golden box and took out...



THE BOOK OF THOTH!

With trembling fingers, Prince Nane opened the Book of Thoth, and began to read aloud.



All of a sudden, Prince Nane could understand every kind of animal language. He understood the beasts of the earth, the birds of the sky and the fish of the deep.



Prince Nane recited the second spell in the book.



All of a sudden, he could see the gods of Egypt!



Thoth told Re that Prince Nane should be punished for stealing the book, and Re, as always, over-reacted.



Immediately, baby Merib fell overboard and drowned.



Then Ahwere fell overboard and drowned.



Prince Nane tied the book to his body... then fell overboard and drowned too.



The king was distraught to hear that Prince Nane and his family were dead. He sent his servants to retrieve the royal ship and the three bodies.



The servants took the three bodies to the embalmer's workshop and gave them to Setne, Master of Secrets, who mummified all three at the same time.



While Setne read out sacred texts, the picklers did their work.



Suddenly, the picklers noticed that the prince was clasping something tight in his arms.



After thirty days, the job was done.

Aaaand... it's a wrap.

They placed masks on the mummies' faces, and laid them in beautiful coffins. After the funeral, the king's most trusted servant loaded the coffins onto a donkey cart, took them far into the desert and buried them in a top-secret tomb.



No one will ever find them!

It's all my fault.



It was me that told him about the Book of Thoth.



Osiris, please tell Prince Nane I'm sorry!



Setne realised that the book in Prince Nane's arms must have been the Book of Thoth. If only he, Setne, could retrieve it, he would be the most powerful Master of Secrets that ever lived!



And at last, they found the top-secret tomb!

Setne ran to his brother, Inaros, and suggested a quest to find the tomb and recover the Book of Thoth.



They searched high...



They searched low...



Setne and Inaros ventured into the tomb, opened the coffin of Prince Nane, sliced through the linen wrappings and pulled out the Book of Thoth.



Suddenly...



Prince Nane warned Setne not to take the book. When Setne refused, he suggested a board game to settle the matter.



They sat down and played... and Setne lost! The ghost of Prince Nane bashed Setne over the head with the senet board, driving him into the ground.



They played again... and Setne lost.



They played one final time... and Setne lost.



Inaros took an amulet from his brother's special Master of Secrets satchel, and recited a spell to free Setne from the ground.



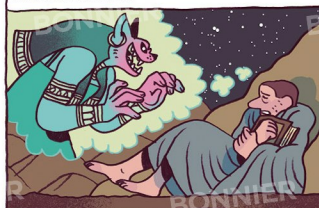
Setne snatched the Book of Thoth and ran off with it.



Setne's long quest (and painful clobbering) had made him tired. He lay down outside the tomb and went to sleep. He had a terrible dream.



Setne dreamed that he met the goddess Bastet and that she forced him to kill his own children!



Setne and Inaros quickly returned the book to Prince Nane's coffin, and there it remains to this very day. If you could find the tomb of Naneferkaptah and managed to beat him at senet, would YOU dare read the Book of Thoth?



HIEROGLYPHS

CARTOUCHE

In Ancient Egypt, a loop of rope was often drawn around people's names. This loop or 'cartouche' was believed to protect the person from harm.

Ancient Egyptian was one of the earliest languages ever to be written down. 'Hieroglyphs' (literally 'holy writing') were pictures of animals, birds, leaves, trees, gods, people and household items, representing different sounds and ideas. Not everyone in Ancient Egypt knew how to read and write. Writers were called 'scribes' and they were highly respected in their day. Thanks to scribes, we have discovered a lot about life in Ancient Egypt.

HOUSE OF LIFE

Young boys did their scribe training in a special library. The hieroglyph for library was a combination of the symbols for house and life. It literally meant the 'House of Life'!

PAPYRUS

Scribes usually wrote on a special material called papyrus. Papyrus reeds grew on the banks of the Nile. The insides of the stalks were cut into strips and laid out in layers, before being pounded together into a sheet.

Listen up! These are simple sounds.

These are more complicated sounds.

THE KEEPER OF KNOWLEDGE

The ancient Egyptians believed that writing was created by the god Thoth. They often painted Thoth with the head of an ibis – a sacred bird in Ancient Egypt that was associated with wisdom.

EQUIPMENT

Pupils at scribe school practised their hieroglyphs on wooden boards. They used special reed pens and wrote with red and black ink. Red was normally used for rough work and black was used for neat work.

OUT IN THE WORLD

The ancient Egyptians loved to keep a record of their daily life and they hired scribes for everything. Scribes chiselled inscriptions on obelisks and statues, maintained records of animals and farm produce, and even wrote down epic stories of their gods and pharaohs.

We know how to read hieroglyphics today because of the discovery of the Rosetta Stone. This large stone is engraved with two languages – ancient Egyptian and Greek. By translating the Greek script, a scholar called Jean-François was able to crack the code and with it read all other ancient Egyptian writings!

Alexanderville?
Alexandropolis?
I know! Alexandria!

The Ptolemies were a violent lot. They were always trying to kill their family members to remove their rivals for the throne.

But I am the
BEST Ptolemy.

The Ptolemies were a violent lot. They were always trying to kill their family members to remove their rivals for the throne.

By the time of Ptolemy XII, Egypt was under threat from a new enemy: the mighty Roman Empire. Ptolemy XII had to pay huge bribes to the leaders in Rome to secure their support.

Dear Julius, Pompeii
Thank you for not invading
my year. Please find enclosed
6666 pieces of gold.
Yours sincerely,
Ptolemy XII

Don't worry, Cleo -
we'll be back!

...but King Ptolemy returned suddenly from Rome and had her executed.

Hooray!

I told you
I'd be back.

—on the condition that she marry her annoying younger brother, Ptolemy XIII.

At last!

10

This is the life...

CRASH

WHY DID YOU PUT YOUR
FACE ON THE NEW COINS
AND LEAVE MINE OFF?

WHY DO YOU KEEP
TELLING EVERYONE
THAT I LOVE ROME
MORE THAN EVERYONE

In the dead of night, a small boat rowed into Alexandria harbour.

A man got out of the boat and headed for the palace

Rug for Caesar

Please don't tell my brother I'm here!

Julius Caesar was a Roman general. Cleopatra knew he could help her return to power, but how could she get into the palace to talk to him, without being killed by Ptolemy's guards?

It's so crazy, it
just might work!

In the dead of night, a small boat rowed into Alexandria harbour.



A man got out of the boat and headed for the palace

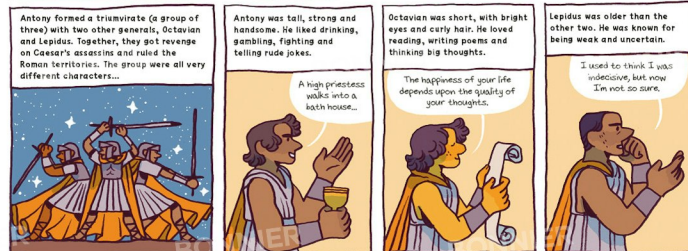
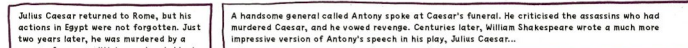
Rug for Caesar

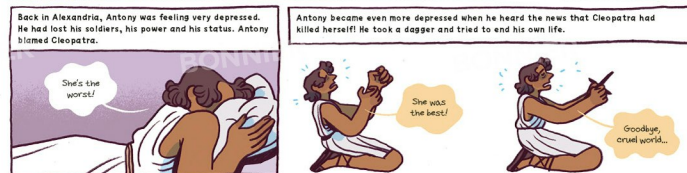
Awesome

Run for Cancer

I saw

All hail, the goddess Cleopatra,
daughter of Isis, kindred
of Horus and Ra, beloved of
the moon and sun, Queen of
Upper and Lower Egypt!





A MYTHIC MAP



OF ANCIENT EGYPT



The ancient Egyptians lived on the banks of the River Nile between 3100 BCE and 30 BCE. The kingdom was divided into upper and lower Egypt, with the Nile running through both parts. It was a bit confusing because Upper Egypt was in the south, and Lower Egypt was in the north! Since ninety per cent of Egypt is desert, the Egyptians mainly inhabited the area around the River Nile. The Nile flooded each year, depositing rich minerals across the floodplain. When the waters receded, it left behind fertile 'black land' that was perfect for growing barley and other crops. The river was also essential for the transportation of people and goods, bringing riches to and from Egypt. Over 3,000 years, the ancient Egyptians built many great cities and temples along the banks of their beloved Nile. Many of these remarkable landmarks are still standing to this day.

