



TAGRATL: the Association of Graverobbers and Tomb Looters.

It's time to revise your opinion of the Graverobbers of Antiquity.

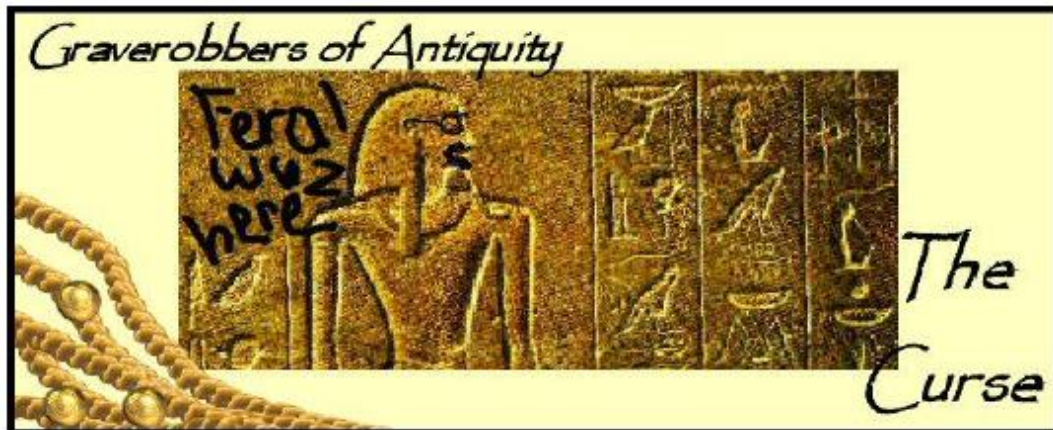
Rather than being scumbags, they were in fact happy-go-lucky blokes.

Stiffy, Mullet, Dingo and Feral (along with a host of other tomb looters)

rollick along in the Ancient world (where no pharaoh is safe).

This is the first episode of the Grave Robbers Trilogy.

Enjoy the fun!



PRELUDE into TITLES

1500 BCE, Memphis. A dimly lit crypt comes into view.

As this prelude progresses, we hear the voice of Professor Phantom. He speaks in English but his voice is weary, shaky and has a heavy French accent.

Phanton *voice-over* Graverobbers of Antiquity ...

How much I hated and despised these evil creatures. For every tomb that I entered (heart beating with excited anticipation) I would find that they had preceded me, some many centuries before. Without caring for the pharaonic curses which presaged their most agonizing deaths, they had stripped away those artefacts which the archaeologist prizes above life itself.

They left ***nothing***, these hideous men!

Always, always (for me) such bitter disappointment ...

From somewhere in the darkness, men throw sparkling devices (the sputtering sparks being blue) onto the floor of the crypt. Into the gloom emerge four grimy men, all stripped to the waist: Stiffy, Feral, Dingo and Mullet. They carry over their shoulders many ropes, nets, some chains and digging paraphernalia.

The four graverobbers continue to look about in the gloom. About them lie beautiful objects: treasured artistic masterpieces. The camera moves in, such that the men's faces are centre-stage. Stiffy, then Mullet, then Dingo. They are solemn. Feral just looks goofy.

All four men have very strong Australian accents when they speak, and they persist in gazing about them (not looking at each other as they speak).

Dingo *whining* Yeah ... Well, I don't get why we had to join a bloody union in the first place. We were doing alright before.

Mullet We all had to join. Those were Modra's instructions. Everyone had to join.

[Admiring the scenery]

Shit! This is a bit of alright!

Dingo *cheesed off* What's it mean again? I can't even remember --

Stiffy *uninterested* TAGRATL. The Association of Grave Robbers and Tomb Looters.

[Admiring the scenery]

I reckon we've hit pay dirt, gents.

Then Feral: who cracks a wide grin and rubs his hand together.

Feral *pleased* Bewdy! This'll keep the boss happy.

Dingo *worried* Them blue sparkly things'll stop us gettin' cursed, ya reckon?

Mullet *nods* Blood oath.

Stiffy Pooter reckons they're okay.

Feral *worried* Then what's this thing buzzin' around me?

Feral smacks at something like an annoying fly near his face.

Stiffy Nothin'. Just shoo it away with yer hand. That's what hands were made for.

Mullet fiddles with his groin.

Mullet My hands were made for somethin' else.

Dingo *harsh* Ya bloody galah. Always touchin' yer toolbox.

Stiffy Come on! Work! We gotta clear this stuff before the anti-curse sputter bombs peter out.

Feral First, we'd better pray. Old Baal will be watchin' us. We'd better ask him nicely to protect us and –

Mullet We haven't got time, mate. Didn't yer hear what Stiffy said? Pooter's magic anti-curse stuff will run out and we'll all be left standing around with our loincloths down to our ankles.

Stiffy, Dingo and Mullet walk out of camera range. Feral sinks to his knees in prayer. He looks up.

Feral *sing-song-voice, loudly* Oh, great god Baal! Well, here we are again – Stiffy, Dingo, Mullet and yer little mate Feral here (g'day Baal old mate) – all duly paid-up members of that TAG thingo – stealin' gravegoods from ... er ... graves! Yeah. So what I was gonna ask yer is --

Stiffy and Mullet have walked back into camera shot and they pick Feral up and cart him off.

END OF PROLOGUE

GRAVEROBBERS OF ANTIQUITY

THE CURSE: Opening Titles

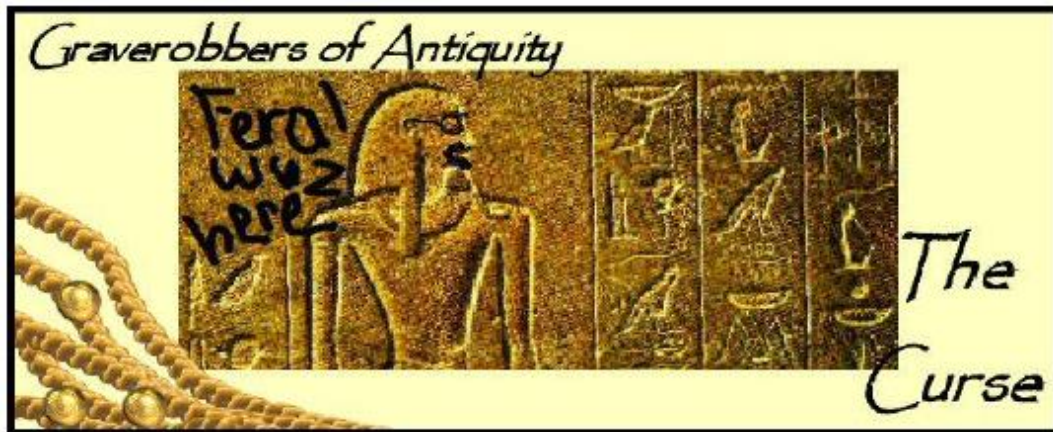
The music is beautiful, sweeping, grand and lyrical.

This is Cairo in the very early morning, sometime in 1931, with boats on the Nile.

The **titles** appear over this breath-taking panorama.

With the last of the **titles** appears a screen title: **Cairo, 1931**

Our camera moves at a sedate rate into the bedroom of Professor Phantom.



ACT I

I, Scene i: Cairo, 1931. A Darkened Bedroom At Dawn

No background music of any kind until instructed.

The room is comfortable: bourgeois but shabby. Colouration: Old newspaper shading.

The sole ceiling fan beats rhythmically. A small, frightened Egyptian boy holds a large fan-shaped palm frond. He moves this to-and-fro, unsteadily. As the scene opens, these are the only sounds.

On a table are strewn some old, tatty, stained newspapers. The camera drifts over these such that we can see the headlines, most of which are in French. But the two English headlines are prominent, and the camera picks them up clearly.

"Ancient Raiders Beat Me To It"

Phanton Discovers Kahmood Grave Stripped of Gold

Phanton's Greatest Disappointment: Empty Tomb of Pharaoh Kahmood

[Footnote: The hidden tomb of Kahmood is not raided until Film #2.]

The camera pans the room, such that we note that this is a very comfortable bedroom. The bed is occupied by an old man (Professor Maurice Phanton), who is close to death. As the camera reaches the doctor, the music kicks in, solemn, foreboding, but understated.

Dr Marell stands, looking down at his patient: serious, stern.

Professor Phanton is a renowned Egyptologist and archaeologist. Phanton kneads the sheets with his hands, looking up at the ceiling, on edge, restless, his lips working frenetically.

Both men have dignified French accents.

Dr Marell May I not give you something to relieve your present discomfort,
Sir?

Phanton is hardly able to speak.

Phanton No! ... *L'anglais* ... Where is he? Have they summoned him?

Dr Marell I'm not sure, Professeur Phanton ... Can I not --

Phanton *gasping* *Je m'en fâche!* Go and find that devil, can't you!

The doctor moves uncertainly. A knock at the door stops his hesitant steps.

The Egyptian servant pokes his head in. Carefully he whispers to the doctor.

Servant *in French* *Le Colonel arrive.*

Dr Marell *nods without enthusiasm* *Eh, bien.* Admit him. He is very much expected.

The servant nods. The news excites the dying man. Phanton reaches out: he is desperate but can only just get out the words.

Phanton *to the doctor* The phial ... in the drawer. *Vite!* Put it into my hand.

We can hear Bartholemew's heavy footfall and gasping breathing as he approaches the door.

Dr Marell *despairing* What is the good of all this?

Phanton *desperate* *Cher docteur.* If you have even a shred of humanity, get the phial out of the drawer here beside me and put it into my hand. *Je vous en prie.*

Begrudgingly, the doctor fetches the phial from the drawer and places it into Phantom's old fingers (which tremble), closing them over the tiny bottle. The dying man gives a cruel smile.

Phantom *whispers* The old hag ... she has the secret of the curse ... *Voici* ...

The French doctor tries to speak but cannot frame the words.

At the same time, Colonel Bartholemew (being a large man) gustily enters the room. Bartholemew is panting from his exertion and mops his brow with his handkerchief.

Bartholemew Gracious! What is this all about, old friend?

Phantom *snarling with mean smile* I've never been your "friend", *Anglais*. Not at all. Not ever. We have always been the best of enemies, *n'est-ce pas?*

Phantom uses all his remaining strength in a valiant attempt to sit up.

Dr Marell *leaning down* No, no. You must lie still ...

Bartholemew takes in the situation. He moves forward and lowers himself carefully onto the side of the bed (as he requests permission to do so).

Bartholemew May I sit here, Professor? I'm very sorry to see you in these straits.

Phantom grasps Bartholemew's hand tightly.

Phantom *fierce whisper* Lloyd ... *Mon cher Colonel* ... It's all up with me. I'm finished ... done-for! Don't bother with the empty expressions of regret, Bartholemew. They will do no good for me now.

Bartholemew *attempt at cheeriness* Why, this is just a bout of the megrims, I'll be bound, and --

Phantom claws desperately at Bartholemew, and his voice is almost screeching. Background music emphasizes the drama.

Phantom *Je suis maudit. Maudit.* You – You! Englishman, would say that I have been cursed.

Bartholemew *stunned* Cursed? But how could this be?

Music more thrilling on "cursed" and following.

The effort has finished Phanton. He collapses back onto the bed, gasping for breath. Dr Marell rushes to him.

Dr Marell *concerned* *Calmez-vous, calmez-vous, Professeur Phanton.*

Dr Marell shakes his head.

Dr Marell *to* I'm sorry, Colonel, but you had better go. This excitement is too
Bartholemew much for the patient.

Phanton squawks above his death-rattle.

Phanton *to Marell* No! No! I - must - tell - to - him ... Cannot expire until I do ...
Graverobbers ...

Phanton needs time to compose himself. Marell looks at Bartholemew, and then the former nods his head. As Phanton's words are whispered, his lips tremble and some tears form in the corners of his eyes.

Phanton ... They preceded us ... I must speak to you ...

Both Dr Marell and the Colonel glance at each other again, then move very close to Phanton, coming from either side of the bed.

Bartholemew *gently,* Just say whatever you like, old chap. Take your time.
kindly

All that we can hear is the rhythm of the death-rattle for a couple of seconds. Both the doctor and the colonel appear deeply concerned for the frail professor. Then Phanton seems to summon up his last gasp. The camera zeroes-in on Phanton.

Phanton The curse of the graverobbers is as follows:--

Listen ... to ... me ... well ... the curse ... the curse is ... *Les rêves*
... Of the *hommes six* ... Of the *femmes cinq* ...

The curse passes to those who ... to those who dream ... Then
one will fly ...

Écoutez-moi ...

The lion ... the lion savages the bu ... the bull ... and the bull gores the lion. *Mais* ... The eagle soars above them on wings ... on wings of ... of gold ...

The old man dies. Dr Marell signs to the Colonel not to speak. Bartholemew stands, dour. The doctor ensures the man's death, then covers his head with the sheet.

Bartholemew *whisper* Well that's done me in, for sure. Death bed scenes ... Bit too melodramatic for my taste ... and what was all that stuff he blathered about birds and dreams and women?

Marell *shrugs, low-voiced* The crazed last words of a dying man are often of the most strange nature. Perhaps we should write down what we remember of his words... Just in case ...

Dr Marell signs with a brief nod and a look that they should leave the room. We get one last glimpse of the goggle-eyed boy standing as before. He has stopped fanning and looks unsure what he must do.

The music kicks-in seriously now.

The two men stand out in the corridor, outside the bedroom. Bartholemew mops his brow with a white handkerchief, then looks into his own palm. The phial is there.

The film's colouration is now true. Bartholemew closes his fingers over the phial.

SEGUE INTO NEXT SCENE

The sun rises higher over the activity of down-town Cairo. An immensely huge eagle glides carelessly above.

We see camels, early cars, people sitting at sidewalk tables, smoking and drinking coffee.

There is a bustle of workers, a marketplace, and women chatting.

The camera moves on to "The Palace", in which the French officers are housed. We see a couple of officers (complete with black armbands) strolling about. The huge eagle is still visible riding the thermal.

Now, the music winds down, and we bring the camera focus onto the first-floor balcony of the hotel (The Oak Nut Hotel) where the English people take tea.

They are in half-mourning in honour of Professor Phantom.

I, Scene ii: Cairo, The Oak Nut Hotel Opposite The Palace, In 1931.

A substantial 19th century European hotel on a busy Cairo street. Called affectionately the Oak Nut Hotel. The weather is unbearably hot, sunny.

On a first-storey balcony, overlooking the bustle below, a desultory group of English academics and old farts take afternoon tea.

Professor Gordon Summerhill (archaeologist and Egyptologist), Mrs Catesbury, Lucas Brenton, his sister, Demelza Brenton, Colonel Lloyd Bartholemew and Mr & Mrs Healy. Each of the men wears a black armband on his left upper arm. The ladies are dressed in hues of grey or black.

There are annoying flies. Egyptian servants tend to the English, amidst an old-world decor.

Opposite this hotel stands a very magnificent and opulent palace, also in the grand old style, complete with a courtyard and palm trees. French army officers lean over a balcony, drinking wine and smoking. They too wear black armbands.

The tea-drinkers murmur to each other as the tea ceremony dominates the proceedings. There is an occasional laugh or "tut-tut".

Mrs Catesbury *under voice* I notice that we've been spared the society of the English doctor.

Mrs Healy *under voice* Lilliban? Yes, he's tried to muscle in on the Phanton death. They showed him the door post haste.

Both ladies nod wisely.

Mrs Catesbury *under voice* Oily and pertinacious. I only ever consulted with him once. That was enough!

Why he haunts Cairo I've no idea ... Declares that he simply **loathes** antiquities. Well, that can't be right ...

Both ladies sigh and nod. There is a hubbub further along the balcony. The two English ladies crane their necks and re-join the general conversation.

Demelza *delighted* -- and this morning, I took the most stunning shot of it as it flew overhead. Well ... **flew!** Glided, I should say.

Mrs Healy With your box camera?

Demelza Yes. Hope the photograph's alright ... probably be just an indecipherable blob in the sky. But at least I snapped it.

Mrs Catesbury One so seldom sees eagles about in this area.

Bartholemew *musng* Damned eagle, was it? I thought that was what it was. Reminded me of Phanton. He rabbited on something about an eagle with his dying breath. Odd what folks will blather about at the end, isn't it?

The British tea drinkers shift about, reminded of the recent bereavement. We see Mrs Healy mouth "Poor man!" as she sips her tea.

Lucas Some of 'em who never uttered a word of conversation in their whole life become quite loquacious on their deathbed, I believe.

Demelza *naughtily* And divulge all the family secrets!

Bartholemew *chuckles* Well, this was more drivel and riddle than secrets, I can tell you. The French quack and I wrote it all down later on, of course, just in case. And the British bloke (Lillyhammer or what-the-devil he calls himself) has been quizzing me forever about what was said. Told the blighter that the Prof said "rien". Ha-ha!

Mrs Healy *shrewd* You mean (of course) Dr Trevor Lilliban.

No I haven't taken to him either. The Frenchie is quite personable ... but you were quite right to take it all down. The last words. One never knows ...

Bartholemew *shrugs* Not sure of the meaning ...

There is a lull as cakes are eaten and tea is drunk. Bartholemew chuckles unexpectedly.

Bartholemew *off-hand* Still ... Won't be able to bury him until they find his bod, will they? Ha! Ha! Ha! No indeed ...

The ladies glance at each other, making faces as if Colonel Bartholemew is once again squawking something out of an Icelandic saga.

Mrs Catesbury *kindly* What's that, dear Colonel?

Demelza *leaning forward, ecstatic* Did I hear you correctly, Sir? Have Professor Phantom's mortal remains vanished?

Bartholemew *draws in a long breath through his teeth* As usual, there's been some sort of slip-up. Looks like the long-suffering undertaker will have to dress-up a dummy, I'm afraid.

[Coughs on his laughter]

Lucas *sitting up in slight shock* Are you actually saying, Sir, that Phantom's corpse has disappeared?

Bartholemew snorts and chuckles at the same time. The guests look concerned. They are staring goggle-eyed at Bartholemew. Summerhill seems to consider this occurrence to be par for the course in Cairo.

Summerhill *nasty* Nothing at all that happens in this place would surprise me one

iota. That English doctor you mentioned has probably borrowed the mortal remains for some nefarious purpose. Wouldn't put it past him. Cad, bounder and charlatan. There you are! That's cutting up a character when he's not here to defend himself. May I rot in Heaven.

At any pass, the bag of guts will be back on the slab tomorrow, you'll see.

The English tea-drinkers continue to whisper in amazement and concern.

A smiling Egyptian servant passes out letters to the old farts. One of these is handed to Summerhill.

Although most of the guests put their letters aside, Professor Summerhill opens his envelope with his knife and begins to read. Summerhill glances over the stiff pages of his letter and grunts.

Summerhill Well, well! Apparently, my daughter Theresa is due to arrive on the SS Velda, sailing from Athens.

Appreciative murmurs from the group.

Summerhill *ironic smile* Keeping a beady one cocked in my direction, I surmise.

Being a rich widow, my dear girl finances this poor dilettante's more expensive pursuits. (Digging in the desert being one of my vices). Thus it behoves me to --

Summerhill realizes that the SS Velda will have already berthed. He flusters and then prepares to leave promptly such that he may collect Theresa from the port.

Summerhill *reads,* Disembarking Port of Cairo on Thursday at 3 o'clock.
surprised

After a slight pause, Summerhill is thunderstruck.

Summerhill *shocked* Isn't today Thursday?

Everyone responds in the affirmative. Summerhill hurriedly looks at his wristwatch.

Summerhill *mild alarm* Goodness ... Hi! Saleb!

Summerhill quickly wipes his mouth with his napkin as he stands. Summerhill drops his hand onto the shoulder of the startled servant Saleb.

Summerhill Send someone to the wharf, will you? Or ... No, I'd better go and greet her m'self.

Ever gracious, Summerhill turns to the other guests to excuse himself.

Summerhill Excuse me, won't you?

Summerhill waves the letter by way of explanation.

Summerhill My daughter ...

Mrs Catesbury Poor Miss Summerhill ... To arrive in all this heat ...

Summerhill *distracted* Mrs Trilbeway, she is actually ... Told you ... A widow ... Rich widow ... Purveyor of spices, he was ... Malaria contracted on a dig... Most unfortunate ...

Must away ... She'll be suffering from the usual headache, one imagines ...

Summerhill speedily leaves the scene.

The English party and some French officers watch as (on the street below) Summerhill clambers into an ancient carriage and shouts some instructions in a mixture of Egyptian and English to the driver. The carriage speeds off.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iii: Visiting The Ravaged Tomb of Anoheth 1931

On the following day a trip to the tomb of Pharaoh Anoheth is undertaken.

The camera takes a long shot of the English archaeologists, dilettantes and hangers-on riding on camels, or being transported in an open bus, along with several servants on asses or on foot.

Theressa *voice-off* What's the black armband for? The Colonel was saying something about --

Summerhill *voice-off* Oh, yes! We've just lost *le Professeur Phanton*. He got a wee bit tipsy (elephant's trunk, in fact) and plunged down a few stairs, landing awkwardly, hitting his head --

Theressa *voice-off* Ugh! Ghastly!

Summerhill *voice-off* -- After slipping on the top step.

Theressa *voice-off* I liked Professor Phanton's epithet for Colonel Bart: "The Trouble-Maker".

Summerhill *voice-off* Yes! "*Le Fomentateur*": quite appropriate, really. But I assure you that since Phanton's death he's been very subdued and has been conducting himself with some restraint.

The members of the party clamber down a rough tunnel into an ancient, empty tomb. Lanterns provide the light; these are held by the many servants. The gentlemen hand-down the ladies (who wear summer frocks and enchanting hats). The entrance to the tomb naturally slopes down; and there are many stones and rocks to slip on. There is a great deal of incidental murmuring, delight and excited commentary. The voices echo somewhat.

Bartholemew makes a grand sweep of his hands.

Bartholemew Here we are then. Our expedition finds us at our first landing-stage. This was the final resting place of King Anoheth. King Anoheth was Pharaoh of All Egypt.

Theressa Is this the site of your dig, Colonel Bartholemew?

Bartholemew No, Mrs Trilbeway, my dig is some 50 miles to the North of here, at Memphis. I brought you all here, my dear Madame, to see what a king's tomb is *really* like. My dig is merely the grave of some official, some underling. It was Jealousy Phanton who did the first work here.

Summerhill And pity 'tis that the G.O.A.s got to this place first. Cleaned it out.

Old Phantom was left nothing but dirt and a few bits of random graffiti to scratch about in. It was ever so ...

Mrs Catesbury *nods* Graverobbers of Antiquity.

Mr Healy What reversals that poor man bore! No matter how well-hidden the tomb, Phantom could discover it.

Summerhill Aye! Lanil, Kahmood, Cheofes, and this Anoheth ...

Mrs Catesbury As soon as the Pharaoh's body was laid to rest with attendant
explaining to Theresa gravegoods, in came the robbers. Very disappointing.

Mr Healy I really can't comprehend why Maurice Phantom didn't blow his brains out in sheer frustration!

Summerhill has wandered away to study some vague characters scratched into the wall.

Bartholemew continues with his own conversation with anyone who will listen.

Bartholemew Phantom was gifted, I'll grant you that. But oh! So pig-headed and ... you know, a very Devil to work alongside. He'd say "leopard", and I'd say "lion". He'd absolutely no grasp on the imponderables ...

Summerhill *calls out* "Gifted". That's an understatement, Lloyd. He was a genius in his field.

A very unlucky man ... He was plagued by the bitterest disappointment.

Theresa *agreeing* The tombs were frightfully well-guarded against invasion, as well.

Bartholemew *nodding wisely* To discover a tomb which was to all intents and purposes hermetically sealed. To finally break into that tomb. To reel back in despair on finding that the treasure had already been plundered by unknown, undiscovered thieves.

Mrs Catesbury Quite right. But they got in somehow. Nobody knows how. **They took everything**, even the mummified corpse. In addition, these Egyptian Pharaohs (through their High Priests and what-have-you)

had placed all-powerful curses on the tombs. The robbers probably died a grizzly death on account of violating these curses. We all hope so, don't we?

Theressa Of course.

Bartholemew can be heard to speak in the background, as Theresa (in the foreground) looks about.

Bartholemew Yes, you can see Anoheth's likeness on this wall here. Note the chain around his neck, bearing the eye symbol of Ra. There is a much clearer likeness of Pharaoh Anoheth at Cheofe's tomb.

The visitors wander about, with Colonel Bartholemew and Professor Summerhill pontificating in the background. Theresa's face bears a quiet disappointment. The voices of Bartholemew and Summerhill are vaguely audible throughout this next long section.

All of a sudden, Theresa realizes that Dr Lilliban is at her elbow.

Dr Lilliban *unctuous* Oh excuse me. I didn't mean to startle you, Mrs Trilbeway.

Theressa *surprised* Not at all, I --

Dr Lilliban is determined to engage Theresa in conversation and tends to rattle along in order that she might not have the chance to rebuff him. His smile is smarmy. It is clear that Theresa distrusts him.

Dr Lilliban *confidential* Because I wanted to confide in you that I don't really enjoy all this archaeology. Shocking, isn't it! To admit such a thing, and in such august company. Did you see that noble edifice opposite our Oak Nut hotel? On the same street in Cairo, but on the other side of the road?

Theressa *surprised* Well, I --

Dr Lilliban Because that is where the French Army officers are quartered, when they've done their tour of duty, and are required to take their *vacances*. The Palace, it's called. So, as I was saying, these Frenchies have invited us along to their barracks ... er, tomorrow evening? Or the one after? Or ... I've forgotten which evening. But

I'll bet it's all on account of having seen **you**, when you arrived.

Theressa *coldly*

How very flattering.

Dr Lilliban

Dinner *à la française*. And you'll chat with every one of the French officers and perhaps --

Theressa notes that an "old hag" (Mahala) has quietly entered the tomb and looks intently at Theresa. Despite their not having been introduced, there is a taut moment. Mahala relaxes and nods reverently towards Theresa, who slightly returns the nod. Then Theresa turns back to Dr Lilliban.

Dr Lilliban *low-voiced*

After we have finished here, when the Colonel and the Professor have run out of steam, we're off to visit that lady. She's quite mad, you know. Says she's a reincarnation of a High Priestess from the time of our King Anoheth. Have you ever heard such a farrago?

Why, she's even enumerated the missing grave goods which dear Professor Phanton might have found here if those rascals of Antiquity hadn't beaten him to it. Now I ask you ... how the Devil can she know?

Under the guise of being in one of her trances, this queer lady sketches the loot onto sheets of papyrus. Quite entertaining, but very much overdone. Like some raddled gypsy-woman who purports to read one's fortune at the county fair, what?

Theressa and Dr Lilliban watch Mahala drift about, speaking to the other guests. Theresa obviously wants to ditch her companion. She strolls off, muttering to herself. But Dr Lilliban moves off with her.

Theressa *wondering*

Madame Mahala ...

Dr Lilliban

The Mystical Mahala ...

conspiratorial

Theressa *joining in the fun*

The Mad Mahala!

Dr Lilliban

The Mysterious Mahala ... I'll keep an eye on her for you, shall I?

Theressa *crisp* There's no need. Thank you, Doctor. My papa will look out for me.
Our discussion has been most pleasant.

With a nod, Theressa marches off to stand close to her father Summerhill.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iv: Dining With The Officers, The Palace, Cairo 1931

Notes on Pronunciation:

The four French officers speak perfect English, but with pronounced French accents. They are somewhat haughty, having come from privileged backgrounds (as well as being French!)

Whenever the word "Lieutenant" is pronounced by an English person, it is *leff-tenant*. If by a French person, it is *lyeur-tenon*.

"Miles" is pronounced (by everyone) as *Mee-lays*.

Role-Playing and Casting:

We have already met the four graverobbers: they are daggy and comical.

The four French officers become these Australian "tradesmen" when they travel back in time. That is to say that the same 4 actors play the parts. This short scene provides a contrast for the characters.

Stiffy/Miles

Dingo/Lorent

Mullet/Roland

Feral/Martin

We are now in a small, elegant dining room with French windows (open) and ceiling fans. Many Egyptian servants stand to attention around about. The English have dressed-up in their finest, and dine merrily with the French officers, who wear dress uniform. There is a crack of laughter from one of the latter, followed by delighted chatter and merriment from the others.

Throughout this scene, the English (other than Theresa) are ready to be wined, dined, and entertained. The French officers are charming, lovable, well-behaved; and excellent hosts.

Theresa is polite but frosty. Whenever the camera alights on her, she wears a lost-look, an expression of unhappiness.

The conversation is not scripted: a few scat words only will cover the plot progression. All we need is for Theresa to meet the French officers.

The overall sensation is of cultivated decorum.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene v: The Palace Garden, After Dinner, Starlight And Moonlight Cairo 1931.

Wandering through the garden following their dinner, Martin and Theresa converse. He is lively and buoyant, whilst she is subdued and unwilling to be entertained. We catch them in the midst of a discussion: Martin is desperately trying to promote his own views.

Martin Yes, she may ***seem*** to be demented, Madame Trilbeway. That is taken for granted at the first meeting. But the woman has a genius of the highest order.

Theresa *sighs* A charlatan with theatrical tricks at her command. How could a sensible gentleman such as yourself be taken in!

Martin I can show you the elixir she gave me. I have it to hand ... Look!

Martin pulls a small bottle from his pocket.

Theressa *laughs* And what is that for? Toothache?

Martin Madame! The lady Mahala looked into my eyes and diagnosed a rheumatic fever. She brewed-up this potion for me. It was delivered to me by her servant on that very evening. And since then ... poof! I have never been better, *je vous assure!*

Theressa stops, turning on her heel such that she faces Martin. She speaks with brusque finality.

Theressa Well, thank you so much, Lieutenant Leveque.

Martin She was utterly taken with you, if I may speak these words, my dear Madame. Her eyes sparkled when first she saw you.

Theressa reaches out to shake Martin's hand. He takes that hand and kisses it warmly, murmuring "My dear Madame!" She snatches her hand away almost rudely.

Theressa I have so much enjoyed our chat, but it's getting late, and I must find my father.

Before Martin can do more than bow solemnly, Theressa strides off into the dark, leaving the young man looking after her.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene vi: Later That Evening

The English guests chatter and laugh as they head back across the road to their hotel. The 4 French officers stand on the balcony, watching their guests return across the road. They finish their wine and smoke.

Voiceover Vincent That young English lady may be a beauty, but she is made of very cold marble.

Voiceover Martin *Ou!* An ice-maiden in the heat of Cairo.

Leveque

Voiceover Miles I wonder if there is not some hidden fire waiting to burst into life.
Renauld

Voiceover Vincent Mmm ... perhaps ...
Lorent

Voiceover Roland *La veuve est très riche, mon cher Miles.*
Ferrier

Voiceover of Martin Ah!
and Vincent

END OF SCENE

What happened to Theresa? Dr Lilliban has secretly given a hallucinatory drug to Theresa, based on a potion of Mahala's. Lilliban's aim is to find the resting place of the grave goods robbed by the GOAs.

We will not mess around with getting Theresa to sleep. That will be pieced together when she wakes up.

Start of THERESSA'S EXPERIENCE

I, Scene vii: Mediterranean Sea, Off The Coast Of Egypt, 1500 BCE.

Screen Title: **Egyptian Coast, Times of Antiquity**

Notes on Characters:

The four haughty French officers have completely transformed back into the rough Australian tradesmen we met in the Prologue. This implies they are fairly carefree, knock-about, fun-loving blokes, with broad Australian accents. These Phoenicians are

the complete antithesis of the French officers.

Stiffy is a born leader, Mullet is a born 2nd lieutenant, Feral is a ball of athleticism, energy and fun, and Dingo has a decided "edge". Theresa has transformed into Debra (Feral's sister). Theresa has not much changed to become Debra, except for her accent. The Australian version of "Go on" is not an incitement to forward movement; but rather a meditative "Is that right?" or "You don't say ..."

Note that instead of shaking hands as welcome, the men grip each other's forearm: I've called this an "arm-shake".

There is a sharp burst of sunlight on the water. We can vaguely make out an ancient fishing vessel, gently floating in the still seas of the Mediterranean, not far from the shore (Egyptian coast).

Still distanced from the boat, we hear that a disagreement is taking place.

We find Dingo very much put out. He shouts angrily at Mullet.

Dingo *voice off* Aw! Whadya do **that** for?

Mullet *voice off* It was in the way.

Camera now moves in: close-up of the boat.

Mullet, Feral and Stiffy are fishing, and at the same time, watching Dingo. Dingo is kneeling, head-first over the side. Beside him, keen and involved, Howzat (a Queensland Blue Heeler) has his paws up on the side of the boat. Howzat begins to bark. Debra can be seen in the background, out of harm's way, sitting demurely, reading a couple of clay tablets or working on a woven palm basket.

Feral Shut yer dog up, Mullet!

Stiffy He'll scare away the fish.

Mullet *grins* Aw, Dingo's already done that.

Howzat! Bit of shoosh will ya?

The dog confines itself to whimpers and violent tail-wagging. Suddenly, Dingo dives into the water.

The other three men break into hearty, genuine laughter. The dog scampers around, looking over the

side, rushing up to the other men, and whining. Mullet retrieves a large jug from its hiding place, takes it over to the place where Dingo dived in, and brandishes it.

Mullet *shouts* Oi! You bloody no-hoper. Here's the jug. I never threw it overboard.

Stiffy *concerned* Hey! We'd better get him out of there, bloody quick ... Did any of youse see any salties?

We hear Dingo gasping for breath and shouting unintelligible utterances. Mullet hands the jug to Feral, Stiffy rises to his feet, and Mullet and Stiffy haul Dingo out of the water and onto the boat. More laughter. They dump the dripping wet man on the deck.

Feral *no emotion* Shit! I thought a croc was gonna get you for sure, Ding!

Feral hands Dingo the jug, which Dingo embraces to his chest.

Dingo Ah, yer bastards. That's my favourite jug.

Dingo coughs, clearing his throat loudly.

Mullet *mocking* Yer "favourite", is it? That's a bit girlie to have a "favourite" jug, mate.

Dingo *mutinous* It's the first **thing** I ever got out of the robbery caper. You know, Modra pays us in gold all the time, but then he slips me this ... this bit of treasure one day. As a "thank you" ... I just thought that was nice of him.

Mullet *still mocking* So ya carry it around with you everywhere ...

Feral *musng* He gave me a titchy statue of a topless goddess once. Nicest bit of marblework this side of the black stump. Or that's what he told me. Good tits, she's got ...

Dingo puts the jug aside, realizing that he's over-reacted. He is now embarrassed.

Dingo *blushing* Aw ... give us a beer, will ya someone?

More laughter. In a wooden bucket stand several amphorae of beer, with XXXX inscribed on them.

Mullet Feral, pass us an amphora of that beer, will ya? No, make it 2 ...
one for me and one for the art-lover.

Feral Awright. There y'are.

Feral hands a beer to Mullet as requested such that he can then pass it on. Stiffy smacks his hands loudly on his legs.

Stiffy So! We're all set for tomorrow?

Dingo What are we doing again? Pharaoh Anoheth's grave?

Mullet takes a long swig of his drink.

Mullet Anoheth ... That's the man. Yeah. Just fresh. Just died.

Stiffy glances surreptitiously at Debra, then leans forward to address Feral.

Stiffy And you'll bring Debbie along?

Feral *reluctant* Yeah, I'll try, Stiffy. S'long as Dingo keeps his dirty mitts off her.

Dingo What? Me?

Stiffy *definite* No, Feral, you can't just **try** ... you have to have her with you,
otherwise it's not going to work.

Stiffy must get his point across. He speaks to Feral sotto voce but with firmness.

Stiffy *definite* Tell her we'll give her her fair share of the takings.

Tell her she's got to come on account of your job security.

Feral *surprised* She doesn't know what I do. They all think I'm just a fisherman,
the family do.

Mullet So how do you explain all the loot in your trophy room?

Feral *shrugs* Aw ... dunno. 'Spose I told them I won that stuff at poker.

Mullet And they believed you?

Feral *uninterested* 'Spose so ...

Stiffy Look! We all know that Pooter's crappo curse-breaker magic is

wearing thin ... Always these bloody side-effects. So we'll go a different way ...

We need a female and Debra fits the bill. She's cluey enough, from what I've seen. Go and talk to her now and make her understand how important it is. And tell her that we'll be totally rooted without a female of some sort ...

Feral Nah. I don't wanna take a girl along. They only make trouble.

Stiffy Howso?

Feral They only make trouble, that's all I'm saying.

Dingo Hey! I vote we have a girl. But only if she'll strip to the waist.

There is good-natured laughter from Dingo, Stiffy and Mullet.

Feral *firing-up* Don't you talk about my sister like that, yer bastard.

Stiffy *to Feral* Look, mate, it'll be a piece of cake. Money for jam.

We've never worked on an accursed site before without Pooter's anti-curse juice. And I know for a fact that Gang #3 tried to defy a death curse. And guess what? They all snuffed it before 6 full moons had gone over.

Feral Yeah, but --

Stiffy *earnest* This bludger's grave has a huge curse set on it that specifically stipulates that "No man shall enter here". Says nothing about women. Or dogs. So the idea is that we take along a female and a dog to dodge the curse. Simple! I thought we agreed on that!

Feral *confused* Is "stipulate" like spitting sort of thing?

Dingo *ignores Feral* Who thought of it in the first place? Was it Modra? Pretty clever.

Stiffy Nah, actually Knackers did.

Mullet Who? The Knackers from Gang #4, that works with Chips?

Stiffy Nah! They're still faithful to Pooter and his lame-brain potions. So they don't ever worry about curses or nothin'. Dumb shits!

Anyway, *that* Knackers is a Phoenician: he's one of us. The bloke I'm talking about is from Byzantium. He's an older bloke. White beard.

Mullet Not the Knackers who got himself pressed into service on that slave galley?

Stiffy No, obviously not him. Anyway, he's Babylonian, isn't he?

Mullet *shrugs* Who'd know?

Dingo He's Donger's real father. Did yer know that?

Stiffy Yeah, matter-of-fact, I did. Makes yer wonder how come Donger is such a good bloke having a prick like that for his dad.

At any rate, the other one. You know, the one whose sexpot young wife was on with Squizzy.

Mullet and Feral nod in recognition.

Dingo *fascinated* Squizzy, that one-eyed bloke from Gang #5 was on with old Knacker's missus?

Mullet Yeah, everyone knows about that.

Feral What's she ... wife number 4, isn't it?

Dingo Whoa! She's a real hottie!

Stiffy Well, the idea came to him one night. Inspiration. Flash of lightning.

Mullet is fascinated by this scenario. He ruminates aloud.

Mullet Go on ...

Pause.

Stiffy So it's tomorrow. Youse are all up for it, are ya?

Dingo and Mullet who are both utterly reluctant.

Dingo and Mullet Yeah.
together

Feral *reluctant* Awright.

Mullet And I've been training Howzat to do loads of tricks.

Dingo *totally sceptical* Good on ya. That'll help ...

Mullet No! He's real smart. We can use him. Breaking into the tomb and that.

Dingo *even more* Good on ya.
sceptical

END OF SCENE

I, Scene viii: Egypt, 1500 BCE, Anoheth, The Tomb Break-In.

The robbery of Pharaoh Anoheth's tomb.
--

This scene is actually a collage of several activities, conjoined by Stiffy's voice-over.

Music: something to fit the action.

As Stiffy speaks (voice-over), the shots on screen match-up with his words.

Props: the men always carry with them torches, sturdy ropes and huge, sturdy nets, plus an array of fearsome weapons and chains.

[Scene -- starlit night, guards shot with small arrows, such that the arrow tips have been dipped in a potion.]

Stiffy *voice-over* First, we do the usual with Modra's knock-out drops ... shoot arrows into the guards. Put them into stun-mode for a good long while.

[Scene -- by ancient torchlight, the four men pour over a shabby papyrus map.]

Stiffy *voice over* Second, we use Modra's map to get into the crypt via the backway.

[Scene: just outside the wall which will lead to the grave goods, Stiffy draws a semi-circle in the dirt, and we can see him instructing the others to stay outside that semi-circle. Then, with great difficulty, the men (keeping their distance), have to break a hole into the wall, but not let their bodies pass into the crypt. Then, Howzat scrambles inside.]

Stiffy *voice-over* Third, us blokes can only stay **outside** the burial chamber. We'll draw an arc in the dirt on the floor of the antechamber so that we can't accidentally get any part of our bodies into the cursed room. Okay? I mean, even our breath can't go in there. So Debra and Howzat will have to burrow inside. She'll have to widen the hole from the inside. We just can't risk --

Debra is crawling into the tomb when the music suddenly stops.
--

Music: stops abruptly. Of course, the action has moved to the antechamber. Debbie is just about to enter the tomb via the small fissure, as stated above. Debra is in a crawling posture when she turns to the men.

Debra Does it matter if I'm menstruating?

Dingo What?

Debra You know, I've got my ... it's the wrong time of the moon.
Perfectly natural.

Feral *put-off* What are you saying? Don't let me hear you talking dirty in front

of my mates, woman.

Debra I ... I can't help it.

The men are all uncomfortable with Debra's announcement. They shift about as they look at each other, hoping for inspiration. Mullet speaks first: a mixture of accusation and interest.

Mullet Have you got the rags on?

Debra Will it make any difference?

Feral No. It's just disgusting.

Dingo Did I have to know this?

Dingo blocks his ears and makes ridiculous noises, as would a child trying to avoid hearing bad news.

Stiffy Don't worry about it. Might work better if she's ... you know ...

Stiffy gives Dingo a clip across the back of the head.

Stiffy *trying to find a positive* Come on! We don't have all that much time. Once the guards come-to again ...

Debbie, we'll leave the ropes and the nets and all the tools you'll need out here. We can't pass them through to you. You'll have to stretch out and grab them. Understand?

Debra *nods* Yes, that'll be fine.

Stiffy You have to bash in the wall from the other side, to make this hole bigger. And you know how to tie the ropes into good, strong knots?

Debra *nods* I'll be right.

The tomb break-in proceeds, with the men passing blazing torches, ropes and nets up to a position within Debbie's reach. As Debbie widens the gap, the boys lay down so that they can look into the crypt, marvelling at the beautiful things. They are not interested in aesthetics: it is all about market value.

The tomb of Pharaoh Anoheth has a mighty gold ghost. A female – she closely resembles Mahala.

The actress who plays Mahala also plays this gold ghost.

Within the crypt, there is the dramatic appearance of gold-coloured ghost. Debbie is very frightened. She screams, cringes, and covers her face with her arm. Howzat starts growling and barks a few times. The ghost is much larger than life, and is in fact a Mahala-lookalike, dressed outrageously as a very colourful but tubby golden Egyptian woman. As she grows and expands, with very dramatic music and effects, the grave goods fall about with loud crashing. Clouds of dust and moths fill the chamber.

Miles and the other men all shout instructions together. They tell Debbie not to be frightened, to hang in there, to ignore the ghoulies ("they can't hurt ya"). The men have moved right up to the hole in the wall, and the four of them hover in the gap, trying to calm Debbie, and to keep her moving on the clearance operation. Miles looks as if he is more worried about the girl than the treasure.

When trying to impress her audience, the Ghost/Mahala has a booming voice laced in refined English accents as if she had been a classical actress. Her voice is loud and sonorous.

Ghost/Mahala Know this. The final resting-place of the Mighty Pharaoh Anoheth, King of the Nile and of all Egypt, cannot be entered by any man.
The curse of King Anoheth means death to those who --

Mahala breaks off suddenly, staring fixedly at Debbie, who is still cringing in terror. The men stop shouting. After a pause, Ghost/Mahala's voice changes to a very unrefined and ordinary Londoner accent.

Ghost/Mahala Oh, naff off. You're a woman!

Still scared, Debbie stands, filled with awe. Ghost/Mahala looks about and spies Howzat.

Ghost/Mahala What's that? You can't bring a dog in here! You're desecrating this holy shrine.

Good God!

Oh, watch out. He's going to piss on that obelisk.

Stiffy urgently reminds Debbie that she has a job to do and that she needs to hurry along the clearance.

Stiffy *urgent* Debbie, come on, love, you have to hand us the goods.
It/she/whatever can't hurt you!

As Debbie snaps out of her fear attack, she and Howzat start to tear about, gathering grave goods which are placed hurriedly into the nets. The men drag the nets up to the opening as Debbie fills them. As the men shout skat instructions, Debbie calls back to them.

Debbie Righto, righto, gotcha.

Ghost/Mahala spies the men at the edge of the hole and points accusingly at them. She admonishes them, but now in her unrefined Londoner accent.

Ghost/Mahala Yes, I see you all there! Just try sticking **one foot** into this holy room and I'll have your balls bronzed! You might think that you've outsmarted me, but I have power, boys: real power! **One foot!**

The ghost is ignored by the girl and by the men. Debbie ties ropes around the heavy stuff so that the boys can drag it clear of the room. The other stuff continues to be carried to the gap at great haste by Debra and Howzat.

Merry, bright music abruptly replaces the dramatic chords, from the time when Mahala makes her last speech. The huge grave-ghost sits slumped in dejected disgust, watching as Debbie and Howzat clear out all the valuable stuff, leaving a few scattered stoneworks. The grave-ghost is surrounded by wafting dust, and she fans herself with a horsehair "flick" slowly and dejectedly. She has given up. Resignedly, she points out things that Debbie might as well take, and even lifts her heavy frame to allow Debbie to rescue some golden spears.

*The robbery must include a close-up of Mullet. Grave goods are passed in front of Mullet's face as he looks from side to side. **We need to see a perfect gold bull statuette here, as it is needed for later scenes.***

And outside, in the night, where the guards stand stiffly to attention, oblivious to the theft, there is a wagon drawn by two horses. The men have loaded everything therein. Stiffy unceremoniously lifts

Debra in his arms such that he can place her comfortably in the cart. He strokes her as he smiles tenderly at Debra.

The goods are covered over, everyone escapes from the chamber, sealing it up as they go, and Dingo sweeps away the track-marks of the wagon as a foil to the gang being followed.

Voiceover Mullet Stiffy! I know what I meant to ask ya ... What's Gang #4 doing?

Voiceover Stiffy Gang #4? "A Bunch Of Fives"? Well, about now they'd be knocking off an enormous cenotaph on the Tigris, young Mullet.

Voiceover Mullet Go on!

They drive off into the distance, Dingo still sweeping, and the music ends brightly, merrily, deliciously.

Voiceover Mullet You say that they still use old Pooter's spells? Wonder why they don't get a dog and a woman on side, like us?

END of THERESSA'S EXPERIENCE

END OF SCENE

I, Scene ix: Theresa's Bedroom The Oak Nut Hotel Cairo 1931.

Theressa lies in bed, asleep. Theresa stirs. There is some sort of heated discussion going on out in the corridor, outside her door. The voices belong to Summerhill and Dr Lilliban.

Summerhill voice off Thank you, Doctor but I have called in Marell to --

Dr Lilliban voice off But it is usual Professor for the English patients to be treated by the English doctor. Now I'm sure that Dr Marell will --

Summerhill voice off Now see here! Marell and I have been chums for many years. I'm
stern more than satisfied with his professionalism. So, it is my abundant wish that **he** treat my daughter.

Go in, Claude, won't you?

Summerhill and Dr Lilliban can still be heard murmuring as they move away from Theresa's door.

Theressa stretches in her bed. She appears to be absorbed in her own delicious thoughts.

The door opens and Dr Marell enters. He bows slightly to Theresa.

Dr Marell Madame. I am Dr Claude Marell. I regret that you are in such a poor state.

Your papa wishes me to check for any concussion. You collapsed out in the garden quite unexpectedly yesterday morning, giving those who discovered you a nasty turn. Did you suffer from a bad fall, perhaps?

As Dr Marell sets up his black bag and dives therein for the usual stethoscope, Theresa sits up on the edge of the bed.

Theresa I had the most marvellous dream! But not a dream at all. Do you take my meaning, or am I talking gibberish?

There is no reply.

Theresa That old crypt of Pharaoh Anoheth. That's where I was. How odd! Yet how very wonderful!

The examination begins.

Theresa *utterly enraptured* It was the most wonderful thing I've ever experienced, Doctor. And I will do everything in my power to go back into my dream (if it's at all possible). Truly! I've never been so happy!

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

Dr Marell                      If not from a fall, then your father and the others wondered if you might have suffered from a nasty bout of heatstroke, and that you'll be more comfortable after a few days' rest and plenty of lemonade.

*There is a pause wherein Dr Marell looks at Theresa as if he is in a brown study.*

Theresa                      Heatstroke? Yes ... I may have overdone things since arriving in

Cairo ...

*Dr Marell slowly shakes his head.*

Dr Marell                      But no ... This is not so. Rather, some devilry is afoot here (as they say).

Perhaps you have ever heard the term "Mickey Finn"? It is what the English call this.

Theressa *surprised*        I've been drugged? But how ... ?

*Dr Marell shrugs.*

Dr Marell                      This is most upsetting. Most alarming.

Can you not think of anybody passing you a drink of some kind? Or strange food?

*Theressa quickly mulls over what she can remember, then shakes her head.*

Theressa                      All I can tell you is that I am blissfully happy and that the dream I had was more marvellous than anything you can imagine.

*The doctor is distracted. He goes to stand at the window.*

Dr Marell                      I'll speak to your maids. They will know. Servants are most "alive" to these strange events, I find. But this comes at a most curious time ...

Theressa                      Yes, I know what you mean.

Tell me. Have the mortal remains of Professor Phantom turned up yet? Father told me that you were rather worried.

Dr Marell *dark*                *Rien.* Nothing.

It is impossible to happen and yet it happened. *C'est ça.*

*Dr Marell turns away from the window. It appears that he has closed up, and yet he is willing to explain more to Theressa. She listens intently.*

Dr Marell                      There was a riveting death-bed scene. Colonel Bartholemew and I

were with him at the end. I ... It was I who pulled the sheet over the deceased. We left the room. As I closed the door ... I can still see the face of the small Egyptian boy, who ceased in his work of fanning. His eyes might pop out of his head, so great was his shock and surprise.

I shook the hand of the so shaken English colonel and sent him on my way. A trip to the lavatory. And then back to the room to finish up. The boy stood exactly as he had been before: his eyes still staring. But the body of Professor Phanton had gone.

"What has happened here, boy? Who came into this room after I left?"

*Personne.* No-one. And then the tears.

The gendarmes quizzed the little boy but could get nothing out of him. He only wanted to cry and talk about the bird.

Theressa                    Oh yes! Yes. Miss Brenton likewise. That bird seems to have dominated everyone's thoughts. So big! An oversized eagle perhaps?

Dr Marell                    Exactly. Such strangeness. The huge bird. And the missing body. Now you having been attacked in this cowardly way.

I can tell to you that I am much disturbed.

*Dr Marell gets his black bag and prepares to leave. At the door he pauses.*

Dr Marell                    Please make sure that you are always in the company of one or other of the English historians who abound. And stick to the normal food and drink taken in their plain sight. Plenty of rest. You should recover. But I'll check again tomorrow.

Meanwhile the gendarmes will come to interview you ... That cannot be avoided, I regret.

Goodbye.

Theressa                      Thank you, Doctor.

*Dr Marell nods and begins to exit via the door. He stops and looks back at Theressa.*

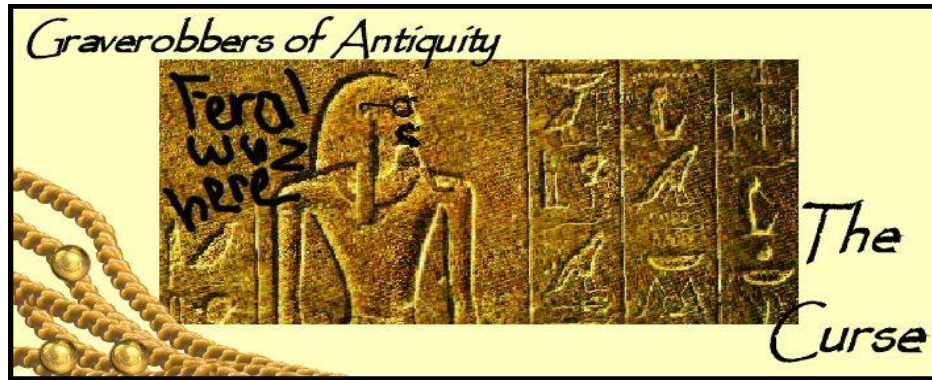
Dr Marell                      He told to us that he had been cursed: a pharaoh's curse (that is what he believed). The last thing that he spoke on this earth was the nature of the curse.

You cannot imagine my very real wonder and worry, Madame.

*Theressa watches the doctor's departure, stunned by his last words.*

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT I



## ACT II

### **II, Scene i:** The Large Burial Chamber Of Cheofes, Egypt 1931.

*We are now in a huge tomb, which indicates that a very important king was buried here. All that remains is flung about, and there is evidence of minor earthquakes throughout. But the walls are utterly beautiful, and there are some superb stoneworks, albeit lying about on their sides.*

*The scene begins with a close-up of Theresa, wearing a pretty hat, looking up at the walls. She is in her very best looks, and her mood of sourness and petulance has been totally erased. She is utterly beautiful, serene and thoughtful.*

Theresa *voice-over*      I am more than surprised that they did not practise menstrual seclusion in those old ancient days. It seems hardly sane that Debra should be cavorting around with those chaps in her condition. And then discussing that very private issue with the men, instead of whispering in epithets to her particular girlfriends as I would be more likely to do. Perhaps --

*Theresa is suddenly aware that Dr Lilliban has sidled up beside her. Dr Lilliban looks up at the wall paintings. In the background, Professor Summerhill is holding forth about this site.*

Dr Lilliban                I hope you're not too tired with trekking about in all these burial chambers, Mrs Trilbeway. Mustn't overdo it. You cannot do better

than rest after your recent tribulation.

*It occurs to Theresa that Dr Lilliban might be the miscreant who drugged her. She picks her words carefully.*

Theresa                      Dr Lilliban. No, I'm not at all tired, and am in fact becoming quite fond of these archaeological sites. This one in particular.

Dr Lilliban                But have you quite recovered? Are you quite well?

Theresa                      Quite.

*Theresa moves away, pretending to be devoted to the painted walls. After a slight pause, Dr Lilliban presses on, approaching Theresa again.*

Dr Lilliban                It must have been a really grand affair once – this tomb. Then Nature played her part in its demise. It looks like some sort of earthquake occurred hereabouts.

*The pair stroll along. One of the Egyptian maids trails behind them at a respectable distance. Dr Lilliban glances towards that servant.*

Dr Lilliban                You've taken the precaution of bringing your maid with you, dear lady. Was that to keep an eye on her?

Theresa                      That, and to assist me should the need arise. Don't forget that the assembled company dwell under the belief that I've lately survived an attack of heatstroke. So they won't think it strange if I drag my maid along with me wherever I go.

Heaven knows what her name is. Something totally unpronounceable. Anyway, I call her Leah. She speaks not a word of English, and I have absolutely no facility for languages. However, we rub along quite well as it happens.

Dr Lilliban                So if you were not incommoded by heatstroke then ... ?

Theresa *crisp*              Some dastardly creature slipped me a Mickey Finn.

*Theresa turns towards Dr Lilliban. She is defiant; daring him to speak. He is flummoxed by the attack direct.*



Dr Lilliban *pretends to be surprised*      My God! What --

Theressa      I hallucinated dramatically under the influence of that vile substance. And yet ... And yet I don't think it was unfortunate, Doctor. It might prove to have changed my life. Best thing that ever happened to me.

Thank you so much for your concern. Goodbye.

*Theressa immediately walks up to her maid, pretending to hold the bewildered girl in private conversation. Theressa is very close to the startled girl, and fiddles with the maid's costume.*

Theressa *privately to the maid*      It wasn't a dream. That's what you want to know, isn't it, charming doctor? No, I was **really there**. And those Frenchmen ... they were in it too. And Mahala, come to think of it.

Yes! The French officers that I met at dinner. I fell in love with one of them: the impoverished French Duc.

Miles Renauld, is it? Only he was anything but sad or impoverished in those days.

*Professor Summerhill et al call Theressa over to view a very interesting specimen.*

*Just then, there is an important interruption. The four French officers (dressed in khaki fatigues) appear through the entrance. There is a hubbub of general delight and greeting.*

*Theressa ducks back behind Leah, swinging the maid around such that Theressa is facing her, and is thus able to peek surreptitiously over her shoulder. While Theressa goes through the following monologue, we can see the four haughty Frenchmen shaking hands, bowing, all smiles and good fellowship. There is a polished politeness and charm in their demeanour. Leah remains uncertain during the whole episode.*

Theressa *harsh whisper*      Oh, Lord! Here they are! I can't believe --

Dingo, Mullet, Feral, and Stiffy. Exactly the same. To the life.

*[Takes a big breath]*

How on Earth am I to converse with them without giving it all away?

*[Glances at the maid]*

Yes, I know that you can't understand a word of it, Leah; but after all ...

Well, Leah dear, do I look composed and in command of my features? I doubt it.

*Theressa laughs at her own folly and pats the worried girl on the cheek. Then Theressa approaches the others who greet her with delight.*

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

A little later, in another part of the tomb.

Theressa comes upon Captain Renauld deeply musing over a wall painting of Anoheth, who is depicted wearing a long gold and ruby chain. Miles appears to be pushing back a postcard into his wallet.

Theressa *keen to break the ice* It occurs to me, Captain Renauld, that many lives were lost upon the pharaoh's death.

[Miles looks a question]

The slaves who bore the gold and silver grave goods into the burial chamber would have to be killed, as they knew the way in. So too would the overseers, probably at their own hand. And the royal wives. Indeed, anyone who might disturb the final rest of the pharaoh would have had to die.

Miles And all for nothing since the robbers broke in anyway.

Theressa *forcing the conversation* Did you come to visit Egypt for the relics?

Miles No. Military service.

Theressa *blushing* Ah yes, of course. Silly of me ... I forgot.

She smiles up into his face. He is staring at her, transfixed. It is almost as if they are about to kiss.

Then he steps back, coldly smiling. Miles looks as if his heart has been ripped from his chest.

Miles Mrs Trilbeway, excuse me.

Miles bows and makes as if to turn away. Theressa is desperate to keep him by her.

Theressa Do you think we'll visit the mystical Mahala after we've finished here?

Miles *shrugs* I have not yet met that woman. Nor is it my intention to do so. However, Martin is one of her devotees. He may like to accompany you.

Miles nods politely and then turns to stroll off. Theressa seems glued to the spot, frowning and chewing her lip.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene ii: On Terra Firma, Memphis. Egypt 1931

We are in the vicinity of the tomb just visited: that of Pharaoh Cheofes.

The area where the Memphis tomb is situated is not desert, but more like a beautiful oasis. There are plenty of people, palm trees, a busy road, low stone walls and some small stone buildings. There are impressive tents, set up by the Europeans, of which our English group make up a small part. Chairs, tables, camels, asses, and Egyptians are all scattered about, and busy people are everywhere.

Our English party have set up a few tents which bespeak years of service and money alike. Nearby is an ancient truck. There are cups of tea on offer, and plates of food, over which a couple of young Egyptians wave large fans. The four Frenchmen are engaged in the proceedings and look happy

enough. Theresa strolls up to join them. Vincent and Martin are rivals in their attempts to monopolize Theresa's attention. Miles and Roland are at a distance.

Martin So, tell to the beautiful English lady what it is that occupies your mind when you are not fighting in the desert.

Vincent *proud* I am keen with the inventions, Madame Trilbeway. It is my wish to be of usefulness to this poor, sad world.

Martin Mrs Trilbeway, my friend has been planning how to harness the wind. He will provide power for all his starchy neighbours with a series of gigantic windmills. *Les moulins*. Have you ever heard of such a business? He is adamant that it can happen and will succeed.

[Chuckles with delight]

Theresa Harness the wind? Can you possibly believe that? Not an intelligent man like you, Lieutenant Lorent.

Vincent But I do! *Je vous assure, ma belle Theresa*.

Theresa *laughing and merry* That's what you say now, but in two days' time you'll have a totally different opinion, no doubt. Oh, Dingo, you are the very funniest --

Theresa's words shatter the conversation and she is stricken, horrified that she has given Vincent the wrong name.

There is a ghastly silence. Vincent turns away, insulted. Martin frowns, and fidgets restlessly with his collar. Theresa cannot believe her thoughtless gaffe.

Theresa *appalled* Vincent! Lieutenant Lorent! You must forgive me. I can explain. Truly.

Vincent pretends to be unaffected by the strange name which Theresa has called him. He tries to smile reassuringly but is obviously quite put-out and offended.

Martin *confused* What is this? Oh, excuse me Theresa ... But did you not just call

mon ami "Dingo"? Or did I hear incorrectly?

Theressa is hardly able to speak, so affected is she by her own faux pas. Vincent is also unable to speak.

Theressa Vincent! I'm so sorry, it slipped out.

Please! I implore you both to allow me to explain.

The gentlemen squirm. However, Martin overcomes his embarrassment and leans forward.

Martin But there is no need. The savage dog of Australia must have been in your thoughts when you --

Theressa I did not pass out due to sunstroke. I was given a drug. I went into a fantastic dream which --

Vincent We were all sorry to hear that you were --

Theressa *urgently* My dream! You were all there: all four of you. Such strong, brave graverobbers that you were. I was a maiden called Debra.

[Points to Martin]

You were my brother Feral. Captain Ferrier was the redoubtable Mullet and --

[Points to Vincent]

And you were called Dingo. That was your name, and not meant to be an insult. I promise you.

It was wonderful. Beyond wonderful!

We were all such good friends.

Vincent *smiles* To think that you dreamt of me, ma chere, gives me more pleasure than I can possibly say (whatever one called oneself). There is no offence taken at all.

Martin *frowns* We were graverobbers you say? But how could this be?

Theressa Oh, but --

It's about ancient Phoenicia ... and Egypt ... and four very brave young men ... and myself. Will you indulge me for a few minutes and listen as I relate what happened? I think that it will amuse and entertain you.

Martin *smiling* Please! I adore the droll tales.

The camera backs off. We can see Theresa talking, explaining, while the four Frenchmen are all riveted, in arrested attention. She gestures animatedly.

Music: grand build-up. Camera backs further and further away. The scene surrounding the five central characters is breathtaking: a beautiful view of Memphis.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iii: In The Truck To Visit Mahala Egypt 1931

Martin drives, singing/humming happily but off-key. Miles is in the passenger seat, cap pulled over face, trying to sleep. The dramatic music slides into the background.

Martin I did not think that I'd ever get you to visit the strangest lady in Egypt. But so it is!

Miles *from under cap* I do not play the game of paying court to that vile woman. I'm not ever intending to visit such a harridan. I'm simply your unwilling passenger.

Martin *eager, happy* And what did you think of that marvellous story from the lips of the beautiful Madame Trilbeway?

Miles *dismissive* Roland and myself were not close enough to hear that tale. But so long as it kept you and Vincent entertained ...

Martin We were the so very valiant graverobbers. It made a rollicking story: a riot of good fun and earnest endeavour.

Miles *snorts* A confection merely.

Martin And what were our names? I called myself (I think) "Ferule", or whatever it came to be, and I am that divine creature's brother, of all things! And your character was named ...?

Do you know, I don't think that *mon ange* Theresa even mentioned what your name was in her strange vision.

Miles *snarls* When it came to it, the lady didn't even **know** my name. What a confused tale!

Martin *laughs loudly* But tomb raiders, *c'est ça*! Such an imagination that girl has.

The truck drives on, with Martin singing/humming, as happy as Larry. Then he pulls up in the lavish garden of Mahala and jumps out. From a distance, we see him try to persuade Miles to join him, but unsuccessfully.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iv: Mahala's Temple Egypt 1931.

Mahala (dressed in flowing, outrageous costume) is in her temple. She stops dead taking up a theatrical pose.

Mahala *whispers* He has come! He is here.

The servant Abul approaches, bows and indicates that a guest has entered the temple.

Servant Abul Lieutenant Leveque craves audience, my mistress.

Mahala *vague, distracted* Yes, yes ... Leveque ... he may enter ...

Servant bows again, and ushers Martin into Mahala's presence. Martin reaches out to shake hands.

Martin My dear benefactress! How do you go?

Mahala takes Martin's hand in both of hers. She is unable to hide her uneasiness.

Mahala Why yes, yes.

Martin *confidential* *Alors!* A certain English lady who resides at the Oak Nut Hotel believes most fervently that she was the undercover recipient of one of your magical potions.

Mahala Mahala denies having taken any part in such an outrage.

Martin *pressing* The lady would be thrilled to obtain more of the drug.

Mahala She'll get no more from me, as I did not perpetrate this business in the first place.

Martin *cajoling* The elixir caused the English widow to dream of ancient Egypt. Specifically, of ancient Egyptian grave goods. Pieces of inestimable worth. Her heart is afire to see more ...

Mahala *intrigued* Go on ...

Martin *persuasive* I've come here today, Madame, to beg you to allow Mrs Trilbeway, whom you met a few days ago, to have another phial of the special mixture. Is that possible, think you?

Mahala *absolutely dismissive* No, that's not possible. She cannot have more. Even had I been the villain in this piece ...

Martin *inveigling* Ancient Egyptian treasures. Treasures beyond price, dear Mahala.

Mahala pouts, gesturing airily.

Mahala Let us understand one another.

It is not always safe. Thank God that the lovely English lady has survived. It could be death to have the vision more than once. Care must be taken, I assure you. This is not a polite cordial, my gallant officer.

That is all I shall admit to.

Just as Martin is about to speak, Mahala interrupts him.

Mahala *crisp* You came here in a motorcar of some description, no? And there is another man in that motor. A man who refuses to come into my presence?

Martin *surprised* Why ... how did you know that? Are you really the Mystic that you claim to be, Madame?

Oozing with confidence, Mahala gestures towards the place where Martin himself entered her presence.

Mahala He will come to me.

Martin But no. I'm afraid that --

Mahala (with dreadful certainty) still gestures towards the doorway.

Mahala He will come! It is pre-ordained.

The camera focuses on the doorway for a few seconds. Nothing and no-one appears.

Martin *minor triumph* See? Evidently not! He does not come to you.

Mahala merely shrugs. This is in no way an insuperable obstacle to her. She turns her attention back to Martin.

Mahala But he will ...

Yes ... Yes ... No matter ... For you! It is for you the mixture. Not the dear madame ... but you yourself.

Mahala goes quickly towards Martin, grasping his hands. She is now keen and focused. It is her main aim to get her information from Miles; but failing that, she will work with Martin. They speak at the same time, their words overlapping each other.

| | |
|--|--|
| [Mahala] You must wait until you are at your bedside. Then you drink. And you will drift off into a very strange state ... not really a dream, you must understand that ... it's an "experience", eerie and quasi-magical -- | [Martin] For me? You'll give to me the |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| [Mahala] You must wait until you are at your bedside. Then you drink. And you will drift off into a very strange state ... not really a dream, you must understand that ... it's an "experience", eerie and quasi-magical -- | [Martin] For me? You'll give to me the
potion? ... Theresa told to me, I mean of course Madame Trilbeway ... that I was her brother, and she went back in time ... to the times of Ancient Egyptians, and glorious burials -- |
|--|--|

Mahala grasps Martin's wrists very firmly in order to silence him.

Mahala Listen to me, you! I'll give you my potion only on one condition:
that you must tell to him the ... the ... the matter, the ... the
substance of your illusion.

Martin *all at sea* *Pardon?*

Mahala To that one who will not meet me. I mean that one in your motor.

Martin Captain Renauld? But I promise to do this, absolutely. Yes, yes!

Mahala nods, going to a beautifully carved cabinet to fetch a small phial of the potion, which she hands to Martin.

Mahala This is more important than all the rest. He has to come to me.
Here! Your prize for being a very persistent young gentleman.

Martin *grateful* I can't thank you enough, *ma chere Madame*. So, I'll become a
graverobber called ... er ... "Ferule", or ...

Mahala *dismissing him* Yes, yes, it will be most beauteous, and you will be quite the hero.
Bon soir, cher Lieutenant Leveque, and remember what you
promised!

Martin *ardent* *Merci!* I shall not forget ...

Martin kisses the hand of Mahala impulsively before he briskly leaves her.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene v: Egypt 1931. Martin Leveque's Quarters In The Palace In Cairo

Special note: Martin believes here that he will experience the same vision which Theresa has detailed, in that she was present for the Anoheth robbery. This is not so. His story will

be a further extension of that dream: he will not visit any grave.

The golden bull highlighted in the Anoheth robbery will be spotted again here, and this will show that this dream is a continuation of the first dream.

The room is large and comfortable, furnished sparsely but substantially. In the middle of the room, Martin stands, wearing a long nightshirt. He holds a thick green glass, the contents of which he swallows down. He looks for a long time at that empty glass, smacking his lips.

Martin And now to journey to ancient Egypt, to raid the tomb of the mighty Pharaoh Anoheth. To be the lynchpin around which all the other actors play. The brave and strong Ferule. He laughs at danger, and scorns despair.

[Yawns mightily]

And above all, this man-mountain craves the sleep ...

Martin dives into his bed and pulls the mozzie net about him.

END OF SCENE

Start of MARTIN'S FIRST EXPERIENCE (the second being in Film #3)

II, Scene vi: Modra, Ulpia And Cynthia At Their Home, Byzantium, 1500 BCE

Modra, Ulpia and Cynthia are all Phoenicians, like Gangs #4 and #6.

Modra had to leave Tripoli; disqualified for 24 moons for forging, uttering, and receiving stolen goods. So, they upped stumps and moved to Byzantium. Modra was married before, and Ulpia is his new wife. Cynthia is her rapacious sister.

Modra owns a palatial spread in ancient Byzantium. There is a private laneway alongside the solid garden wall, with a secret entry through a hidden gap in the wall. Through this gap comes the

wagon. It is unloaded under Modra's supervision, watched by heavily armed guards. Despite this menacing scene, Modra is pleased to greet Gang #6. His wife Ulpia will totter out to greet the boys and pick-over the goodies.

The "backyard" is marvellous. It is a huge take on the typical Aussie backyard: a tyre swing for the kids (made of a wooden wagon wheel), a BBQ (obviously made of stone and metal), plants and path, and some seats, even a lily pond. This is opulent, overblown and grand. Modra and Ulpia have some children of their own, and Modra has an older son (Jacob) from his earlier marriage.

Ulpia is a real scrubber: rough as bags but dressed like a cheap tart. She clops around in ridiculous platform soles. She bemoans the state of Gang #6's getaway wagon and insists that Modra organize something better for her boys. Cynthia is very bossy with the slaves and finds fault with everything.

It is evident throughout this part of ACT II that Modra is searching for a specific piece which was supposed to have been found in the Anoheth tomb. He is concerned and confused that the piece does not surface.

Ulpia picks over the grave-goods.

Ulpia That getaway wagon of Stiffy's is a shocker, Modra. You oughta give them the one that Gang #1 don't need any more. Update them. That's a much better model than these dodgy wheels they've got now.

What've ya got? Any goodies?

Modra *distracted* Yeah, love ... there's some good shit here ...

Ulpia Oh, this'd be lovely if ya put a scarf around the neck and did somethink tizzy with feathers. I love this good stuff. Chips brought in a wagonful of rubbish from the Tigris. Oh, it was all religious stuff, ya know. Nuthink ya could put in ya bedroom, and that.

Modra, can I've this?

Cynthia That Tigris is so "yesterday". It's full of cheap rubbish. What about this in ya bathroom? Next to the bronze pony?

Ulpia Yeah ... mix 'n' match. We'll give it a try. "Refurbish" is my word of the day.

Cynthia *pretending to be prim* My word of the day is "libido".

Ulpia Oh, that's a nice word. What's it mean?

Cynthia Somethink about that big Nubian slave ya gave me for me birthday.

Ulpia Talking of slaves ...

[Shouts in ugly, fishwife tones.]

Errol! Dwayne! Come on, stop that torturing, youse can do that later.

[Reverts to normal tones.]

I want them to look nice for the games ... everyone will be there.

Where are those slaves? Hey! Are youse gettin' Errol and Dwayne ready for the games or not? Lazy bastards ...

Modra's puttin' on Games this arvo for the locals. He's got a horse runnin' in the 3rd. Might do alright.

Debra whispers with Stiffy. She is angry. Stiffy tries to calm her, but this only leads to Debra raising her voice.

Debra No, I'm not happy! I broke two nails.

Cynthia *turning to address Debra* Did ya break a nail, Darl?

Debra *put out* Actually, two nails.

I had to do all the work, and it was the wrong time of the month.

The three women give Stiffy angry looks, as if he is to blame for both the menstruation and the loss of the nails. In return, Stiffy appears awkward and at a loss.

Ulpia *to Debra* Oh, ya poor thing. No wonder you've got the shits.

Cynthia Don't worry about ya nails, love. We've got a grouse little slave girl that does really nice falsies with fish scales and clay. Ya'd never know.

Both Cynthia and Ulpia hold up their talons, which are the ugliest fingernails ever seen.

Ulpia Come up to the house and we'll get her to do you a make-over.

Cynthia Ya'll look lovely.

*They traipse up to the house, followed by a dozen slaves carrying trophies from the raid. **We need to see the afore-mentioned perfect gold bull statue here, as it is needed for later scenes, possibly in later films.***

Modra *harassed* Hey! Are you taking all that stuff? I won't have anything left to sell.

Ulpia I have to accessorize, Modra.

Cynthia Ya don't want ya missus to look like a swaggie, do ya?

Modra watches his wife and sister-in-law slink up the steps, laden with their stash. Then he turns back to the armoured guards. He effects a complete change of expression from infatuated husband to ruthless criminal. Modra speaks to three nearby guards in a conspiratorial way.

Modra Follow them into the house. Make sure that they haven't got hold of a chain. The chain is long but ornate, a delicate chain (not really a man's sort of jewellery), studded with diamonds and a big, fat ruby the size of a pigeon's egg.

I want you to take Lady Cynthia aside and make sure she understands that the girl has to be stripped, down to the nuddy. She can pretend to be dressing her up for the games or something.

As those guards troop off, Modra turns and signals to another three guards.]

Modra I want the wagon pulled apart, inch by inch. You're looking for a

gorgeous, expensive-looking chain. Diamonds, ruby, gold. It's got to be here somewhere.

Guard What about the four men? Might they have it hidden on themselves?

Modra *nods* They're alright. I'm taking them swimming right now. And when my boys swim, they don't wear any togs.

Modra utters a crack of laughter and slaps guard playfully on the upper arm.

Modra *laughs* And the chain's a wee bit too big to be stuck up anyone's pooper hole!

END OF SCENE

II, Scene vii: The Games, Byzantium, 1500 BCE

The Games take place on a large grassy area, which contains a hastily erected stand, closely resembling a stepped verandah, as one might see in a bullfighting arena. There is a ring, within the arena, where the grass has been replaced by sand and brick dust. Those folk not in the stands sit about on chairs, waited on by slaves. Although Ulpia had declared this day to be a holiday for the slaves, they work even harder than usual.

On the grass can be seen a variety of entertainments: weightlifters, tug-of-war, bull and dog fight, tumblers and acrobats, human towers, wrestling and graceful movements (girls only). On the track/ring, several superb horses (with coloured rugs and coloured mane plumes) trot about, ridden by jockeys in bright cloaks and turbans. They speed up to full gallop and race around the track, with the jockeys grabbing scarves from designated marshals as they gallop past them.

In the stand, there is a "royal" box, where Ulpia, Cynthia and Debra will sit. The boys sit on forms nearby. There is a table laden with small marble trophies.

The scene opens with the "royal" party traipsing up into the stand. Ulpia, Cynthia and Debra are surrounded by a crowd of doting slaves, and the ladies are carried on divans, shaded by huge

canopies. After the business of depositing the ladies and helping them to their seats, Ulpia stands, accepting the plaudits of the large crowd. She acknowledges with the royal wave. Note that Ulpia and Cynthia are overdressed and covered in bling. Debra looks demure and still sweet.

Ulpia sits, turning to the boys of Gang #6.

Ulpia I got them to miniaturize the trophies. They're made of marble and weigh a ton. I reckon I got muscle strain last time from presenting all them heavy trophies.

Cynthia She was on her back for two weeks.

The horserace absorbs the ladies' attention; they barrack loudly and gratingly. It is followed by an alarming parade of livestock (some of which threatens to take off and wreck the place).

Ulpia Stiffy -- Modra and I are going on a Fantasy Honeymoon Cruise of the Mediterranean in a couple of days' time.

Feral Lots of port-stops are there so you can do loads of shopping?

Cynthia Shut up, Feral, you're not funny!

Feral *defensive* I wasn't tryin' to be ...

Ulpia When youse call around at the shop for your assignments, well Modra's son Jacob will be in charge. He's on work experience, and Modra's made sure that everything's set out right. So he can't make any mistakes.

Cynthia Jacob's a lazy shit. And a dumb-cluck as well.

Ulpia We're down to only three gangs now, so he should be able to handle it.

Cynthia He'll stuff it up. He always does.

Stiffy nods. The group now watch the highlight of the afternoon. There are some young buckjumping bulls over which scantily clad girl acrobats jump, vault and tumble. One girl in particular is very talented and earns warm applause from the crowd.

Debra Oooh, I like that aquamarine colour she's wearing. Isn't that lovely

the way she's got the sash tied?

Cynthia That girl? We've seen her before. She loves herself.

Ulpia Yeah, she's got tickets on herself.

Feral *to Dingo* Have a close look at that human tower. Whadya reckon? Doesn't the bloke at the bottom who's holding everyone else up look like Chips?

Dingo cups his hands over his eyes, squinting hard.

Dingo Yeah ... you know what, I wouldn't mind betting that *is* Chips.

Dingo now cups his hands around his mouth such that he can shout out and be heard.

Dingo *shouting* Oi! Chips! M-A-A-A-A-A-A-T-E!

Close-up of Chips straining under the weight of the acrobats. He just manages to grunt "Hup!" and one by one, the acrobats get themselves to the ground, all with a neat tumble and triumphant bow. Finally, Chips is the last man, and he poses as if a body-builder. This brings a ripple of laughter from Stiffy and his men. Chips is wearing only a very brief snakeskin posing pouch, with a few purple feathers at the hip. (Obviously, he has been costumed by Ulpia).

Chips bows to moderate applause, then saunters over to the stand. There are armshakes and welcome all round.

Chips Dingo, old mate! How're they hangin'? Feral, Stiffy, Mullet.

Stiffy Chips! What are you doing here?

Feral That's an interesting outfit you've got on.

Chips Yairs, it's a bit rude isn't it? I feel like me old fella's on parade.
Still, a bloke shouldn't be ashamed of being a bloke.

Feral If you've got it, flaunt it.

Mullet What are you doing this acrobat job for, anyway?

Chips Aw, it's me part-timer.

Mullet Go on ...

Stiffy *scathing* Take them feathers off, will ya? You look like a poofter.

Chips, laughing and not at all embarrassed, hoicks off the feathers and chucks them on one of the seats behind. Errol and Dwayne, who have been playing "hack-the-slave" in the back of the stand, run forward to retrieve them.

Chips *kindly* There y'are boys. Don't cut that slave up too much, will ya? He won't be any good for work. You know, if he hasn't got any arms ...

Cynthia Are youse boys playing butcher again?

Ulpia Errol! Dwayne! Answer your Auntie Cynthia.

You'll never stop boys from being boys, Cynth. You can't stop them fiddling with their naughty bits, and you can't stop them from climbing trees.

Cynthia And throwing stones at birds.

Ulpia And you can't stop them from throwing stones. That's right. And you can't stop them playing butcher, neither.

Stiffy steps over to the royal area and takes Ulpia's hand.

Stiffy Lady Ulpia, the boys and I are going off to get some food and beer. Chips has to put on his clothes, and we have some things to sort out. At any rate, thanks so much for the Games. They were magnificent. Very entertaining.

[Backs away]

Debra, we'll come back for you later.

Chips steps forward to kiss Ulpia's hand.

Chips Yeah, the Games were grouse. I enjoyed being part of it all, my oath I did. Hooroo.

Ulpia See youse later, then. And don't forget that me and Modra's going on our cruise, so youse'll have to do all your business through

Jacob.

Cynthia If he can find his fingers to count on.

As the five men attempt to take their leave graciously, another horse race begins. Ulpia and Cynthia now ignore the men and concentrate on yelling and screaming in cutting voices at the jockeys. The men all wince and take a speedy departure.

They walk around the stand and leave the arena. There are people milling around, and the racehorses suddenly gallop past.

Mullet I dunno how Modra puts up with her.

Feral You can understand why he wasn't sitting with her and that witch sister of hers. Drive a man to drink that would. Debbie'll get a headache, you watch.

Chips No, no, no. Modra wasn't in the stand on account of because he was downstairs doping his horse. That was it, the rangy chestnut in that last race.

I know what. Youse blokes are going round to the pie stall, aren't youse? I'll meet you there after I've found me togs. Won't be long.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene viii: The Home Carpentry Demonstration, Byzantium 1500 BCE

Background -- an older man and his son are giving a home carpentry demonstration.

This is part of the Games, around the back of the arena.

There is quite a crowd of men of all ages standing around, looking interested and thoughtful.

When called for, the slave Kevin steps forward, already wearing a very well-finished yoke as described. He is beaming with pride to be selected for the demo.

Throughout, Stiffy and Mullet watch the demonstration, and their conversation runs over the top of the carpentry demo but does not drown it out. Dingo arrives and likewise, the demo runs underneath the conversation.

Older Man,

*preferably speaking
with Aussie accent and
pronounced whistle*

..... so if you've got a male slave at home who's giving you a bit of trouble, you can easily knock-up one of these Ionian yokes. I've used a lovely mahogany wood, about two thumbs thick for this one. It's got to be thick enough so that the slave can't run at a stone wall and smash the apparatus. So, if you've got a big brute of a slave, then you'll obviously go for something thicker. For those of you who are a bit house-proud, you could finish the yoke off with a wood stain and a couple of coats of lacquer.

Now, Crabs is going to show you how to put the yoke together. He's measured the neck and wrists of the slave and allowed a couple of fingers for room. Don't fall into the trap of making the neck too wide, or a crafty slave could wriggle out of the yoke, and we certainly don't want that.

So cut six semicircles using a little Philistine saw. If you can't get it quite right, just chisel away until it's looking very circular, as you see here Crabs is doing. And do remember gentlemen that you'll need these semicircles to match up when you put the two pieces of the yoke together. If you think that the slave deserves a good splintering, you can skip the sanding part. However, most home handymen like to finish off with a good bit of sandpaper work, to give a nice finish.

Now, the hinge is an Ionian type of hinge, quite a firm hold there. Crabs is lining the two pieces up as you can see, and he's nailing in the hinge, because screws ... ah ... haven't been invented yet. He's going to bang those nails into the wood, and that takes care of the hinge. And we'll be putting a very similar connection at the other end of the yoke; that will only be secured when the slave is

positioned in the yoke.

And of course don't forget to firmly attach your chain rings. So that's really all you have to do, apart from, as I said, the nice lacquer finish if that's the way you want to go. And chain him firmly into the yoke, as you can see.

Come forward, Kevin. This is our young house slave here ... young Kevin ... and you can see that he's very comfortable and secure in the Ionian yoke. So there you go fellas, that's a very handy way to deal with your difficult servants.

Stiffy and Mullet lean against a pillar within easy earshot of the carpentry demo.

This conversation runs over the top of the above carpentry demonstration.

Mullet We've gotta remember to tell Modra and Jacob that we're going out of town for a couple of days to unwind.

Stiffy Will they care?

Mullet Probably not ... but may as well ... in case they want to contact us.

Stiffy The whole point of getting away is so that people can't contact you ...

Any ideas where we're going?

Mullet Ding has his heart set on the Adriatic. Some beach he's heard of on the Eastern Coast of Italy.

Stiffy laughs without humour.

Stiffy Great! That'll put us right in position to wave at Modra and his harem as they float by.

Dingo wanders up with an amphora of beer in hand. He is followed by a slave bearing a tray of beer amphorae.

Dingo Did ya go for my idea of the Adriatic?

Mullet Yeah. Stiff reckons we'll see Modra and the ladies on their honeymoon cruise. They'll sail by us if we stand on the beach.

Dingo I'd rather be shark bait then be married to that woman. And that sister of hers.

Mullet What? Is Modra married to both of them? I didn't know that he was double-dipping.

Dingo That's not what I meant. Anyway, Shit-face Cynthia is on with her big buck slave that Ulpia gave her for Christmas. I hear that he's a love machine.

Mullet *confused* "Christmas"? What's that?

Dingo Doesn't matter ... I meant "birthday".

END OF SCENE

II, Scene ix: The Market Byzantium 1500 BCE

This is usually a busy, thriving market, but everyone has gone to the games. The 5 men wander along, eating meat pies and drinking from amphorae. A couple of Ulpia's slaves follow at a respectable distance, bearing trays loaded with food and drink.

Mullet I 'spose the market's half-empty today because everyone's at the games?

Dingo Reckon.

Mullet Been meaning to ask youse blokes: what's the go with Modra these days? Is he going funny or what?

Feral Yeah, I noticed that too. There's something going on.

Chips You know, I don't swim. Never could even as a nipper. But

whenever we get back from a job, he makes all us boys strip off and have a paddle around in his pool, see. I don't swim, but, as I said. D'you know what? He makes me peel off too, and I have to sit around in the nuddy. That's funny, don't you reckon?

Mullet Doesn't he trust us?

Feral Do ya reckon that he might be on the turn?

Stiffy Who wouldn't be with a missus like he's got.

Chips Stone the crows, these are yummy pies.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*A little further on, Dingo turns back to confront one of the slaves who is carrying the tray loaded with pies and beer. He goes for a particular pie, winking broadly at the slave.*

Dingo                        Mullet, have another pie, mate. This one's a Pork and Bacon Surprise. Looks grouse.

Mullet                        Aw, gee, thanks mate! That's nice of you to do that.

*As they walk on, Dingo grins to himself, as Mullet gets stuck into the pie.*

*Then Mullet stops, struggling with the contents of the pie. He is shocked to find a dead mouse under the pastry.*

Mullet *appalled*            What the fuck --?

*While the other men laugh, Mullet throws the pie savagely aside and turns in anger towards the frightened slave, who drops his tray of pies. With fists clenched Mullet launches himself on the hapless man. Stiffy and Dingo rush over to subdue Mullet, who is wearing "face-of-thunder", whilst Chips and Feral rescue the pies. They rub the pastry on their clothes and brush off the dust with their fingers before re-positioning the pies on the other slave's tray (which is loaded with beer).*

Dingo *laughing*            Hey, settle down! It wasn't him; it was me.

*Mullet is incensed. He shouts after the fleeing slave.*

Mullet I'll get you, you turd!

Dingo Mullet, Mullet. I told you, it wasn't him. I did it as payback for when you threw me jug overboard.

*Mullet coughs violently. Bent over, he tries to spit out the entire contents of his mouth.*

Mullet I never threw it overboard. Don't ya remember? I just pretended I did.

Dingo *trying to appease* Yeah, well that was payback. Don't play jokes on people if ya don't expect jokes back.

Come on, kiss and make up. Have another pie. These ones are alright. A bit dusty, but ...

Mullet Fuck off. Stick yer pies up yer arse. I'll have a beer.

Feral *proudly* Huh! You're a loser, Mull! No-one's ever put a mouse in **my** food.

*Mullet, Stiffy and Dingo turn to look at Feral in awe.*

Mullet We have! Don't you remember?

Stiffy Yeah, we did. We did that a couple of times.

But the joke went flat because you didn't even notice.

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene x:** Beach on the East Coast of Italy 1500BCE (in the Afternoon)

*The four members of the Pubic Punics and Howzat stand on a beach on the East Coast of Italy.*

*Feral has four "empty sheep": the insides of shorn sheep have been extracted such that the skin of the sheep can be inflated, for use as flotation devices. The body orifices of the sheep were sewn up and sealed with tar.*



*The men all look intently out over the Mediterranean (they are in the Adriatic Sea). Mullet is stripped to the buff. Howzat is unsure about the sheep and looks like he is trying to herd them.*

*Dingo points to sea. The sunshine is so fierce that the men have to shade their eyes with their hands.*

Dingo                      That's them, isn't it? Bright blue sails ...

Feral                      Whoever heard of a "Fantasy Honeymoon Cruise"?

Stiffy                      Yeah, that'll be them. I have to hand it to Modra for being game enough to go on a ship with those two birds. Talk about holiday stress ...

Mullet                      Come on, let's hit the surf.

*Feral offers one of his blown-up sheep to Mullet.*

Feral                      Do ya want a floatie?

Mullet                      No thanks, mate. I'd hate anyone to see me paddling about in the Adriatic on a blown-up empty sheep.

Feral                      You don't know what you're missing. They work a treat. Does anyone else want a go?

*Feral receives no answer. The other three men, in the raw, plunge into the inviting water. Then follows Feral, who has left the floaties tied together, and uses them as a surf mat. The men splash about, laughing and happy.*

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

The four men lounge about on the beach, drinking.

Dingo "Stiffy" ... that's funny how they called you "Stiffy". Yer parents, I mean.

Stiffy Why?

Dingo Because ... when you say to someone, "That's stiff", what you

mean is that they're unlucky. Whatever they had told ya (some sob-story), you would say, "Oh that's stiff". Okay, so that's why so many people call their first-born son "Stiffy". As in "Unlucky".

Mullet Explain that again. I don't understand.

Dingo Well --

Stiffy finds himself unable to pronounce the difficult words in his narrative.

Stiffy Look, my big brother died just before he was offered as a scraffifice to Baal. And I was born just before that. So it was a bit of confusion whether I'd have to go in his place. My mum thought that me brother was disquaaffled ... disqualified disquaaffled

Stiffy gives long resounding burp, then takes another long drink of beer.

Stiffy Where was I? Oh yeah ...

His name was Stiffy. And I was named after him. Anyway, the Head Bloke said no, that me brother was presented correctly for scarrifice, and they didn't have to chuck me in the flames as well. So, they're ya go.

Feral *laughs* Shoulda been called "Lucky", then.

Stiffy *mulling it over* Yeah ...

And I'll tell youse something else that's strictly private. Youse say this to nobody.

You know my kid brother, Patto? Well, he's not me brother at all. He's me cousin, and his mum (me auntie) snuffed it just when he was born, and so me mum raised him as her own. He's a first born son, and they **never** cottoned-on, the big blokes didn't.

Never cottoned on ...

Mullet Go on ...

Dingo So ... didn't Baal punish your family for that?

Stiffy Nuh, nothin' happened ... makes you think, doesn't it?

The four men ponder this, looking very thoughtful.

~~~~~ **Break (just before the sun sets)** ~~~~~

*Smashed! The four boys and Howzat are lying in complete disarray on their deserted beach. They are lying in a welter of empty amphorae. The full beers are in a net bag. In the background, we see seabirds and waves. The men are almost dressed, except for Mullet, who is still naked. He lies on his stomach, head to the side.*

*The rope tying the inflated sheep has been untied. Howzat lies on his back with his legs in the air, juxtaposed beside the only remaining inflated empty sheep, which lies in the same position as the dog. The other empty sheep are totally deflated. Feral looks pathetic as he uses one of these as a pillow.*

*When the men speak, they slur and sound hopeless.*

Stiffy                                Feral. Mate. I wanna marry your sister.

Feral                                Whafor?

Stiffy                                I love 'er. She's nice ... d'ya think she'll have me?

Feral                                Dunno ...

Dingo *definite*                        She'll want you, mate. She'll want to marry you. All girls love Alpha males.

Mullet                                What the hell's an "Alpha male"?

Dingo                                An "Alpha male" is ... you know ... the top dog, the big cheese, the head honch--

Stiffy                                Well why don't ya just say that instead of spouting bloody Greek at us?

Dingo                                Sorry mate.

Feral Am I getting bitten by sandflies?

Mullet If y'are, they're drunk now, mate.

*Drunken laughter. Someone farts long and loud. Everyone groans. They drink more beer from amphorae. A pile of empty amphorae lie about them.*

Mullet This is good *[burps loudly]* beer.

Dingo It's X-X-X-X. That's what's written on the side of the amphora.

Mullet Well, it's bloody good.

Feral Bloody good.

Mullet I could go a savoury meat pastry right now. With spicy sauce on it. And **without** any extra livestock in it.

Dingo Well get that bum-boy that was hanging around before like a bad smell to go and get you one. We've got plenty of shekels. We can afford a bucketful of them picy spastries. As well as a big tip for the bum-boy.

*Mullet lies face down in the sand.*

Mullet He's buggered off, the little twerp.

Stiffy We can afford to buy a huge fishing boat and spend the rest of our lives sailing around this old Mediterranean Sea.

Dingo Yeah ... 'n' slaves to look after our every need ...

*[Giggles]*

Feral And you can afford to marry my sister ... have a boatful of kids.

Stiffy We - are - the - Pubic - Punics ... the greatest Graverobbers of Antiquity.

Dingo 'Sright mate. 'Ken oath.

Stiffy We rocked-up to Anoheth's tomb, we flexed off with the most **fantastic** treasure that anyone's ever seen, and we got away

right under the eyes of those stupid guards. And ***no-one*** (except for Modra and his ... thingoes ...) will ever know that we got in, got out and got away. ***No-one.***

Dingo                      Yep. You're bloody right, mate.

Feral                      Right on the money.

Stiffy                      We beat the curse ... we can do ***anything ... anything ...***

Dingo                      Yeah, mate, yeah ...

*Stiffy is on a roll. Stiffy drags himself up off the sand. He is very unsteady and slurs badly.*

Stiffy                      Come on. Wake Mullet up and we're out of here. Gotta pick up my beautiful woman from ... what's 'er name?

Feral                      Debra ... Debbie ...

Stiffy                      That's right, Debbie. I love 'er ... gonna marry 'er.

Back to 'Zantium, pick up Debbie and find out from Jetsam what our next perilous adventure will be.

Feral *without moving*      Wake up Mull. We're outta here.

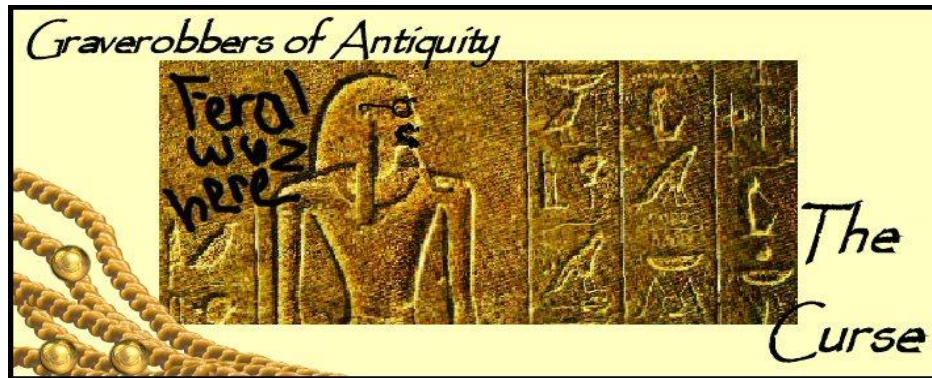
*They try to drag themselves up with great difficulty. Those men who are on their feet have to haul the others up to standing/swaying position. Mullet is virtually comatose and needs to be dragged/carried along the beach, with his head lolling and his feet dragging absurdly in the sand. All that is left are the amphorae, the empty sheep and Howzat, eyeing the empty sheep. Howzat lifts his leg on the inflated sheep, sniffs, barks, and then runs off after the men.*

*[There is a further scene in this dream. We will learn of its content from Martin, but not see it.]*

END OF SCENE

END of MARTIN'S FIRST EXPERIENCE

END OF ACT II



## ACT III

### III, Scene i: The Tiny Study/Writing Room Oak Nut Hotel, Cairo 1931

*This scene occurs after breakfast at the hotel of the English party in a very small room where there is a tiny afternoon tea table, a commanding bookcase, writing desk and a few battered armchairs.*

*Theressa and Roland sit at the table whereon lie a pile of 6 or 7 slim hardback volumes of various size and colour. Other books are piled nearby.*

*Theressa picks up each volume in turn, flicks through each cursorily and then casts each aside with a resounding "No!"*

*After the 3rd book is given this Turkish treatment, Roland (seriously reading his literary choice) speaks.*

Roland *grinning*                      The pride of English literature ... For Madame Trilbeway to toss away, hm?

Theressa *pouting*                      Whose ridiculous idea was it to put on an Evening of Entertainment?

Roland *shrugs*                      I believe that it is more or less an annual event. A local custom, as it were.

*Theressa makes a noise of disgusted frustration.*

Roland *continues* And I'm told that a good many of the dignitaries of Cairo will be in attendance. Quite a night, in fact.

Theressa *reasoning* So, if we're to perform before the cream of Cairo society, and English is **not** their favoured language, then probably a Shakespearian comedy would be a total waste of time and effort.

I find that I must take your last suggestion, then: a French farce.

*Roland reaches over to the untidy pile of discarded volumes and hands one of them back to her.*

*Theressa glances at the title of the book, then chucks it aside petulantly.*

Theressa Too hard! Too long! Too boring!

*Roland picks up the discarded book and gently hands it back to Theressa.*

*Theressa dabs at her eyes with a lace handkerchief. Roland watches her, wise in the ways of lovestruck females.*

Roland *kindly* It is a love story.

Trust me, Madame. I can see that you are subsumed in romance. Your own heart is not untouched, I think. You are much, much too young (may I say it?) to be the widow.

Theressa *big breath* For all that I am in love, he hardly spends any time with me. We rarely converse.

*[Whispers]*

I'm sure that you've divined of whom I speak.

*Roland utters a very Gallic sound of commiseration.*

Roland That's not very hopeful ... Why on Earth are you holed-up in this miniscule study with me, when it's such a lovely day? If I were to escort you, might we not make the promenade together about Cairo, to imbibe the Middle Eastern atmosphere?

*Theressa wanders over to the window. Roland joins her and the pair of them look out. Then Roland returns to the table to turn over some books.*

Roland                                Ah! Here! Here! I was sure that you had it ... Professor Phantom's monograph on his fateful discovery of Pharaoh Kahmood's last resting place.

*Roland flips over the pages of the book as Theresa follows his advice and fetches her hat.*

Theresa                                I accept your invitation to promenade, Captain Ferrier. Beat you down the stairs!

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene ii:** Wandering About In Cairo 1931.

*Theresa and Roland (who carries an old book) amble amidst the crowds of locals along the back streets of Cairo.*

Theresa *dreary*                        What wrath?

Roland                                He was livid to the point of apoplexy ... a well-hidden grave, you know. Surely no-one would have known of it. And yet ... You should read this. It's very illuminating.

Theresa                                Is it in French?

Roland                                But of course.

Theresa                                Then it's of no use to me. I'm rubbish at French.

Shall I be able to visit this tomb of Kahmood?

Dr Lilliban *shakes head*        'Tis all boarded up, I'm afraid. Quite perilous, or so the *cher Professeur* would have it. Poisonous gasses. He earnestly believed that he'd been cursed in there. Perhaps he was right ...

*Theresa sighs. She and Roland are jostled by strangers.*

Theresa                                Roland we must make the entertainment as light as spiders' webs,



drifting in the afternoon breeze.

Roland                   We can do that, of a surety. The Sultan al Barrad will be a member of that audience. Were you aware?

Theressa               A real live sultan?

Roland                   Yes. The fame of your beauty preceded you, and the great Sultan permitted himself to be persuaded. He will appreciate so much the "light spiders webs". Songs and action and rollicking good fun.

Theressa               I am able to hold a tune (just). Do any of your fellow officers play the piano?

Roland *smiles*           But indeed! Le Capitaine Renauld is a very fine pianist.

*There is a pause while Theressa quickly thinks of a proper negation.*

Roland *gently*           Shall I enquire of him if he will play for you?

*Theressa looks at Roland, biting her lip. And then with a shy smile, she nods her head.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene iii:** Martin's Bedroom In The Palace Cairo 1931.

*The scene opens with the camera pointed up to the ceiling, and four heads hovering over it. This activity represents a concerned Dr Claude Marell and the three remaining officers being concerned for Martin, who lies in his bed, with the mozzie net folded back.*

Roland, Miles, Vincent   *Mon cher* Martin! Martin! Leveque, *mon ami*! Can you hear my voice, comrade?  
*at same time*

Dr Marell               Gentlemen, please! Don't crowd about the poor lieutenant! He needs air; he needs to breathe.

*Suddenly, Martin sits up with a loud gasp, eyes open wide. He sports a 2-day growth, his hair is wildly tousled such that he is more like his alter-ego Feral than at any other time. He swings his legs over the edge of the bed and rapidly rises to his feet. The three friends reach out to steady him, or to try to stop him.*

Roland, Miles, Vincent,     Are you quite well enough to stand? Martin! Martin! Don't overtax  
*at same time*                      yourself, old fellow! Be careful now.

*He looks about him, trying to focus. His excitement builds. He grasps hold of the surprised Dr Marell's hand and shakes it vigorously, patting him on the shoulder at the same time.*

Martin                              Dr Marell, you have been a holy preserver in your ministrations to  
me and I'm now quite recovered. Thank you a thousand, thousand  
times. May your saint look over you with kindness and love.

*Martin holds the doctor's shoulders and gives him two energetic pecks on the cheek, French-style.*

*Martin races over to the chest of drawers, followed by a very worried Roland.*

Martin *whispers*                      *Cher Roland!* For the love of God, get rid of that damned doctor,  
*urgently*                                  will you? We have to talk most urgently.

*While Martin pulls on some clothes, shedding the nightdress as he does so, Vincent and Roland hustle Dr Marell out of the room.*

Martin                              Mrs Trilbeway, the lovely Theresa ... We have to find her and --

Miles *from the window*     She's in the figure garden now. With that so entertaining English  
Professor, her papa. Look you.

*They all rush over to the window. Martin is very excited and speaks accordingly.*

Martin                              The beautiful English lady. What a sight for my eyes. Oh, I swear  
to you all, as a French officer ever loyal to the Tricolour, that I did  
**not** see Debra without her clothes on ...

*The other three French officers are totally aghast at the possibilities behind this revelation. Martin is oblivious.*

Martin *still eager*                      But she must be offered refreshment of the highest order: coffee,  
lemonade, cakes. Is it too early for the English morning tea? You

know that these English do love their elevenses. Even yet, I so hate tea ... No matter ...

*[Rubs hand over chin]*

Razor! Shave! Where is that lazy batman of mine?

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene iv:** Outside The Palace, Cairo 1931.

*Dr Marell has left Martin's room and walks around the side of The Palace, carrying his black bag and looking to be in a hurry. The doctor looks back to where he had been in Martin's room and shakes his head.*

*Colonel Bartholemew (somewhat out of breath) meets him. Dr Marell stops to acknowledge the Colonel.*

Dr Marell                      *Bonjour, Colonel.* I hope that I find you well?

Bartholemew                Ah! Just the man I want to see. How d'ye do, Dr Marell? Will you just assist me in that little matter of Professor Phantom the other day? I'm sure it won't be going against your sacred code of ethics or anything like that.

Dr Marell *surprised*        Why, yes ... of a surety I will assist you in all that I am able.

*Bartholemew begins to riffle distractedly through his own pockets.*

Bartholemew                Do you think you could --

*There is a change of tack. Bartholemew becomes confidential and secretive; his eyes display his eager anticipation at what the doctor might reply.*

Bartholemew                Ah! The French gentleman's body. Has it been located yet?

Dr Marell *stiffly*            I am unable to furnish that information, Sir. It is not *convenable*

that we speak on this subject.

Bartholemew *skewing one eye* So the corpse is still floating somewhere about Cairo, eh? Terrible ... terrible ... Now, if he were an Englishman, we could call on Lord Bellamy, ye know. But then ...

*Bartholemew finally reefs a scrap of paper and a pencil out of his pocket, and thus returns immediately to his subject.*

Bartholemew *skewing one eye* Now, see here! Maurice Phantom twittered like a canary before he died. We both heard him. Word upon word; I tried to write it all down. However, it made no sense, all those strange Frenchie expressions. Pardon me for my frankness, dear Sir.

Dr Marell *bows slightly* Of course.

*Dr Marell sees that Bartholemew is stirred up. So the doctor treads carefully.*

Dr Marell *bows slightly* Often, when they are breathing their last, those who are dying may appear to be trying to convey an important message to the living. But in reality, Colonel, the speech is just as you called it: "the twittering of a bird".

Bartholemew Do you know that during his lifetime, Jealousy Phantom and I were the bitterest of rivals. Were you aware of that?

*Bartholemew is pleased that Dr Marell nods.*

Bartholemew Very well. Very well.

So here is my momentous question, Doctor.

Why, then, should this great man, after all his dazzling achievements, call **me** (of all people) to his bedside at the last? Can you explain that?

Dr Marell Those deathbed wishes are --

Bartholemew *urgent* Doctor! He called for me specifically and hung on until I arrived.

Dr Marell It's possible that --

Bartholemew                      He told me that he had been cursed. We who excavate the dirt and sand all have at the back of our minds this dread of being cursed by those who went before us.

Dr Marell                         Oh, come, come! These medieval superstitions --

Bartholemew                      Medieval fiddlesticks!

Dr Marell                         Ver' well, *mon Colonel*. I can see that nothing else will satisfy you, then. *Tiens!*

*Dr Marell sighs heavily and shrugs his shoulders as if conceding defeat. He drags a neatly-folded paper from his pocket, and makes a face, as if comparing his note to that of the other man. Bartholemew listens intently.*

Dr Marell                         The dying man spoke these words exactly as recorded (except that I've translated his *bon mots* into English for you):

"I am cursed, cursed.

Graverobbers preceded us.

The curse of the Pharaoh: six men and five women That is the curse. The dreams.

The curse passes to those who dream. And one will fly.

Listen to me." Er ...

"The lion savages the bull, and the bull gores the lion. But the eagle soars above them on wings of gold."

*C'est tout ...* that's all.

*Dr Marell hands the paper to Bartholemew.*

Bartholemew                      Incredible. Thank you. But what is it all in aid of?

*Bartholemew stares at the paper.*

Dr Marell *at a complete loss*     Who could possibly know? Did he even know himself?

Bartholemew                    He believed it to have been important ...

*Bartholemew tries to hand back the paper, but the doctor waves it away.*

Dr Marell                    No, no ... you keep it.

Oh, and by the way, Sir, after much careful deliberation, I have decided that Phanton was counting on the fingers: 11 people, 6 of whom were males. *Cinq femmes, et cinq hommes, plus un autre.* These 11 people would be passed-on the dreams which were part of the curse. Of course, I may be completely on the wrong track ...

Eleven ... strange number to pick, eh?

But what he meant by the eagle, the lion and the bull, Heaven alone only knows!

Bartholemew *winking*      And no body to bury, what? You'd better find it, or there'll be Hell to pay, my dear Doctor.

*Dr Marell stiffens at the Colonel's insouciance. As Lloyd Bartholemew laughs, the French doctor nods coldly, then marches off.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene v:** The French Figure-Garden At The Palace Cairo 1931.

*At the back of the Palace, the aridity of Cairo has been challenged by a small garden with its regimented little hedges and formal layout. Hence, it is called the figure garden. When the scene opens, the four Frenchmen and Theressa are relaxing (most seated) around a small table which has previously been laden with food and drink.*

*Martin is holding forth about the time-travel he has just experienced, to the rapt attention of the others, as this scene opens. While Martin explains his dream in the figure garden, we only hear a few*

*snippets, because we already know what happened, and we want to keep the scene moving. As he tells it, we do a lovely cinema tour of the garden and shade house (very short, very sweet) -- bees on the flowers, and so on. The music is divine, delicious and entrancing.*

SIDENOTE: We do have to hear Martin confer with Theresa over the characters he encountered, and we have to understand that everyone knows that this is a continuation-type dream sequence.

*Martin is just coming to the conclusion of his narrative.*

Martin                   ... where we lay on the sand, waving to the ship as it drifted off into the distance. We drank our beer and chatted. Then we moved off ... *C'est ça.*

Obviously, I did not have the same experience that the so lovely Theresa had ... but more like ...

How can I say it? You know, it seemed to me, *moi-même*, that this story might be presented in chapters. And that this was indeed Chapter 2 of her experience. I believe that this is so. I hope it makes sense, my explanation. And is it not quite interesting, in its own way ...

*Music fades. No-one moves much. Thoughtful silence, except for perhaps a long "mmmm". Miles kicks at a stone.*

Miles                   And so that is that, evidently.

Roland *sucking in air through his teeth*   But it so much feels as if there must be **more**. This cannot present the end when more adventure is tacitly promised.

*This pronouncement is met by a French moue, shoulder shrug, "C'est ça". Silence for a few seconds.*

*Then Martin suddenly recalls an important point.*

Martin                   No, no! Wait! Roland is in the right of it. Of course! It was ... I have recalled that there **was** something else, right at the end.

I have told you that we lay on a beach, somewhat intoxicated --

Miles *slyly*

-- you said before: "very intoxicated!"

Martin

Yes, yes, that's true. But we then went back to Byzantium, and sometime later we made our way to the shop of Modra. And his son was in command. This very unattractive young man was in the arms of a *putain* ... so it was a great embarrassment for us to have to interrupt him. But this we did. And we said some unkind words to this boy which I must not repeat in the presence of this gracious lady. Madame, forgive me.

*Theressa leans forward, and gestures in a pressing manner that Martin should continue his narrative.*

Theressa

Please ... go on!

Martin

Without leaving the arms of his whore, this Jacob handed to us the instructions for our next assignment, which was to be the long-lost grave of the Pharaoh Cheofes, at Memphis.

Vincent *surprised*

But we visited that very tomb not so long ago.

Miles

Yes, we did. We saw incontrovertible evidence that Cheofes' tomb had been racked by earthquakes and tumult, do you not remember that?

Vincent

Quite so! It resembled a war zone.

Martin

Our clear instruction from Modra via this Jacob was to raid **that same** burial chamber and clear it of its valuables.

Roland

My God! Did we do that then?

*Martin shrugs his shoulders with a Gallic pout.*

Martin

I can't tell you. My vision ended there, with us all staring at a papyrus chart covered in some stylae or hieratics, or whatever they are. And you, Miles (as your Phoenician counterpart) read to us that the location of the Cheofes riches had been recently discovered at the deathbed of one of the royal servants. So, that



then became our immediate destination.

Vincent                   And is there another dream that one of us must dream? Do you have more of that stuff?

Martin                   Mahala is a ver' strange lady, *non?* To me she gave a vial of this magical brew of hers. But it was not at all easy to extract it from her.

*[Sounding self-important]*

There were the usual warnings wailed in tones which might frighten the weak-minded. *Lieutenant* Leveque is certainly of the stronger strain and ignored her diatribe.

However, she made me promise that I would tell to you all this business. I mean, of what I saw in Egypt as the valorous Ferule. Especially to *you, cher* Miles.

Miles                   But ... why ... ?

*Martin tries to look knowledgeable but can think of nothing to say. Roland's mind is buzzing, however. Roland stalks about, eager and full of business.*

Roland                   Mahala ... we must see her. It is clear. So far, it is clear.

Two of us (Mrs Trilbeway, and then Lieutenant Leveque) each drank that concoction of Mahala's making. And then they each had a very vivid, almost lifelike dream or vision perhaps you would say. Very well ... not the same vision, but a continuation, one to the next. And not about other people, but about ourselves, in a way. Yes, it becomes so very clear ... we all must follow this course.

Theressa               Lieutenant Ferrier, what are saying?

*Roland stops pacing. He raises an elegant hand.*

Roland                   Ver' well then.

I will stoically offer to be the next "*lapin*". You know that I soon

make the safari in order to study the vegetation and geological features of these parts. Very well then, at my return, I will beg to undergo the hallucination. And hopefully, I will experience this anticipated tomb robbery of Cheofes.

*Roland's pronouncement is met with general approbation.*

Vincent                    So ... these dreams ... you've had two so far. And all of us were in the dreams, as other people?

Theressa                Yes. We emanated from Phoenicia.

Vincent                    At the time when the pharaohs of Egypt were rulers of the known world, and had amassed glorious wealth?

Martin *nodding*            That's it exactly.

Vincent                    And the leader of the expedition was Miles, in his Phoenician guise?

Martin                    Mmmm ... Not quite ... Miles was under the orders of one Modra. What do the English call the criminal who receives --

Theressa                Modra was the organizer and the fence. The gangs worked for him.

Martin                    He is at once ruthless and cunning. His job is to oversee everything such that it all runs as smooth as silk.

Vincent                    What a fantasy!

Martin                    I am this gallant Ferule, Madame Trilbeway is the lovely Debra, Roland is Moollet [*mispronounces*] with Dingo ... that's you, Vincent.

Theressa                Oh, and don't forget the little dog. He's very clever. Mullet calls him "Howzat".

Miles                    And may I not know *my* name in all this? I seem to be the ringleader of this strange and rough gang of Phoenicians, who

have no fear of raiding tombs. I assume that I also have a name?

*Now follows an awkward silence. Roland and Vincent are also in the dark and look a question. Miles bears the expression of **really** wanting an answer. Theresa and Martin look at each other, hoping that the earth will swallow them.*

Martin                      Well ... Stiffay. Your name is Stiffay, which stands for --

*Theresa rushes violently into speech.*

Theresa                      A soldier standing stiffly to attention, that's what it is ... standing straight and tall as he salutes the flag. ... Oh ...

*Gets flustered and runs inside with a quick "Excuse me". Meanwhile Martin discerns a look of outrage on the face of Miles.*

Martin                      She didn't make it up, my friend. That's how it is. Stiffay, you call yourself Stiffay. But it is well explained in that --

Roland *affronted on Miles' behalf*              But why not be honest, uh? In the patois of London, that would mean *l'érection, mon ami*.

*Roland makes the visual sign of a raised and braced forearm.*

Martin                      No, no. There was a discussion about --

*Miles looks about him -- aghast and offended. Vincent chuckles.*

Miles                      To say that I am offended by what you have just said quite understates my feelings. I am of noble birth, with a heritage of honour and service. I am not to be made the fool in this way, with this unspeakable epithet.

Vincent                      Oh come! It's not about yourself. It's just a story ...

Roland *reasonable*              Don't take it so badly, Renauld. If you must blame somebody, then that Mystical woman --

Martin                      You must listen! "Unlucky"! It means --

Miles *horribly offended*      Excuse me, gentlemen. I've just recalled a pressing duty which

cannot be overlooked any longer.

Martin *desperate to be heard* It stood for "Unlucky". There was nothing indelicate or rude about it. Should I follow him to explain?

*Martin hovers. Miles strides off, towards the shade house in exactly the opposite direction to that which Theresa went.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene vi: Professor Phanton's Museum Memphis 1931.**

*Professor Phanton built a museum at Memphis to house and display some of the finds from his digs. It is a small stone building, where everything is poorly presented in dust-covered display cabinets. Evidently, from the indolent behaviour of the Egyptian staff, the museum is being allowed to deteriorate.*

*All that aside, a brisk Egyptian man walks determinedly through the museum, followed by the English and French visitors. Not just our characters: others as well. Compared to what we saw, this "treasure" is quite paltry. Martin allows himself to fall back to where Theresa ambles along.*

Martin *undervoice* Does this trash represent what was taken from your tomb (as you dreamed it)?

Theressa *undervoice* No! Not at all!

Stiffy told me that Modra scorned such stuff. It might have had nostalgic value, but there was nothing to be gained by taking it. So we did not.

You boys were only interested in worthwhile treasure.

*Martin nods, then quickly looks about. He draws Theresa by the arm behind a showcase such that they might be unseen.*

Martin *focused*                    Where did they end up, then – Modra's golden goods? Where are they now?

Theressa *frowning*                Do you know, Martin, that in my time I've scanned many illustrated tomes which were dedicated to the treasure troves of Egyptian grave goods. Museums and such ... Not **one** of these august volumes contained the beautiful things that I saw when I was a graverobber with Howzat (the dog).

*Martin makes a huge gesture of loss.*

Martin                                Exactly my thoughts ... *Moi aussi* ...

Theressa *reasonable*            There may be any number of private collections in (say) Russia, the United States, the Balkan States ... Uncatalogued and unknown. But surely ...

Martin *conspiratorial*           The English doctor (Lilliman) has been more than keen to know what I saw.

Is it that he quizzed you likewise?

Theressa                            He tries to.

*Martin makes a frustrated clicking noise and looks about for inspiration.*

Theressa *reassuring*            Martin we must be vigilant.

Martin                                And we shall maintain the strict silence before the English doctor, hein?

*Theressa nods. Martin grabs her hand to kiss it fervently. He bows and then marches off. Theressa breathes heavily and then strolls in the other direction. Theressa runs smack into Miles in a secluded area of the museum. It is clearly apparent that he does not wish to linger with her.*

Theressa                            Captain Renauld! Please, please forgive me! I've wanted so much to explain. Your name and so on ...

Miles *cold*                            I have nothing to forgive.

Theressa                            You were the most wonderful, perfect man. Er, in the old times,

that is.

Oh dear! I'm not doing this very well, am I?

Miles *bows politely* No, do not try to explain, Madame, there is nothing further to say.

*Miles moves off, but he is halted by Theresa grabbing his sleeve.*

Theresa I have to tell you.

*Miles turns to her, looking down at the hand on his sleeve. Then at her face. She quickly looks around to make sure that they are not overheard. Theresa speaks gently, persuasively.*

Theresa We have fallen in love, in those old times. You depended on me, and I on you. We were equals. There was nothing then about the impoverished *Duc* and the *nouveau riche* young widow. Remember what Martin told us ... on that Italian beach ... you asked my brother if we could be married?

*Miles is too overcome to speak. He removes her hand from his sleeve to take it between both of his. Theresa takes much courage from this action.*

Theresa *whispers* Tell me that I should not give up hope.

Miles *voice breaks* I do admire you fondly, Theresa, with every fibre of my being. Be very sure of that. But as for asking you to marry me ... what must that seem? I need to marry a rich woman, and that is what you are. I cannot in all honour ask you to forfeit your wealth to --

*They overhear Colonel Bartholemew's voice; he is nearby and approaching. Theresa uses her free hand to reach up around Miles' neck, allowing her to kiss Miles swiftly on the lips. They then break apart. She points towards some item in a glass case.*

Theresa See this comb, Captain Renauld. Just like a modern one. Fashions don't really change, do they?

Miles Yes, Mrs Trilbeway, quite beautiful and lovely.

*[Whispers]*

Just like you.

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene vi:** Roland Is Off On His Safari, Cairo 1931.

*Here is a massive undertaking.*

*This is a very grand and beautiful scene, requiring a burst of magnificent music that will first be heard as the cavalcade comes into view.*

*Vincent cycles in fine style along the streets of Cairo, whistling merrily (and we hear this happy tune as he whistles it).*

Roland and his retinue – the tour of the Egyptian desert.

*Vincent turns into the curved driveway of the palace in time to almost run into Roland's retinue. This cavalcade is a very grand affair, exactly as one would expect of an Englishman (or here, Frenchman) as would be undertaken in the 1930's. There are several recumbent camels sporting colourful caparison, and a bevy of dutiful, humble Egyptian guides and servants. The luggage is strapped onto the camels. Miles and Martin hang over the balcony as usual, also observing with great interest. There are other balconies on various levels of the palace, complete with sundry spectators.*

*Roland appears, very much the seasoned traveller, in full safari outfit, including pith helmet and a riding crop under his arm. He directs the servants in French, waving his hands vaguely towards different bits of impedimenta. The servants rush back and forth at his bidding.*

*Vincent dismounts from his cycle, impressed by the cavalcade. An Egyptian photographer snaps a photo of Roland: gallant, manly and adventurous. The music winds down.*

Vincent                                      So, you're off to study the ... what was it?

Roland *self-important*              I will photograph and gather geological, biological and botanical

specimens for inclusion in my opus: "*Cairo, A Journey Across The Sands*."

Vincent                      And therefore you will evidently be journeying across the desert sands in some measure?

Roland *haughty*              Evidently, *mon cher*.

Vincent                      And when you return to us, you won't forget to visit the old harridan as you promised?

Roland *smug*                  No need!

*Roland taps one of the saddle bags with his riding crop.*

Roland                      The harridan came to me. Or, one should speak, that one of her minions did. So I'm prepared already.

Vincent *alarmed*              But you will be very careful, then!

Roland                      Of course.

Vincent                      *Bon chance*, my so dear friend!

*Roland climbs adroitly onto the camel's back without assistance (which is offered by several hands), and taps the beast's neck with his riding crop. The animal drags herself to her feet, as do the other camels. If the camels can be inspired to make camel-noises, so much the better! With a solemn wave to Vincent, and then to the other two men, Roland heads off.*

*Again, we hear the music: grand, sweeping orchestral. The music continues throughout until the end of Act III but will be of various strengths/intensity as befits the scene. The dialog is only scattered and always in French until end Act III. Obviously, this is at the director's discretion but for those reading this, here are some ideas.*

- The cavalcade sets off, down the Cairo main street, amidst crowds of locals, motor cars and vendors.
- Along a beautiful walled road, such as we saw in Act II, near the tents.
- Into the desert, with the pyramids or something like as a backdrop.
- Photographing (with huge kludgy camera and tripod) a small weed whilst the tent is erected by his harassed servants.



- Looking out over the desert at twilight, with snifter of brandy nursed elegantly in hand.

***This following is an essential scene:***

*Night, whereby lanterns hang about in the tent's annex. There are mozzie nets, fly papers, bottles of wine and brandy, crystal glasses, cigars, and an old Remington typewriter: all the comforts of home. Roland is found to be busily working away, pounding the keys.*

*The saddlebags have been stowed, and apparently Roland has extracted the phial of potion. It sits in a spare corner of the cigar box. Roland picks up the glass phial and examines it against the lantern light, turning it over and over. Without much thought, he swallows the potion in one hit directly from the phial. [Remember that both Theresa and Martin had theirs watered-down.]*

*Roland coughs and splutters, which brings a couple of servants into view. He waves them off, and (still coughing slightly) is seen to continue working (typewriter). As the camera pans backwards, we can just make out that Roland's head flops onto the typewriter and the servants rush forward. They carry him off into the tent proper. We see the silhouette of him in the tent, being laid down on a travel cot, under a mozzie net. And as previously stated, the music works in beautifully with this progression. The lanterns are extinguished, leaving only starlight.*

*Fade out to darkness, ready for the next dream-experience.*

END OF SCENE

**Start of ROLAND'S FIRST EXPERIENCE (the second being in Film #2)**

*To be comically reprised at the very beginning of Film #2.*

**Times of Antiquity: The Big Tomb of Cheofes**

Geography of the antechamber:--

|           |                                                                    |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WEST wall | Gang #6 (1st to appear) the "Pubic Punics" with Debbie and Howzat. |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|

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|                |                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SOUTH wall     | Gang #4 (2nd to appear) Chips, Donger, Socks, Curl, Knackers #2 (called "Bunch of Fives" and Phoenician as is Gang #6).                        |
| NORTH wall     | Gang #5 (last to appear) Squizzy, Callum, Fergus and Archie (called "The Eagle Boys"). They are Hittites and speak with South African accents. |
| EAST wall/door | The door to the chamber itself.                                                                                                                |

### **III, Scene vii:** he Burial Chamber of Pharaoh Cheofes Egype 1500 BCE

*The antechamber to the large burial chamber of Cheofes which was visited in modern times in ACT II.*

Be advised that there is a comic reprise of this scene, twisted about such that Mullet/Roland is the leader, at the beginning of the second film "GOA The French Touch".

*We have already seen the finished product of this tomb in ACT II, so this will show us what it should have been like **before** the earthquakes. It is a huge tomb. The walls are utterly beautiful, and there are some superb stoneworks. The gravegoods are sumptuous, stunning. Of all the grave robberies, this one and the Kahmood robbery in film #2 have the most amazingly gorgeous settings.*

*So we start off in the dark of the antechamber, with no music. The darkness will become dimly lit as the members of Gang #6 (the Pubic Punics) break in from the West.*

*We hear noises of knocking, with banging and grunts.*

*Stiffy voice off*                      Okay, we're in! Give us the torch, Dingo.

*Low light appears, lighting Stiffy's upper torso and face. He is holding the torch up high and looks around. He bears heavy nets and ropes over his shoulders.*

*Dingo voice off*                      All good, mate?

*Stiffy*                                      Yeah, come on.

*The other men follow, with Debbie and Howzat. More torches give more light. Feral has a grubby tunic painted with slogans: "Gang #6 Rocks" and "The Mighty Pubic Punics". He wears a red commando bandana and carries a quantity of bunched ropes over one shoulder. Mullet has been charged with carrying the weapons and more torches. Howzat sniffs about.*

*There is a large, solid door, heavily bolted on the East wall. The men wander over towards the door. As the four men of Gang #4 investigate the door (with Debbie and Howzat standing back), a loud banging is heard from the South wall, which causes them all too suddenly spin around. Howzat growls menacingly.*

Mullet                                      What's that? What's making that noise?

*Stiffy walks over to the South wall and runs his hand over it. He is definitely not happy.*

Stiffy *worried*                              Dunno ...

*A small part of that wall tumbles to the floor, which causes Stiffy to become alarmed, moving backwards with arms out, in a blocking move. All of Gang #6 back off, deeply concerned that this might be the start of a cave-in. Looking up to the ceiling, they are desperate to see if there is any structural weakness.*

Chips *voice off*                              Strike me pink, fellas, but there's a chink of light here.

*More banging. Stiffy realizes what's happened and immediately relaxes. He shakes his head, grinning slightly, with hands on hips. The hole in the South wall opens up.*

*Chips' head appears through a gap in the South wall of the antechamber.*

Chips                                      Stone the flaming crows! What have we got here?

Stiffy                                      Aw, that prick son of Modra must have double-booked us. That's what's happened, any money yer like.

Chips                                      But he can't do that!

Stiffy                                      Yeah, well, he bloody-well has.

*The members of Gang #4 climb out of the hole and into the antechamber. That brings more torches, more light. More ropes and nets (slung over the shoulders of Socks, Curl and Knackers #2) can be seen. There is arm-shaking, greetings, smiles all around. Except for Stiffy and Chips, the latter having joined Stiffy at the door. Chips and Stiffy closely examine the door.*

Chips                                      Once we get that monstrosity out of the way, she'll be apples. But how do we do that, I'm wondering?

*Camera: close in on the door, where fingers are examining, prodding, poking.*

*Out of the blue, to everyone's extreme surprise, there is a loud bang, as of a blast in the North Wall.*

*General alarm in the antechamber. Once again the fear is that there is an imminent cave-in.*

Dingo, Curl, Donger      Oh shit!! Look out!!  
*really concerned*

Archie *voice off*      Fuck! You nearly took my hand off then!

**(South African  
accent)**

Callum *voice off same*      Get your fucking hand out of the way, useless prick. Shove over,  
**S. African accent**      give a man room to move.

*Stiffy shakes his head in denial and disbelief as he stares at the North wall.*

Stiffy      No! Not Gang #5. Tell me this isn't true ...

*Another loud blast, causing a gaping hole to appear in the North wall. The assembled Gangs #6 and #4 shout and yell their disgust in unison.*

Squizzy *voice off*      What's going on? I can hear voices in there.

*We hear a few more bangs in the North wall. General disgust of all concerned in the antechamber. Surprised and amazed, the Gang #5 members clamber out of their North wall hole. They, too, are replete with the usual grave robbing clutter (ropes, nets, weapons).*

Squizzy      What the --

*Stiffy has turned his attention back to the door in the East wall.*

Stiffy      Modra's on holidays, and he's left his no-hoper son, Jacob, in charge. "Clueless" has obviously stuffed up and put all the gangs onto the one job.

Knackers #2 *arcs up at*      Hey! You one-eyed prick. You've been rooting my missus, haven't  
*Squizzy*      ya?

Squizzy *laughs*      I might have been, old cock, but I gave it away.  
*derisively*      *[Insulting]*

You see, she wasn't worth the effort.

*Immediately, Knackers #2 flies at Squizzy. It's just a "jumper-grab" as in an AFL melee. Mullet dives in to separate the men.*

Mullet                      No! No! Knackers, it's not **your** wife that Squizzy's been on with.  
It's the **other** Knackers.

Fergus                     That poor bastard that Stiffy sold off to that galley?

Mullet                     Seltzer, or whatever he calls himself? No the **other** one.

*Stiffy stands up straight, arcing up and looking very menacing.*

Stiffy                      What did you say about me? I never shopped Knackers. You be  
bloody careful saying stuff like that, you can get into trouble.

Fergus                     It's not me saying it, old cock. Knackers is telling anybody who'll  
listen to him that you sold him up the river. He's getting a few of  
his old mates to spring him out. And then he's coming after **you**.

*Chips notices that Stiffy is growing angry.*

Chips                      Aw, nobody can weasel their way out of a slave galley once the  
chains are on. Don't fret! He can bluster till his bum drops off ...  
can't do nothing.

Come and get this flaming door open. Don't want to be here all  
night.

*This scene finishes with Stiffy eyeballing Gang #5, then he slowly turns back to the business of  
opening the door.*

END OF SCENE

**III, Scene viii:** Exactly As In Scene vii, But 3.5 Hours Later

*[Explanation of this Break -- it takes a long time to get through the door. The men work for hours. So from Stiffy turning back to the door, there is a discernible break, then into the following fight scene.]*

*When this scene opens, they are all into a footy-type fight: a typical AFL melee. We have "jumper-pulling", chesting, body blows, wrestling on the ground. Grunting and roaring. This is **not** a Hollywood fight. More like a tussle: grabbing clothes, tossing each other aside, wrestling. The fight is between Gang #4 and Gang #5. It is the Gang #6 members who pull the Gang #5 blokes off the Gang #4 blokes. Remember that Gang #4 has one extra member, so the odds are unfairly stacked in their favour.*

*Note that the torches have burnt down and lie about, as new ones have been fetched. All the men are very dirty and sweaty, with ripped clothing. Feral has lived up to his name and daubed himself all over with stripes of mud, like a native. Stiffy is now bare-chested, extremely dirty and wearing only a skimpy loincloth. The members of Gang #6 struggle to break up the fight. They grapple the combatants from behind and pull them away.*

Gang #6 *at the same time*      Come on, boys. Settle down. That's enough. We're here for a reason, don't muck it up. Come on, that's enough You're not here to fight. Break it up!

*Gang #6 push one gang over to one wall, with the other gang over to the other wall.*

Stiffy *breathless and pissed-off*      Okay! Now we've nearly got ourselves inside the crypt.

*Stiffy takes a big breath, then shouts. He is taking charge.*

Stiffy      Come on! We've gotta all pull together, now! There's enough of us here to bring this off without damage. Let's work on our strengths.

            Chips! How are you planning to get in and out without getting the fucking curse rammed up your arse? What's your method? What's the strategy?

Chips                               The good oil is that us boys in Gang #4 have got hold of a counter-curse from an old wizard, name of Pooter. You all know him. This'll work a treat, he reckons!

Stiffy                               Sounds like a plan. Good, we can go with that one.

*Donger points towards Mullet.*

Donger                            And I heard on the grapevine that youse blokes have started to use a dog and a woman. How did that go?

Chips                               Yeah, they did. Mucking farvellous.

Callum                            Who thought of that?

Feral *disgusted*                Aw, don't start that again!

Archie *eager*                    A woman? They've got a woman? Is she here?

Socks                              Yeah, she's hiding in the shadows.

Archie                            Let's have a look at her.

*When Archie grabs Debbie, Stiffy lunges forward, pushes the guy away, and puts his arm around Debra.*

Stiffy *shouts, angry*           Leave her alone, you mongrel! She's ***mine!***

*His shouting is followed by a loud rumbling and earth movements. The men all look around in fear and concern.*

Dingo *amazed*                 That can't be anyone else, can it? I mean we've run out of gangs, haven't we?

Chips                               Stone the crows. I don't like the sound of that ...

*Stiffy turns to Squizzy, raising an eyebrow.*

Stiffy                              Well, Squizz? What have you got up your sleeve?

*The members of Gang #5 shuffle about. They are very reluctant. Archie looks around, then focuses on Squizzy.*

Archie *shrugs*                 Might as well tell them.

Squizzy *big breath*                We have sworn to honour the Lady Ulpia. We will die in her service.

*Now there is rude laughter. More fighting breaks out. This time, it is Chips who brings back order.*

*But Squizzy's words spark a light in Mullet's head.*

Mullet                                You mean ... you mean that ... You've made a death-pledge, haven't ya? This is a suicide mission!

*Feral and a couple of others are straining to finally free the door. With a loud scroop, it swings slightly ajar. We can see the glorious golden treasures glowing dimly beyond. Feral now turns to address the members of Gang #5.*

Feral *sarcastic*                    Awright! That makes our job a lot easier. Youse blokes can go in, get the stuff and we'll take it back to Ulpia for ya. We'll take it --  
  
*[Fends off a potential interruption from Callum]*  
  
-- no mate, cause you'll be **dead!**

*More rumblings are heard.*

*Music: dithering strings as in "something about to happen".*

*Strange smoky fingers come out of the doorway into the light of their torches. The men are getting worried.*

*Howzat pads about, sniffing and growling. A light appears from inside the tomb. The men gather around, unsure what to do. Then more earth tremors. The door swings open wide. Howzat barks frantically then shoots through the East door. Mullet, holding one of the counter curses, and terrified for Howzat, tears in after his pet.*

*Music is now forceful, fast and furious. Stiffy is horrified. He shouts wildly, holding his head in terror for his mate's safety.*

Stiffy                                Mullet, no! Don't follow the dog, mate! NO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

*Under the direction of Squizzy, Gang #5 work themselves up and break into an inspirational "dance" (like a Haka) and the other blokes look at them in bemused fashion. It doesn't last too long. Then the gang #5 members charge at the hole; they launch themselves inside.*



*Curl gives a mighty war whoop.*

Curl                                      Let's go with the counter-curses!

*The members of Gang #4 all throw into the burial chamber what look like about 40 small paper packets. Following that, they too charge inside.*

*In the now very dimly-lit antechamber, Dingo is peering through the door into the burial chamber with Debra behind him, craning to see the action inside.*

*Chests still heaving after all the exertion and excitement, Feral and Stiffy look about, then size each other up.*

Stiffy                                      What are you all tarted-up for?

Feral                                      I'm trying to get back to my Earth, back to my roots. The maleness in me is absolutely oozing out.

*Debbie (overhearing) sighs loudly, rolling her eyes. Feral's words cause his sister Debra to sigh loudly, rolling her eyes. Stiffy is also unimpressed.*

Stiffy                                      Yeah? Well, you look like a clown. And if you're going to start "oozing", don't do it all over the floor.

Feral                                      What about you? Who are you supposed to be? A Nubian slave?

Stiffy *chest out*                              A real man shouldn't be afraid to strip off in an emergency. If you've got it --

Feral *arcs up, shouting*                      Not in front of my sister, thanks mate!

Stiffy *arcs up*                              And what's that got to do with the price of fish in Carthage? She can view the wedding tackle if we're going to get married anyway, can't she?

*Debra has not yet been told that she is to marry Stiffy. She is not displeased.*

Debra                                      I didn't know that.

Stiffy *shame-faced*                              I ... I ... I meant to tell you, but ...

Feral *defiant*                              I haven't given my permission yet.

Stiffy Yes you did. On the beach in Italy. We were as crissed as pickets.

Feral *more defiant* I haven't said "yes".

*We see a long shot of the antechamber. What was a sea of struggling humanity is now a forlorn, lost-looking group of three men and a girl. Debra makes a gesture as if to ask if they were intending to enter the burial chamber. Dingo shrugs a question.*

Dingo In?

Stiffy May as well, Dingo. Mullet's gone before us ...

*Feral is still smarting from the disagreement with Stiffy.*

Feral *savage* If anything or anyone has a "go", I'll punch its teeth in ...

Stiffy *kindly* Deb? You stick close beside me, sweetheart.

|                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All the graverobbers are now inside the chamber of Pharaoh Cheofes. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|

*The chamber is totally beautiful: utterly fantastic, just like a magnificent well-appointed emporium. But the ghostly fingers of smoke/dust/mist continue to waft around. Eerie music drifts across. All the people in the chamber wander about, struck by its magnificence.*

Stiffy Hey! Where was that light coming from?

*More rumbling is heard. There is bright thick orange smoke coming from the counter-curse packets, rising wistfully from where the packets landed. Stiffy and Deb wander over to where a spotlight appears to highlight a small area in front of a huge golden throne. Stiffy is looking up and down, concerned over the purpose of this light. Dingo clambers up onto the throne and sits in regal splendour in it.*

Dingo *shouts* Oi, Mullet! M-A-A-A-A-T-E! Ah you still with us?

Mullet *voice far off* Is that you Ding? There's a dozen more rooms up the back, fairly bulging with gold goodies. You ought to come and have a look.

Dingo *shouts* Just a minnie. I'm luxuriating in my royalness.

*Mullet (voice-off) gives a joyous yell and then shouts.*

Mullet                                ***You bloody bewdy!!!!***

*voice far off*                        This old crow that's buried here was taking a bag of beer with him to the ever-after. I'll bring it over ...

Debra *to Dingo*                    Should you sit there? Won't the gods get cheesed off?

*Chips wanders up. He is awestruck at the magnificent surroundings.*

Chips                                 Bonza ... what a corker!

Debra *frowning*                    Well, fellas, let's get on with the raiding party, shall we? The usual policy is to rush around, grab everything, then get out.

*Debra looks about her. None of the men from any of the gangs appears to be doing anything related to the work of graverobbing.*

Debra *nervous*                    So ... let's get moving? ...

*Mullet comes racing into view, handing out amphorae of beer to each man from a hessian bag which he is carting about with him. Howzat trots along beside him, tail wagging. The males from all three gangs have all gathered around the spotlight, relaxed and carefree, and happily drinking.*

*Debra is confused: why are the men stalling? She constantly looks at them, while collecting some of the loot, which she deposits in the antechamber nets.*

*As she works and wonders, some entertainment occurs.*

- First, two Egyptian men rush under the spotlight and do an Egyptian dance to a bright, jazzy 1930's number (music hall entertainers in London at about this time were all into this sort of comic dancing: in the weird flat-hand posture). The male graverobbers stand transfixed.
- Then follow Egyptian women, dancing evocatively in the manner of slave girls. They dance to a sensuous and lilting melody. This is accompanied by yelling and wolf-whistles from the men.
- The entertainment changes to jackal-heads doing a can-can. Some of the men join in.
- Lastly is a free-for-all disco/rap, where the men are joined by a Boris Karloff "Mummy", complete with dragging bandages. Also ibis-heads and other gods join in.

*Debra continues to carry out the stash, weighed down by it and browed-off that the men do no help her.*

*We can see Debra in the background or foreground as the men watch/join the entertainment. She gradually gets tired, frustrated, angry, fearful and distressed.*

*During the disco, Debra slumps to the floor, starting to cry in a mixture of fear and frustration.*

*Debra half-sobs, as if working herself up to full-blown bawling.*

Debra                               Are you blokes going to help me or not? *[Breathy sobs]*

What's wrong with you all?

*[Breathy sobs]*

Are you demented? You can't just stand around like that. I can't carry out all this stuff on my own. It's just ridiculous. I --

*Debra stops her noisy sobbing as the penny drops. She realizes that the curse has outsmarted them all.*

Debra                               I ... can't ... all ... on ... my ...

*Debra parts her lips amazement. She stands up, and walks slowly into the chamber. The entertainment is now the rap dance under the spotlight. She looks at the men through the plumes of orange smoke. She has it!*

Debra *eureka moment*   The counter-curses! The gods who guard this crypt have found a workaround for the counter-curses. The boys can't leave ... The boys can't leave!! I have to ... **oh shit!!** I have to somehow get rid of the counter-curses so that the boys can leave ...

*Debra grabs an empty beer amphora from near the me and starts to collect all the counter-curse packets, shoving them down the neck of the amphora. It is a case of following the plumes of orange smoke. When the last one is gone, Debbie shouts "There!" and watches as the spotlight extinguishes and the boys are caught in humorous postures. They look bewildered.*

*Debbie pushes and pulls them into action. Immediately they settle down to the task at hand, with lightning use of ropes, muscle and grunt.*

*Debra hightails it to the huge door, to clear a path for the men, in time to find armed guards appearing in the antechamber as they clamber through the three wall holes made earlier by the graverobbers. She screams, then deliberately smashes the beer amphora, letting the counter-curses escape into the antechamber. Jumping back into the burial chamber, she slams the door shut. Then Debra looks horrified, aghast that she may have sealed the graverobbers and herself inside the tomb, with no escape. She stares at the door in dismay.*

Debra *distraught*            Oh shit, I'm absolutely dead! I've locked us in. Please somebody help me. Please!

*Debra turns around as the graverobbers rush up, bearing an unimaginable variety of grave goods on their shoulders or dragged across the floor in an array of nets].*

Debra *warning*            We've got company: a herd of armed guards is outside, but I think I've trapped them.

Squizzy *annoyed*        You haven't shut the door? By all that's wonderful ... why did you do that?

Feral                        Did you shut the bloody door on us? Can we open it again?

Debbie                      We can't get out that way ... armed guards!

*As the other men push Debbie roughly aside, Stiffy grabs her shoulders. In the background the men strain to open the door.*

Stiffy                        Why did you --

Debra *desperate*        It's Chips' wizard thing, Stiffy. That orange smoke. Don't let yourself breathe it, or you'll go into a trance.

*Debra turns in agitated manner towards the men at the door. She is frantic.*

Debra *warning*            Hey! Don't go out there! Don't breathe the orange smoke!

*The door opens a little way. Again, plumes of orange smoke can be seen. To everyone's bemused amazement, the guards in the antechamber are enjoying some rollicking community singing. They loll about in complete relaxation, oblivious to the robbers. They sing something like "The Ladies of the Harem of the Court of King Caractacus" but the song is specific to the era.*

*The door briskly shuts. Everyone immediately turns to Stiffy and Debra. But before either can speak, rumbling begins. The music switches to "Oh-God-something-awful-is-coming". General alarm.*

*Suddenly, slits appear in the stone floor, just like splits in the sponge of a hot self-saucing pudding. Liquefied rock oozes out of these cracks. It bubbles and hisses, with steam and spitting. The chamber begins to rock from side to side, with grave goods spilling over the place. The ceiling cracks. A big piece of ceiling crashes to the floor. Everyone starts shouting. Stiffy is determined to save Debra.*

*Stiffy to Debra*                      Whatever happens, hang onto me! Hang onto me!

*Debra clings to Stiffy, whose arm is around her shoulders. They are both amazed and terrified. All hell is breaking loose. As they go into a passionate kiss, the torches flicker, and then there is darkness.*

END OF SCENE

END of ROLAND'S FIRST EXPERIENCE

### **III, Scene ix:** In The Desert, Roland's Tent 1931

*There is beautiful sunrise in the desert. The camera randomly picks up the little birds, the plant life and so on.*

*Almost the same as at the end of scene vi; however, a couple of mornings have passed. It is exactly the same location, but with the sun coming up instead of the lanterns. Roland is banging away on the keyboard, with a smoking cigar clenched between his teeth. Every so often he reaches for a large cup of tea, from which he sips. He has a large cigar clenched between his teeth. He mutters to himself as he types.*

*Roland*                              Beware: The guards are in the ante-chamber.

*[Click, click, click, click]*

*[Imitates a girl's voice]*

Don't breathe-in that orange smoke, or it will bewitch you.

*[Click, click, click, click]*

*[Man's deep voice]*

Cling closely to me, Debra my angel ...

*[Click, click, click, click]*

And that is the FINIS.

*Roland leans back in his chair, smoking contentedly. The camera backs off.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene x:** In The Market Place Cairo 1931.

*This is typical Middle Eastern market scene: stalls, vendors, people, animals; a wealth of interesting detail. Three Frenchmen (Miles, Martin and Vincent) with Theresa wander along, constantly jostled by passers-by.*

*Roland steps out of the crowd to join them. There is a general welcome. Looking smug, Roland hands to Vincent some typed pages. Roland stands back importantly to watch the reaction.*

Roland                      Here you are! Something to interest you all. Lieutenant Ferrier writes up his report, and now passes it you for your *delectation*.

*Vincent reads avidly, with the others looking over his shoulder.*

Vincent *delighted*           Ah! The robbery marches ...

Theresa *disappointed*    Bother! It's in French. My French is terribly rusty.

Vincent                      I'm willing to translate for you the words.

Roland, this is excellent.

*Roland is very pleased with himself. As if a conjuror, he produces another sheaf of papers.*

Roland                      **And** I've sketched all the gravegoods.

Been up half the night.

Miles But what about the other business? The desert photography and so forth? Did you manage to --

Roland *waves that off* No, no. This was far more important.

I did some few bits and pieces, enough to go on with.

But this! Going back to the era of the ancients. Such an experience! It throws every other consideration aside.

*Martin and Vincent continue to read avidly.*

Vincent Ah! Monsieur le Dingo! What a brave!

Martin And Ferule. He is the mastermind – that is beyond dispute.

But ... All three gangs together? Does that not lead to trouble?

Theressa What's that? Oh, please, tell me what it says?

Miles Most interesting. Fascinating!

Come! We'll return to the palace and rest in the figure-garden. We can take refreshment ... then ...

Theressa Wonderful! But not for too long mind! We have these wretched rehearsals this afternoon.

Lieutenant Ferrier, I'm so glad that you will be able to join us this evening.

Roland *bows* My so very dear Madame, it's why I to Cairo returned with such speed.

To miss the performance would unman me.

END OF SCENE



**III, Scene xi:** At The Oak Nut Hotel For The Theatricals, Part 1 1931.

*[Be aware that this French farce foreshadows the love affair between Dani Renauld and Mimette Charliez in the second film.]*

*Scene opens with an audience of locals, perched on a sea of chairs. We catch sight of the Sultan at various stages. He is superbly dressed in Arab outfit and seems to thoroughly enjoy himself throughout.*

*The dining room has been converted into a little theatre. In the two farthest corners from the audience stand two large armchairs.*

CAST:

|                                 |                                  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Uncle Bernard                   | Bartholemew                      |
| Aunt Claudine (Bernard's wife)  | <i>one of the Oak Nut guests</i> |
| Antoine (Bernard's nephew)      | Roland Ferrier                   |
| Babette (Antoine's sister)      | <i>one of the Oak Nut guests</i> |
| Louis (Babette's fiancé)        | Martin Leveque                   |
| Mde Eliza Perfoin (housekeeper) | <i>one of the Oak Nut guests</i> |
| Felicite (housemaid)            | Theressa                         |

*All members of the cast overact to the hilt, are obviously amateurs and all have very heavy stage makeup and inadequate costumes, as would be run-up on the Singer just before the performance.*

*Uncle Bernard is hiding behind one armchair (left), and his nephew Antoine is hiding behind the other one (right).*

*There is a large table in the middle of the stage, covered by a rich, thick fringed blanket.*

*ACTION: Felicite rushes on from stage left, squealing, chased by Louis. She runs around the table, then stops, turns and places her hands firmly on Louis's chest. The audience rocks with laughter, as Uncle and Nephew pop their heads up and then down again.*

Felicite                    No, no, Monsieur Louis! You are Mademoiselle Babette's fiancé, after all!

Louis                      But I love you, you naughty French maid.

Felicite                    Oh, someone's coming! You must hide! You are believed to be touring the Tuileries today.

Louis                      Very well, saucy minx!

*Louis points dramatically toward the left armchair.*

Louis                      Behind that armchair shall be my hiding place

Felicite                    No: for Uncle Bernard is there. He is supposed to be on his vacances at Juan-les-Pins, and not here at all!

Louis                      You are a veritable vixen, but I will obey you.

*Louis points dramatically toward the right armchair.*

Louis                      Then, I must hide behind **that** large chair.

Felicite                    Oh, no! That is where his nephew Antoine hides! He is your fiancée's brother, after all, and is thought by the family to be lecturing on curing leather in Alsace.

*Switch to someone backstage with their hands in men's shoes, clumping them on a wooden box in a rancid imitation of footsteps.*

Louis                      Where then? The footsteps approach.

*Holds up a corner of the thick tablecloth]*

Felicite                    Quick, quick, under the table, Monsieur.

*With a flourish, Louis dives under the tablecloth. Felicite stands in centre stage and looks like butter wouldn't melt: very demure.*

*The three remaining ladies come on stage from different directions.*

*In unison:*

Babette

Felicite, what have you been doing?

Claudine

Eliza

Felicite *curtsies* Polishing the silver, my ladies.

*Audience rocks with laughter.*

*Focus on Vincent, seated at the rear of the audience, laughing delightedly. Then an Egyptian servant catches Vincent's attention, and he slips from the room.*

END OF SCENE (a break in the performance)

### **III, Scene xii:** At The Oak Nut Hotel For The Theatricals, Part 2. 1931.

*Then we swing straight into the last scene of the French farce.*

*Uncle Bernard and Aunt Claudine come on from stage right arm-in-arm. They stop, hug, then share a chaste kiss.*

*In unison:*

Reunited!

Bernard

*[Move to stage left]*

Claudine

*Niece Claudine and Fiancé Louis come on from stage left arm-in-arm. They stop, hug, then chaste kiss.*

*In unison:*

Reunited!

Claudine

*[Move to stage right]*

Louis

Eliza

Ah! That naughty coquette Felicite has disappeared. I'm going to have to polish the silver since she evidently has **not** done it!

*Felicite and Antoine crawl out from under the table and remain in kneeling position. They look shyly at each other. Miles sneaks into the dining room and makes his way as discreetly as possible to the piano, which is off stage.*

Antoine                      You know Felicite that I have always loved you, even though you are only a little French maid.

Felicite                     And I you, Master Antoine, in spite of my being a serving girl in your so grand house.

*Antoine opens his arms wide.*

Antoine                     Darling!

Felicite                     Darling!

*They embrace, even though they are on their knees.*

*Miles plays a couple of grand chords on the piano, indicating finality.*

*The full cast come into centre stage and bow. There is effusive clapping as the bowing continues. The audience obviously loved the performance, bad as it was.*

*We catch Vincent returning to his seat. He joins the applause but looks as if he has seen a ghost.*

*Theresa tears out to change into a more formal gown. The cast mingle with the audience, chatting and laughing loudly. The noise continues in the background of the following conversation.*

*Roland is merry and jolly, as he takes a seat near Vincent. Roland still wears his stage makeup.*

Roland                      Vincent, my dear fellow. You look most discomposd. I trust that you have not received bad news?

Vincent *stiff upper lip*      The fact is, I've been summoned.

*Takes from his pocket a small red box, which he passes to Roland (who inspects the contents of the box and looks aghast.*

Roland *horrified*             It's your turn, then?

*The following speech by Vincent is prophetic. [Refer end of Film #3].*

*Roland passes back the red box. Vincent pockets the box as he speaks.*

Vincent                      Yes. Believe it or not, it's my turn. And you know that at the end of your narrative, you speak of darkness, fear and despair.

**When the little man handed me the box, I felt the cold hand of Death passing over my heart.**

Roland                      Surely not ....

*They are interrupted. As Martin seats himself next to Roland, Colonel Bartholemew stands before the audience, signalling for silence. Theresa sneaks quickly over to the piano, holding music for Miles.*

Bartholemew              Ladies and Gentlemen, Captain Renauld of the French Armed Forces has gallantly offered to accompany our own lovely Mrs Theresa Trilbeway as she sings a song which is very close to our hearts. And apologies to the original composers of this popular tune.

*During the song, we note that the Sultan is tapping his foot in time to the music.*

*Theresa sings, and Miles accompanies her. He is a very talented pianist.*

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>[Spoken]</p> <p>Colonel Bart and all his friends are very sad to find<br/>When digging here in Egypt no goods were left<br/>behind.<br/>Those rascals called "Graverobbers" (the men we'd<br/>love to shoot)<br/>Defied the Pharaohs' curses and made off with the<br/>loot!</p> <p>[Singing]</p> <p>They lived so long ago, we fail to gauge<br/>The monumental fashion of their age ...</p> <p>Graverobbers were men of steel<br/>Their greed was huge and their passion real</p> | <p>As soon as the corpse was cold<br/>They breached the chamber and took the gold<br/>To foreign ports where the stash was sold<br/>By Graverobbers of Antiquity.</p> <p>Big, strong and handsome -- these fearless chaps<br/>Cleared out the crypts with no Pyramid mishaps<br/>(oh!)</p> <p>Graverobbers could make you weep<br/>The Pharaoh's bounty was theirs to keep<br/>Yet they left nothing for us to reap.<br/>Those Graverobbers of Antiqu --,<br/>Graverobbers of Antiqu --,</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                  |                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| They plundered, pillaged and stole with zeal<br>Those Graverobbers of Antiquity. | G - O - A (oh!)<br>Graverobbers of Antiquity! |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|

*Applause. Pan the audience. Miles and Theresa hold hands as they bow. Martin's applause is the most appreciative.*

Martin                      Ah! Did you hear that? She called us "Big, strong and handsome"!

Roland                     Shush! Shush! Only for our ears, Leveque.

Martin                     It's alright for you! You have embraced and kissed the lovely chanteuse.

Roland *smug, droll*      One vows to serve one's country to one's best endeavour. *Ainsi, vive les rapprochements amicable française et bretagne.*  
  
*Vive l'Entente Cordiale.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene xiii:** Vincent's Bedroom in the Palace, Late At Night 1931.

[Be advised that in a sad way, Vincent here presages his fate at the end of film #3.]

*Miles, Martin and Roland stand a trifle awkwardly, averting their gaze as off camera, Vincent readies himself for bed. They all stand erect, almost braced, and in sombre mood. Roland takes a long draw on a cigar, and Martin fidgets with some object that he has picked up.*

*Vincent, dressed only in a monstrous pair of Bombay bloomers strides up to them. Now they stand roughly in a circle. Still the awkwardness.*

|                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vincent is so sure that this is the end that his "goodnight" becomes a leave-taking. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Vincent                      Roland, thank you once again for the illuminating narrative and the accompanying sketches of the tomb. I'll be prepared for whatever eventuates.

Roland *bows*              You ... you don't have to --

Vincent                      There's a box of cigars over on my dresser. You may as well have them. I don't suppose I'll get a chance to smoke them.

Martin                      Dear fellow --

Vincent                      And to you Martin, my collection of rare coins and stamps. They're at the home of my mother, just now, but if you can call for them, when you return to France...

*Martin is visibly choked with emotion.*

Vincent                      And to you, Miles ... I can give nothing but my most sincere wishes for your happiness when you wed the lovely English lady, as you no doubt shall.

Miles                      Thank you.

Roland                      You must know that the two of you looked exceptionally well together, in your so entertaining duet.

*This pronouncement meets with general agreement.*

Miles                      It was ... thank you. Very kind.

Vincent *deep breath*      If I don't ... I know that I can depend on you to ... It's time, I think. It is not in the character of the French soldier to stand back from the abyss.

*Vincent turns to Miles and salutes with great ceremony and solemnity.*

Vincent *solemn*              Captain Renauld!

*Miles returns the salute.*

*Vincent turns to Roland (who is determined to be stoic) shakes hands and they exchange the Gallic kiss.*

Vincent *to Roland*                      Lieutenant Ferrier!

*Turns to Martin, who is now dabbing his eyes and nose with a white handkerchief and sniffing audibly. Handshake, Gallic kiss then after a second's delay, a warm hug.*

Vincent *to Martin*                      Lieutenant Leveque!

I salute you all, as a man of honour, one of my most worthy companions and friend.

*With huge resolve and shaking hands, Vincent strides to the dresser, opens a little red box, removes the tiny phial which lies therein, and drops most of the contents onto his tongue, washed down with a swig of cognac. He carefully dabs at his mouth with a nearby cloth, then marches sternly to the bed. An Egyptian servant (male), openly weeps as he tucks Vincent's mozzie net in. Vincent lies on the bed, on his back, in a theatrical posture, as if death is only minutes away.*

*Except for Martin's valiant attempts to compose himself, and the noisy weeping of the servant, there is silence. Then Roland pulls himself together. He spies the servant.*

Roland *to the servant*              *Tiens!* You there! Get out, please. We will look after the lieutenant.

*The servant bows, and noisily makes his way out of the room.*

*Vincent opens one eye.*

Vincent                                      Nothing yet.

Roland                                      Give it time, old friend.

*Vincent snuggles down again.*

Miles                                        I tried to stop this ... I did!

Roland                                      Tried to stop Vincent taking that damned liquid? I didn't see you try ...



Miles                               No, no. Pardon, but before that. I tried to get it from him. We diced for it, and he won.

Martin                            You mean? ... That stuff was meant for you?

Miles *shakes head*            When he received it, during the theatre piece, I was with him. I was shocked and ... unhappy for him. I guessed what lay ahead. So, I bet him with the dice. But he rolled with luck, and so, here we are.

*Silence for a few seconds. Then quirky music is heard.*

*Then, the three officers notice that Vincent has plunged into a rapturous, sexy dream, as if being seduced by women, with much sensual moaning and wriggling. The three men look from one to the other, in alarm.*

Miles *concerned*               Consult Roland's narrative. At the end. I don't remember anything like this. Surely it was all fear and anguish?

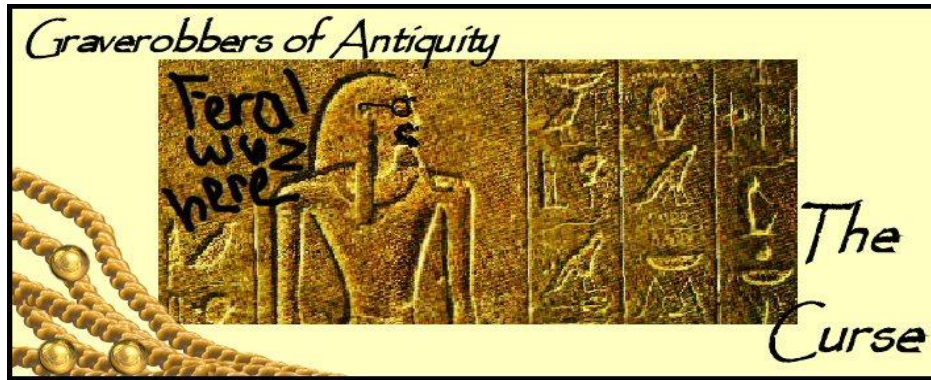
Martin *uncertain, trying to explain*   The dancing girls, *n'est-ce pas?*

*Swiftly, the men retrieve Roland's typed sheets from the bedside table, and pore over the last page. They all turn towards Vincent with surprised looks, concern mixed with disbelief.*

*Close up of Vincent smiling in his sleep: Ah!*

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT III



## ACT IV

Start of VINCENT'S FIRST EXPERIENCE (the second being in Film #3)

**IV, Scene i:** Byzantium 1500 BCE, Modra's Shop.

*Jacob is entertaining a group of five young ladies. They are babes: oversexed and underdressed, draped all over him. He is groaning happily, expressing his pleasure in the ladies' attentions.*

*From behind, we see three heavy-set men (Lion, Topper, Peewee) watching him. Suddenly, the girls notice the men and start to move away, in some fear.*

*A fourth man, Knackers #1, strolls into the scene. He speaks in a strong Cockney accent: urbane, attempting his version of charm.*

Knackers                    'ello, young Jacob. Good to see vat you're lookin' after the family business wif such energy. Good little earner, i'n it? I mean, you organize your boys, you send vem orf to the more remote corners of the known world, vey get vemselves dirty on account of all the 'ard work you give 'em to do, and ven vey come back 'ere with the loot. Which you promptly flog on the black market. Nice. Nice little racket ...

*As the girls back away, Knackers #1 signals with a head movement, and one of his henchmen starts herding the girls out.*

Knackers                      Excuse us, ladies, won't you? My lads will 'elp you to find your way back to whichever harem you've all escaped from -- if vat should prove necessary.

Jacob *affronted and angry*                      What the --? Who are you? What d'ya want?

Knackers                      Well, son. My name is actually Telzer. But most men know me as Knackers.

Jacob *confused*                      You're not Knackers!

Knackers                      Well ... yes I am, son.

*Jacob is confused. He is also becoming scared.*

Jacob                              But, I thought --

Knackers                      Vat's right what you're no doubt finkin': vat I was safely out of the way on a galley.

*[Leans forward]*

I was shafted, see? Impaled on a pike and roasted, as they say, by a man wiff a most unusual moniker.

Truth is, I got sold into slavery, young man. While you and your dear family 'ave been livin' the 'igh life in Byzantium, I been floggin' my guts out in a filthy, stinkin' galley. No better van a beast, I been.

*[Shows his biceps]*

Rowin' all day builds up your strength, son. Vat's a fact ...

*[Stands back with fake smile]*

Anyway, I didn't intend to come 'ere and be unpleasant. I can be very congenial when I try to be. And I did want to congratulate you on your business acumen, now vat you're the company director. Your dad ... I should say your *late* dad ... would 'ave

been very proud of you, he would.

Jacob *gasps in shock* Dad? What's happened to him?

Knackers Yeah, 'e'd 'ave been very, very proud ... of you, of your business skills, of your flock of girls, --

*Jacob is horrified. He stands up, looking from one man to the other. Suddenly (panic-stricken) Jacob yells for help.*

Jacob Guards! Guards, help me! Guards! Guards! Where are you?

*There is a scuffle as the henchmen lunge forward to push Jacob roughly back down into the chair.*

Knackers Now settle down, young man, settle down! No need to make all that noise! Nobody can 'ear you.

*[Leans forward]*

Modra's guards 'ave gorn. Run off, they 'ave. Vey didn't mind lookin' after Modra the father, but not so very keen on guardin' Jacob the son. Pity ...

*[Stands back]*

Yes ... as I was sayin', your lovely parents were on their 'oliday cruise, weren't vey? There they were, sailin' along. Sad what 'appened ...

Your dad's body wouldn't sink, you know, even though 'e was so weighed down with 'is jewellery. And some 'eavy chains, as well. Bobbed about in the water for a little while until the sharks came around and made a meal of 'im.

*Jacob covers his face with his hands and sobs gustily several times.*

Knackers But your step-muvver's quite safe. And your Auntie Cynthia. They're going to see if they'll enjoy their new life ... in slavery.

Jacob *total disbelief* Slavery? Oh, bullshit! No-one will want **them** for their slaves.

*Knackers slaps Jacob very hard across the face.*

Knackers                      Now that's not very nice, young Jacob. Your step-mum is a really attractive woman. Nice titties, she's got.

*[Leans forward, right into Jacob's face]*

My visit, which so far has been entirely sociable, has a serious side, I'm afraid. I want to extract a little bit of revenge, son. You ever heard of a joker called "Stiffy"? Funny name, ain't it? One of your late father's fair-haired lads, 'e'd be. Do you know 'im?

*Jacob, staring up into Knackers' face in appalled awe, nods briefly.*

Knackers *pleased*              Good! Well, your dad wouldn't tell me where this Stiffy might be found. But **you'll** tell me. I know vat **you'll** tell me where 'e is.

Jacob *gulps*                      Memphis. He and his gang are raiding a tomb in Memphis. I can give you a map.

*Knackers smiles as he strolls about, rubbing his hands together.*

Knackers                      And even a map thrown in?

Excellent! See? It's not 'ard to be a good boy, is it?

*Knackers walks off, whistling, and looking about the office with pleasant interest. Meanwhile, Jacob scrabbles around, under the close watch of the henchmen. Jacob gives a scroll to Peewee. Peewee checks it out, then nods towards Knackers. During this time, Jacob starts babbling in a useless attempt to eke out his life.*

Jacob *shaking*                      How ... how did you get away? I mean, what did you do to escape from the slave galley?

*Knackers does not answer straight away, but continues to whistle for a little while. Then he slowly turns towards the terrified Jacob.*

Knackers                      I got sprung by my loyal friends.

Jacob *weak laugh*              You were joking about Dad, weren't you? What would you want to knock him off for? He's a good man.

Knackers *laughs*                      A good man ... 'e 'ad to leave 'is native Phoenicia on account of 'is

forgin', utterin' and receivin' stolen goods. But vat's fine ... you just believe vat 'e was good if it makes you 'appy.

Jacob *shaking his head* But he's not dead -- you -- you were joking ...?

Knackers *with finality* 'e's dead. 'e was murdered by my boys because 'e wouldn't shop vat Stiffy bastard. 'E was faithful to 'is employee. Not like you. You've just tried to buy your life by offering me Stiffy. Now vat wasn't a very loyal fing to do, was it?

*[Turns to leave]*

See you in the ever-after, young Jacob.

*As he strides out, he signals to his henchmen with a nod.*

*We hear, but do not see Jacob scream and gurgle as he is murdered.*

END OF SCENE

Interruption to VINCENT'S FIRST EXPERIENCE (returning to Cairo in 1931)

#### **IV, Scene ii:** Vincent's bedroom in the Palace 1931.

*There is just enough light coming from the hallway to illuminate this scene.*

*The other three men are still in Vincent's room, heavily asleep and snoring.*

*Vincent sits up, still under the mozzie net, shoulders hunched in despair. Vincent gives a long sad sigh.*

Vincent *Mon Dieu!* That was most interesting; although how Dingo was not there to see this ...? Perhaps he is told about it at some later date?

*[Another sigh]*

Poor Modra ... Jacob I don't care about. He is the *petite merde!*

*Vincent has to fight his way out of the mozzie net and gets in a tangle. On having freed himself, he notices the other men who sleep soundly in his room. Vincent is a little put out.*

Vincent                      What are these itinerant people doing here in my room? Let them sleep in their own bedrooms. At least they give me proof that I'm not yet dead.

*Vincent wanders over to a dressing table.*

Vincent                      Where's that bottle of the *Juice of Dreams*?

*Vincent switches on a small lamp. There is a framed photograph of the four officers in military uniform, posing in the desert. He touches the glass of that photograph with his fingertips, looking wistful. Then, snapping out of his reverie, he grabs the phial from a small crystal bowl. He holds it to the light of the lamp, screwing up his eyes -- Ah!!!!*

*Vincent rushes about, whispering to himself as he does so, grabbing the bottle of cognac from the small coffee table, and trying to get some of the liquid into the phial. He spills, licks, slurps and drinks. The cognac dribbles down his chin.*

Vincent                      Is there more? Just one or two drops should put me to rights ...  
Modra must not have died in vain.

*Sucks violently on the phial, then gulps down more cognac. Smacks lips, then wipes back of hand over mouth. Climbs into bed and lies awake staring at ceiling.*

Vincent *still in his*              *Monsieur le Dingo ... it's so dark ... Dingo, can you find your way*  
*French accent*              *to the door? Debbie, can you tie them up? ... The orange smoke*  
                                         *... At least we'll be able to see ...*

*[Eyes close]*

END OF SCENE

**Continuation of VINCENT'S FIRST EXPERIENCE****IV, Scene iii:** The Antechamber And Burial Chamber Of Cheofes' Grave Memphis  
1500 BCE

*The antechamber is like a scene from an old Music Hall. The orange smokebombs continue to smoke, but in a more desultory fashion, the smoke rising in thin puffs now. Which means that the light in the antechamber is not all that bright. There is a huge pile of gravegoods, which is ignored by the guards.*

Debra takes out the guards.

*Several of the guards are attempting something which looks alarmingly like the Cygnets' Quartet from Swan Lake. The rest stand or loll about, whistling, humming or "tra-la-la-ing" some indistinguishable tune.*

*The door opens slightly and Debra rushes into the antechamber from the bigger burial chamber, with Feral's ropes over her shoulders. At this point, Debra is totally ignored by the guards and is able to tie them up. They merely laugh at her efforts, even assisting her. Tying up the dancers is difficult, but we see her at least attempt it. Dingo takes a gulp of air, then rushes in (not breathing) to finish off the rope work, swiftly and dexterously. He casts an eye over the others, then grabbing Debra, runs back in through the doorway. Once inside, he takes an enormous gulp of air.*

Dingo                      Right! We'll leave this door open but stay away from it. At least we can sort of see what we're doing ...

Debra                      I'll try to find some torches.

*There is a huge rumble, as of thunder overhead, and then the earth begins to shake violently again. Debra heads back to the antechamber for the discarded torches left in there. She will attempt to light them from the counter-curses. The guards are singing in harmony, like a choir.*

*Just as she manages to get one torch alight, and go back into the chamber, the men have gathered near the doorway with the heavier gravegoods. As Debbie collects the last of the counter-curses, and once-again bottles them, the guards begin to struggle in their bindings, and yell out. The three gangs begin to push, pull, and drag the final goods into the already very crowded antechamber. Howzat begins to bark at and bite the guards.*



*There is a sensation of the tomb twisting and turning in space. Everyone (gangs, guards, dog) is still, listening. There is an eerie electronic sound.*

*Over the next few minutes, there is a last violent attempt by the grave gods to protect the treasure, which is now almost all out in the antechamber. All these events happen over each other in swift succession. Everyone yells, screams and looks horrified. Except Feral, who is spoiling for a fight and seems to enjoy himself hugely.*

|                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The grave gods make one last violent attempt to protect the grave. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|

- A rush of fire: a firestorm, which extends into the antechamber. Some of the guards writhe in pain, but others have the ropes burned from their wrists.
- Huge Egyptian gods loom up out of the rock, trying to kill, smash, destroy anybody they can catch. These characters will be the ones we saw dancing earlier, only magnified to colossal size. Great CGI challenge here.
- A couple of gang #5's members are thrown against the rocks.
- There is a fight over the people on the ground (that is, the still-tied guards) between the freed guards and several gang members. They use huge swords. For the gang members, they acquired their swords from the tied guards.
- The earthquake splits open the chamber, leaving a gaping slit, filled with red-hot molten rock. Several guards spill over the edge, but the heroes only teeter then rebalance.
- Feral uses a golden scimitar from the gravegoods against all the gods. With clenched teeth, he hacks, punches, lunges, yelling at them: "Take that, you bastard! Ram this up your feeble arse! Have a go, mug lair!"
- Debbie and Howzat struggle with the freed guards. Chips, Socks and Curl come to their rescue. Debbie turns away, to be confronted by a weird deity which shrieks at her. Without pause, she bops it on the nose. It falls apart, weeping pathetically.
- Stiffy is in a desperate fight to the death against a couple of guards and a bevy of gods. He has taken the high ground and looks extremely heroic: strong, fit, and masculine. His loincloth now looks more like a skimpy posing pouch.
- Throw all the CGI in: make it scary, impressive, and interesting. I hate boring CGI stuff. It has to have meaning and continuity.

The heavy grave goods are now much easier to dispatch. The grave robbers can easily escape.

*The upshot is that there had been no way that the heavy stuff could have been brought to the surface. Now, however, the violent earth movements have caused the ceiling of the antechamber to explode upwards and outwards. Quickly, the gang members carry, drag, push the stuff up the hills caused by the explosion. More gang members appear from the rubble, and head towards their respective wagons. Somehow, they are dividing up the loot on the fly. The most pressing need is to get the goods into the wagons and get out. The next speeches have to be yelled: sounds of earth movements continue.*

Stiffy *breathless, bloody, almost naked*      Who've we got? Are we all here? Debbie, Howzat, Mullet, Dingo -- where's Feral?

Feral      I'm here. At least, I think I'm here.

Stiffy      Quick, quick, quick! Get this stuff on board, and then off we go.

Debra      What about the others?

*Quickly, Stiffy looks over to where two other wagons are parked. Men run around, trying to load the loot on board. There are still some minor fights going on with the guards. But it can be seen that the guards are now more interested in rescuing their bound comrades.*

Stiffy      Come on! We gotta go!

*At one of the other wagons, which has a sign "Byzantium or Bust" on its side, the same sort of activity is going-on.*

Knackers #2      We're all here. Let's hit the road!

*Chips puts the finishing touches to the packing. Sadly, he looks at the wrecked antechamber.*

Chips      Stone the flamin' crows! Fair suck of the sauce bottle! I could bite me own bum!

Knackers #2 *insulting*      Aw, mate, no-one talks like that anymore. You sound like a fogey.

*tone*

Get with the program, why don't ya?

END OF SCENE

END of VINCENT'S FIRST EXPERIENCE

#### **IV, Scene iv: Vincent's Quarters In The Palace 1931**

*It is morning. Shafts of brilliant sunlight spill into the room between the blinds. In a wicker chair Miles sleeps soundly. On a small couch Roland is curled, his head on a pillow: fast asleep. On his stomach on a makeshift bed lies Martin, snoring loudly.*

*Vincent has rolled right out of bed but is lying within the confines of the mozzie net, as if it is a trap. He starts thrashing about, yelling and shouting for help. Desperately Vincent tries to fight his way out of the mozzie net.*

Vincent                      *M'aidez! Help, help! Some brigands have captured me. I fear that they mean to sell me into slavery. Oh, durance vile! M'aidez! Help me!*

*This brings to his bedside a couple of worried servants along with the three fellow officers, who have to drag themselves out of their uncomfortable positions.*

Miles *somewhat*              Peace! Be at peace! Your bed traps you. Look! I'll untangle you.  
*amused*

Martin *laughing*              What a big fish to catch in the net!  
*delightedly*

Roland                      What the natives call a Lorent fish.

Vincent *from under the*      I'm more than happy for you gentlemen to amuse yourselves at  
*netting*                      my expense.

*Here follow sundry comments from Miles, Martin and Roland.*

Miles                      Hoop-la! Now you are free.

*Vincent lies on the floor, looking up at the ceiling. Guessing what is to follow, Roland imperiously gestures to the servants to leave the room, which they do with a quick bow.*

Vincent                      Guess what happened!

*Vincent looks eagerly at his fellow officers, who shrug.*

Vincent                      No, no guess!

Martin                      Well, I can easily see that you survived your peril which so frightened you last evening. That's always a good sign, I think.

*The others agree.*

Vincent                      Help to my feet, eh?

*The other men assist Vincent to rise unsteadily to his feet.*

Vincent                      *Merci, mes amis. Alors.* I will tell to you of the tale so far.

No Mrs Trilbeway must hear it too, as you recall that Mahala told to us.

*Vincent looks about him restlessly, as he wants to be active.*

Vincent                      Then quick quick! *Ventre a terre!* We must call on the so lovely English madame. *Immédiatement!* Move it!

END OF SCENE

#### **IV, Scene v:** The Footpath Outside The Oak Nut Hotel Cairo 1931

*Thwarted in finding Theresa at her hotel, the three French officers (Roland, Martin and Vincent) are seen to climb into a horse-drawn "taxi". (Apparently, the officers have learnt that Theresa is a guest of the Sultan). The absence of Miles will be discussed anon.*

END OF SCENE

**IV, Scene vi:** The Sultan's Magnificent Palace Cairo 1931.

*The horse-drawn "taxi" pulls into the sumptuous driveway of the Sultan's glorious palace.*

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

The three French officers are ushered into a large, covered area complete with colonnade and a marble pool with grotto attached to it. There are three solid oak tables which are covered with a collection of superb Egyptian artefacts (including jewellery). Three armed guards of obvious Arabian descent stand about to guard the treasure.

Our officers are hugely impressed. They look about in awe. Some small boys (the sons of the Sultan) swim quietly in the pool with their minders.

A tall, haughty Arabian butler approaches, bowing to the officers. They (likewise haughty) nod in response.

Arabian butler The lady will join you presently.

The butler retires to the grotto, returning with Theresa on his arm. She is dressed scantily as a harem girl, wearing a costume of old gold. The officers are stunned and arrested, even gasping at the beautiful sight of Theresa in her exotic outfit.

Mischievously, Theresa curtseys to the officers, smiling archly. They, in their turn, bow solemnly (but grin at the same time). Then, Theresa languidly surveys the bounty laid out before her, stroking some of the objects.

Theresa *matter-of-fact* The Sultan kindly instructs me to choose some few baubles that catch my eye from his extraordinary collection. His ulterior motive is that I shall dance before him in a semi-clad state, I'm sure.

The French officers are appalled and shocked.

Roland *horrified* But you will not do so!

Vincent *equally*
horrified

Madame Trilbeway! Don't fall for such a trick!

Martin *aghast*

Better to refuse the jewels in order to maintain your so precious modesty and decorum.

Theressa is almost divorced from reality. She seems to float as if a sleepwalker. Vincent looks searchingly at Roland and Vincent. Roland pouts, shrugging his shoulders. Vincent steps forward.

Vincent

You will no doubt wish to know, dearest Madame, that my trip back to other times took place in Memphis, at the site of the devastating earthquake. The colossal tomb of Cheofes which we viewed but very recently: that is where I went.

And the haul of loot was phenomenal. Indeed it was!

Theressa stops to look wonderingly at Vincent.

Roland *to Vincent*

Your other news is quite shocking, however.

Martin *to Vincent*

Reveal to Madame Trilbeway the terrible information.

Vincent nods, and steps even further forward.

Vincent

Our gallant *patron* (you will no doubt remember Modra) was viciously slain by that vile Hittite, Knackers. By his henchmen, to tell truth.

Roland *correcting*
Vincent

Monsieur Knackers was a Byzantine, rather than a Hittite. Please don't confuse the lady, Lorent.

Vincent

No, no. I am correct. This man was from Babylon ... a Hittite. At one time this wretched creature toiled as a miserable galley slave. He is the most vicious enemy of our beloved Stiffay. *La pauvre madame* must not be **further** confused, my friend.

Theressa turns to stare coldly at Vincent.

Theressa

And would it be possible to be any **more** confused than I am already, Lieutenant Lorent?

Without embarrassment to herself (but causing red-faced discomfiture amongst the gentlemen), Theresa draws a folded paper from her cleavage. She unfolds the paper in order to read it.

Theressa I've made a little list of all the points of this narrative which puzzle me.

Why does Dr Lilliban (who admits openly to care little for archaeology) fairly dog our footsteps? He has tried to quiz me and then Martin and --

Roland *eagerly* *Oui!* That same esteemed English doctor breasted me – *moi aussi!*

Theressa There! We must be especially careful of what we say in front of this suspicious gentleman. And in no event must he see your exquisite drawings, Roland.

Martin *light bulb moment* No Madame! No! All is well. The English doctor has vacated Cairo. He has gone to the Near East alone. Nobody would accompany him, so onerous is his person.

Vincent To which locale do they travel, *mon ami?*

Martin *pout and shrug* Anatolia? Or Crete ... ?

Theressa *welcoming* Ah! Now my many questions may be answered. Good afternoon, Madame.

Just at this moment, the butler re-appears, escorting Mahala into the covered area. Rather than being anti-social towards Mahala, Theresa seems to welcome her. The 2 women kiss on both cheeks in the French style. Theresa draws Mahala (who nods to each of the French officers) to sit with her on a superb Ottoman.

Vincent *awestruck* But what do you do here, *ma chère Madame?*

Mahala The Sultan welcomes my advice, my forethought. He dotes on the Tarot cards. Also, I read his horoscope that is all.

[Smiles wryly]

I don't feel it necessary to ply him with my weird concoctions, as I

do you ...

Martin *with heavy irony* They are spared for us, no?

Roland *Oui*, but what purpose could you have had with these potions?

Theressa Yes! Why did you force us to --

Mahala *touches* **You**, I forced. I'm sorry about that, my dear. But it had to be so.

Theressa's hand The three gentlemen here ... no, they drank my brew of their own accord. In fact, as I remember, you, Lieutenant Leveque almost **begged** me for the phial of potion.

Theressa But why give it to us? What could you possibly get out of it?

Mahala What did **you** get out of it?

A very strange man known to all as Professor Maurice Phantom was possessed of the belief that he had been cursed. He was crazy, that's all. Somehow a phial of this magic brew came into his possession. Did he find it in a crypt? Who knows ...

The truth is that Phantom in his last days became busy handing samples of his concoction out to all manner of people, babbling on about five men and six women, or some such trash. He became manic, as if he were on a mission from God to dole out the stuff.

Do you know what it is, that stuff? It is just nothing. A tisane of herbs, with a pinch of this and a drop of that. I sipped this concoction too: nothing!

My servants, my visitors, and all other souls ... they sipped it to no effect. Null. Not one crazy dream or vision did any of us have: nothing. Not even a slight headache.

Except for its effects on the four of you, it is just a quaint beverage.

Martin & Vincent *Quoi?*

together

Theressa Wait a bit! Are you *really* saying that those phials of "drug" that we've been taking are nothing but a nonsense?

Mahala *nods* So it would seem. Yet Phantom had been so insistent ... His story should be a nonsense, but perhaps not. Forces darker than mine appear to have been at work. I decided to use it (and you!) for my own purposes.

Vincent Which are?

Mahala Add up the current value of every precious object that you found when you scabbled in the dirt of ancient Egypt. An eye-popping total no doubt. But all of that money cannot in any way cover the monumental value of the Chain of Ra.

It is a gold chain, studded with brilliant diamonds, with the Eye of Ra containing a priceless ruby.

I know that ... the unctuous Dr Lilliban knew that ... and our lately deceased Professor Phantom knew that.

Theressa And his body ... Where is the Professor's body?

Mahala I am the most astounded person in Cairo as to where the Professor's remains sped off to. I do not know. That is sure. I do not know.

Vincent *very confused* I fail to understand what --

Mahala *imploring* We are all lost here. But my firm belief is that Captain Renauld holds the key. If only he would come to me and take the potion ...

Music: haunting, mysterious.

Theressa You mean, of course, that Chain of Ra which appears on the wall of Anoheth's tomb, in the painting of the pharaoh? The one Bartholemew showed me?

Mahala Exactly! I want it. And the Duc Renault will not discuss the current whereabouts with me.

Martin *all at sea* Stiffay? You think he took it?

Mahala Do you recall that Debra was strip-searched by those rapacious women under the guise of being dressed-up for the games?

Roland *blushing* Pardon, Madame! Do not embarrass Madame Trilbeway like this.

Mahala And that cunning Modra. He questioned the contents of the wagon. Was anything left behind? Do you remember that?

Martin Of course! You are correct; he did! He was insistent that everything be catalogued. And ... yes! yes! We had to tell him in graphic detail of how the lovely Debra and the so-clever dog cleared out the crypt. It all rings true! Modra was after --

Mahala The most prized possession: the ruby and diamond chain of Ra. Where is it? Who has it? I want the noble Captain to tell me to my face that he knows now where it is.

Theressa *soothing* Madame, Captain Miles Renault did not take your potion (or rather, Phantom's potion), and nor is it likely that he ever will. There must be another way.

A long silence ensues as they look from one to the other. Then they walk about a little, all deep in thought.

Mahala There is a curse at work. Nothing could be clearer.

My dear friends and fellow-travellers, I must leave you now for my session with the Sultan.

Please try to persuade your Captain to reconsider his refusal to deal with me. You all want to find out what transpired, don't you? His mystic vision may answer all our questions, if only he has that dream.

Theressa Of course. But --

Mahala I'll leave it in your hands. Farewell to you all.

Mahala bows stiffly to the party, turns on her heel and marches off, in company with the butler.

The scene closes with the friends deep in thought.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene viii: Twilight, The Oak Nut Hotel And The Palace Cairo 1931.

No music. Our camera is placed at a distance. We switch between the two scenarios.

At the Oak Nut Hotel:

The English sit on their balcony, sipping wine in the twilight. There is desultory conversation, not clearly heard.

Theressa seems to be a long way off.

At the Palace:

The French officers play billiards and drink snifters of brandy as they smoke cigars. They speak indifferently of other things. Again, the conversations are distanced, so we cannot make them out. Slowly, the officers head off to bed.

END OF SCENE

IV, Scene ix: Night, Mahala's House 1931.

In the dark, Mahala is asleep. She snores, then awakens suddenly.

Horse's hooves can be heard coming from the ground outside.

Mahala scrambles about in the dark. In the only shaft of light, near the doorway, stands the proud, very masculine Captain Miles Renauld. Two servants hover nearby. When Mahala sees him, she gasps in minor exaltation mixed with reverence.

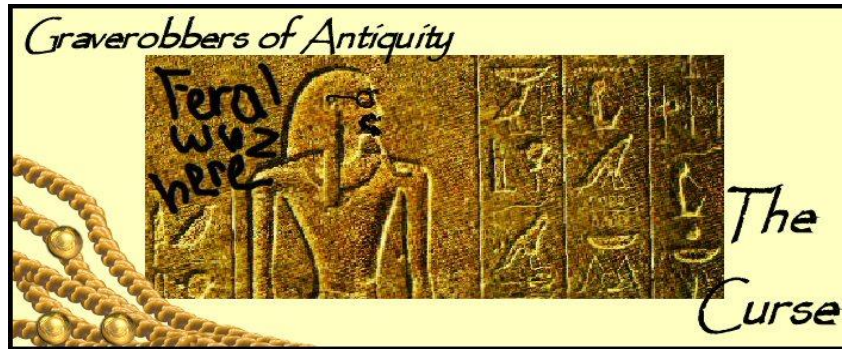
Miles (wooden faced) bows slightly.

Miles I apologize for this unseemly entrance. It has been brought to bear upon me that more hangs in the balance than just my precious pride.

Madame, you know just how this must pass, that which must be undertaken.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT IV



ACT V

Start of MILES'S EXPERIENCE

The second film "French Touch", ACT II, scene vi previews this activity. Stiffy and the other footballers are having their "photo" taken (via a clay tablet) having won the Leather and Pigskin footy premiership. Stiffy mentions therein that following their training run they will head for Byzantium to sort things out.

V, Scene i: Heading for Byzantium, At Sea, 1500 BCE

The Mediterranean Sea. The boys stand on the bow of a large boat, hair wind-blown, looking out to sea, as the waves chop about the boat.

No music: just the sound of the wind, and the boat sliding through the waves.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene ii: Knackers, Lion and Topper, Also At Sea 1500 BCE

Knackers #1 and his boys are on board a fighting ship. The ship has dropped anchor at the neck of a strait. Rocky land can be seen to port and starboard.

By the look on Knackers's face, he is fed-up with his chief henchman, Lion, who stands at his right elbow. They have evidently been having a disagreement. The other henchmen, Topper and Peewee, stand back.

Knackers #1 controls his temper and takes a deep breath.

Knackers #1 Vey don't yet know vat you've slit Modra's froat under my orders.
 So veir destination will still be Byzantium. Which means vey'll sail
 right frough this 'ere strait. No other way for 'em , is vere?

 And we'll see 'em, and we'll 'ave 'em.

Lion *nods* Yep, that makes good sense, what you're sayin'.

Knackers #1 *sarcastic* Fank you, Lion. It's good to 'ear vat you've finally been payin'
 attention.

Lion I only meant, when I interrupted you --

Knackers #1 *angry* Ven don't interrupt me, Lion. It's not polite, it's not nice and I
 don't like it.

Lion Sorry, old cock.

Long pause.

Lion *blurts out* Squizzy.

Knackers #1 stares at Lion, stunned.

Knackers #1 What?

Lion Squizzy. Leader of Gang #5. Ve Eagle Boys. Squizzy.

Knackers #1 *testy,* I know which gang vat Squizzy's leader of! I know vat!
impatient What about 'im?

Lion 'E shopped ya.

Not Stiffy.

Knackers #1 *shocked* You told me vat it was **Stiffy** who sold me over to vem rogues in
surprise ve galley. I distinctly remember vat it was **you**, Lion. **You** told me.

Nobody else. You.

Lion *ashamed*

I meant Squizzy. I get 'em mixed up.

Knackers #1

'Ow could you **possibly** get Stiffy and Squizzy mixed up? Stiffy is a young man in the very prime of 'is life: fit, strong, affletic. Whereas Squizzy is a middle-aged hulk wiff only one eye!

Lion

Vat don't change ve fact vat it was Squizzy who shopped ya.

Knackers #1

So where is 'e?

Lion

Squizzy? I dunno, Knackers.

Topper sidles up to the left elbow of Knackers #1. He twitches Knackers' sleeve.

Topper

'E'll be comin' frough 'ere just like Stiffy, Knackers. In a boat. Wiff all the loot on board.

Knackers #1

Why do you say "just like Stiffy"? Vey 'aven't done the same job, 'ave they?

Topper

Yeah, that's it, they 'ave. All free gangs done the Memphis gig. I seen the rosters on the wall in Modra's office. That no-good Jacob mixed 'em up, and 'e sent all three gangs to the same place: Memphis.

Lion

So Squizzy and all vem'll be coming frough 'ere together, like?

Topper *nods*

Yeah. Funny, really ...

Knackers #1

'ow so?

Topper

Well ... In Modra's shop, there was 6 pegs on the wall.

On pegs 1 and 3, Modra 'ad put a little wreath, made out of olive leaves. About so small that it would fit in the palm of a man's 'and.

I was there one day organizing to get 'old of some 'orse dope when up rocks Gang #2's wagon. No-one was drivin' it, see, but the 'orses were cloppin' along. The bodies of gang #2 were draped over what was left of the cargo. I swear that without a

moment to think about it, or to ponder 'is losses, Modra takes down the slate from peg number 2, smashes it to pieces, then 'angs another little wreath up on the 'ook where the slate 'ad been. And all the while, 'e keeps up 'is end of the conversation. That's a fact.

What I'm sayin' is that I saw the rosters what Modra done. They was all right and tight.

But when we did the hit on Jacob, I noticed that they'd been dicked with. And I fought: "Funny, vem 3 remainin' gangs is all doin' the same gig."

Lion and Knackers #1 hardly move while this monologue progresses. They stare out to sea. After a few seconds, Lion begins to scratch and fidget. Lion is trying hard to understand. It is a bit hard for him.

Lion So it's alright, then?

Knackers #1 Let's 'ope so, Lion. We might be killin' several birds wiff one big stone, 'ere. Nice work, Topper. And you're forgiven (for the moment), Lion.

END OF SCENE

| |
|--|
| <p>Here follows a collation of scenes which concern our boys fighting the Minoan Pirates.</p> |
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V, Scene iii: The Three Gangs Heading For Byzantium 1500BC

Three utilitarian boats plough through the Mediterranean Sea in a formation, such that they are at shouting distance from each other. On board each boat is a wagon and a few strong horses, along with Carthaginian seamen.

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| Boat #1 = Stiffy and his Gang #6 "The Punic Pubics" |
| Boat #2 = Squizzy and his Gang #5 "The Eagle Boys" |
| Boat #3 = Chips and his Gang #4 "Bunch of Fives" |

On boat #1, Gang #6 and assorted Carthaginian seamen stare out towards the horizon. The sound of creaking boards, ropes and the waves slapping the hull are the only sounds to be heard. All the sailors have Australian accents.

Sailor I've got a funny feeling. Something's wrong.

Dingo What?

The sailor shakes his head and sucks in his breath.

Sailor Dunno. I just got a feeling ...

A carrier pigeon flutters up, and lands on the sail. The members of Gang #6 look up at it.

Mullet *to Howzat* Hey, dog! You sit very quiet now, and don't upset the bird.

Howzat obeys but looks like he would rather be in the action. Mullet whistles gently and clicks his fingers invitingly. The bird eyes him for a few seconds, then flaps down onto his wrist.

Mullet *gently* That's the way.

[Strokes the bird to settle it]

What've you got for us, eh, little fella?

Mullet manages to carefully extract a tiny scroll of parchment from the small leather message holder strapped to the bird's leg. He cannot read, so he wordlessly hands the scroll to Stiffy. Then Mullet tosses the bird into the air, and it flies off.

Stiffy *reads aloud* To Stiffy: Modra and Jacob dead STOP Progress Byblos meet
Knackers FULL STOP.

Stiffy (confused) looks up from the scroll. He looks at the other men.

Stiffy Which Knackers? And who sent this?

Mullet Ya mean Modra's really dead?

Stiffy Apparently. Shit ...

Stiffy walks briskly up to the bow, climbing up as high as he can. With his hands around his mouth, Stiffy shouts across the water to the other boats.

Stiffy Modra is dead. Repeat: Modra is dead. Progress Byblos. Repeat: Progress Byblos.

Someone on the second boat waves a scarf over their head. Then we hear Stiffy's message being repeated in the distance to the third boat. A scarf waves on the third boat. Stiffy covers his forehead and eyes with one hand, overcome.

Dingo Modra dead? Do we know how?

Stiffy Nup.

Stiffy moves off, mastering his feelings.

Dingo Bloody shame.

Stiffy Yep.

Another carrier pigeon appears, and alights on the bow, just where Stiffy had been. Mullet looks at the group of men, shrugs his shoulders and heads off to retrieve the new message.

Dingo *hopeful* Might be a recall on that last message ...

We next see Mullet handing the next note to Stiffy, whilst holding the bird gently in the other hand.

Mullet There y'are. Hope it's better news than last time.

Stiffy Thanks ... so do I.

Stiffy unrolls the second scroll and sighs audibly. He then reads aloud.

Stiffy *appalled* To Stiffy: Knackers loose STOP escaped galley STOP intent murder you FULL STOP.

Oh, shit! Double shit, and triple shit!

Dingo *wondering* Must be the **other** Knackers ...

Dingo nods his head in the direction of the second boat.

Dingo You gonna pass that on?

Stiffy is barely able to control his anger.

Stiffy *fuming* No, mate, I'm not. That turd needs a witch doctor to bring him to his senses. What dickhead told him that **I'd** shafted him? I don't know who did, but it wasn't me!

[Thinking, then with decision]

When we get to Carthage, we flog the goods.

Feral Who to?

Stiffy Anyone. We're free now that Modra and Jacob have gone on. We owe allegiance to no-one. And at some time I have to deal with Knackers (whichever bloody Knackers he is!)

Deb and I'll get hitched, then piss off for a quick honeymoon.

Dingo *grins* You're gonna be busy, old son.

There is a tension in the way the sailors watch the horizon. The members of gang #6 stand at the portside railings. They cannot make out any change from before. The sailors, however, are alert, on edge. One of the pirates points to the horizon. The Master points likewise.

Master *yells* Pirates!

Stiffy See something?

Master I know them well, in the worst way.

Minoan pirates, they are. They've taken over a huge galley from Hyksos. Bet your balls that'll be them. After your loot.

Mullet But we've never been attacked by pirates before. Never even looked like it.

Master Well, you are now, mate.

The Master heads off to another part of the boat.

Feral *dismissive* Aw ... Chances are they're just sailing by and won't touch us.
Right?

Everyone looks at Feral as if he's from Mars.

Stiffy We've always had Modra's cloak of safety over us. Until now. He paid off the pirates, the outlaws, the naysayers, the shonks ... He organized wagons, horses, fast ships. He bought us protection at ports and in cities. And he's gone. So we're as exposed as newborns.

[Bitterly]

If anyone sees any more pigeons, I give you leave to top 'em.

Stiffy walks purposefully towards the Master. From a short distance, we see that the Master and Stiffy confer animatedly, with the result that the Master nods and shakes hands with Stiffy. The Master turns to another sailor, who proceeds to run a yellow flag with a red X on it up a short flagpole. In answer, boat 2 and then boat 3 follow suit.

Dingo *full of respect* The Carthaginian manoeuvre! Good call, Stiff.

Stiffy shrugs, resignedly. Many male hands appear to pat Stiffy on the shoulders.

Stiffy What else have we got?

END OF SCENE

V, Scene iv: Farewell To Debra

In a tiny cabin, Debra lies on couch, bored and twisting some silk between her fingers.

Stiffy enters, closes the door behind him, and lowers his frame onto the couch. He takes Deb's hand and strokes it gently.

Stiffy We've got trouble on the horizon. Minoan pirates. They call

themselves Sea People. So you stay here. Mullet and his dog will guard you. You've got my moneybag, so you won't go short if anything drastic happens. Not that I think it will.

Debra Are we still going to Byzantium? I thought I heard you yelling out something about Byblos ...

Stiffy Yeah, well, I dunno where we're going. We'll try for Byblos. All depends on how smart these Minoans are ...

They caress each other, stroking. Stiffy leans down and gathers her to him in a lovely warm kiss. He tries to sound cheerful.

Stiffy Did you look inside the moneybag?

[Debra shakes her head]

There's something in there for you.

Debra gets up, drags the money bag out of a locked chest, and spills the contents of it onto the couch. A heavy gold and ruby necklace or chain winks in the light. The Chain of Ra!

Debra *gasps* It's so beautiful ...

Stiffy In the antechamber, when no-one was looking I carefully unwound the bandages of the Anoheth corpse and pinched this. I reckon I got away with it, too. I did the bandages up again, nice and tight, and no-one the wiser.

Debra You know what, I had a funny feeling at Modra's place that Ulpia and her sister were looking through my robes. Do you think they were looking for this chain? That they thought I had it?

Stiffy Sure. I always thought that Modra had a dark side, that he pretended to trust us, but didn't. It was bloody tricky, finding a nice, safe hiding place for that thing. Picked it up later after the games.

Debra Will there be any further trouble with it?

Stiffy Nah! Modra's gone. Nobody'll say "boo". Alright, it's yours. Keep it to wear on your wedding day. See you in Byblos.

They kiss again, but this time it is a really passionate thing. Then they hug, both realizing that this might be the last time that they do so. Then Stiffy turns to go.

Debra bites her lip, frightened that she has lost Stiffy forever. Her hands pour the Chain of Ra through her fingers over and over again.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene v: The Carthaginian Manoeuvre

Stiffy marches out onto the deck, buttonholing Mullet on his way. Mullet nods, and commands Howzat to stay with him.

Feral has what looks like zinc cream thickly applied to nose and cheeks. Dingo and Feral have strapped thick belts around their waists and tucked heavy daggers into them. Stiffy grabs a belt and quickly buckles it around himself, pushing short sword and scimitar in under the leather. The boys give a brisk wave to the boat's Master, then dive off the side of the boat. Mullet watches, with Howzat very excited, almost ready to leap into the water after them.

The three men swim strongly towards boat #2, which is Squizzy/Gang #5's boat. As they clamber up rope ladders to come aboard, we see four members of gang #4 also clambering aboard, from the other side: Donger, Socks, Curl and Knackers.

The boats which they have deserted (boat #1 and boat #3) head off directly to Byblos. Boat #2 (which now has these 7 extra men on board) turns towards the galley. All the men gather on the bow of boat #2: looking big, strong, armed to the teeth and grim-faced.

The men are comprised of: Stiffy, Squizzy, Feral, Dingo, Fergus, Callum, Archie, Donger, Socks, Curl and Knackers #2.

[Mullet had to stay with Debra and Howzat on boat #1, and Chips couldn't swim.]

END OF SCENE

V, Scene vi: Knackers #1, Lion And Topper, Revisited

When SnackBloke comes on the scene, we hear canned applause and a chant of "SnackBloke, SnackBloke" as if he is a cult hero. He waves to the camera as he rows up.

[See also Film #2, during Dorothea's dream, and Film #3, during the Leather and Pigskin footy game.]

Knackers #1 and his boys are still on board the fighting ship, and still at anchor.

Peewee, Topper and Lion are playing a board game with ivory pieces and ivory dice. They seem to be passing time rather than enjoying themselves.

Knackers #1 is studying papyrus charts.

There is a call from one of the sailors. Peewee jumps up to look over the side of the ship.

Peewee Chickenboat coming alongside, boss. D'ya want to buy any chicken?

Lion and Topper also get up and take a look at the small boat. However, Knackers is not one bit interested.

Knackers Tell 'em to naff off.

SnackBloke (from his small boat) calls out. His words are unintelligible as he makes dramatic hand gestures. Peewee translates SnackBloke's patter for Knackers.

SnackBloke Till nick at boss ... sum dead Mod.

Peewee Vis joker ain't 'ere just to sell chicken, Knackers. He 'as news for ya.

Knackers continues to study his charts uninterrupted.

Knackers What news?

We hear but do not see SnackBloke. Peewee, Lion and Topper hang over the side of the ship, listening intently.

SnackBloke *voice off* Ig fen go Mod. Sum dead no bot. Hen Bloss.

Peewee turns back to Knackers, still totally engrossed in his charts and maps.

Peewee He tells me vat someone got ve news to Modra's boys vat vey couldn't go to Byzantium. So now vey are headin' towards Byblos.

Lion *uncertain* So vey won't pass by 'ere, I s'pose ...

Knackers still does not drag his attention from the maps.

Knackers #1 You're right on ve money again, Lion. Vey won't be passing by 'ere.

We are in fact waitin' in ve wrong spot, gentlemen.

Topper, get our ship's captain to weigh anchor and make for Byblos wiff all good speed.

Topper nods and heads off quickly.

Knackers #1 Peewee, 'as our little SnackBloke gorn yet?

SnackBloke *voice off* Sum dead no bot. Ig fen go Mod. Hen Bloss.

Peewee No, 'e's still 'ere.

Knackers #1 Ven grab a couple of snackpacks and 'alf a chicken off 'im, will ya?

Lion holds out a hand for money, which Knackers provides from a nearby moneybag.

Lion 'E's got jellied stingrays, goats' cheese and pickled eggs as well.
Shall I get ya some?

Knackers #1 If ya like.

Knackers looks up for the first time.

Knackers #1 Does 'e 'ave coleslaw?

Lion What? What's vat?

Knackers shakes his head and returns his full attention to the maps.

Knackers #1

Doesn't matter ...

END OF SCENE

V, Scene vii: Fighting The Pirates, From Boat #2

Back to exactly the same scene as we left the 11 men on the bow of boat #2, armed and ready for action.

Fiery spears are hurled from behind our 11 men over their heads towards the pirates, and in answer come globs of fiery, sparking tar, falling on the deck of boat #2. At the same time, a huge shadow spreads over them. It is the shadow of the bow of the pirate galley.

There is a huge roar from the men, and they launch themselves forward, into the camera.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene viii: Fighting The Pirates, On The Decks Of The Galley

Next, our 11 boys are scurrying up the sides of the pirate galley by whatever means they can.

| |
|--------|
| Fight. |
|--------|

Fight, fight, fight. The pirates fight back, but our men quickly gain the upper hand. Loads of action by the 3 gangs, sword fighting, general fighting and wrestling. If comic, go for it.

Dialogue is whatever fits the action. After a few minutes, it is clear that Modra's troops are well on top. The men start tying-up the vanquished pirates.

Stiffy looks utterly heroic as he hangs from a mast by holding a rope.

Stiffy *triumphant*

We have the ship, men! Don't release the slaves until we reach Byblos.

END OF SCENE

V. Scene ix: The Lower Decks Of The Galley: The Slaves

Next, we see Feral, Curl and Archie descending wooden steps from the deck down to the galley, where the enchained oarsmen are situated. They draw back at the stench and make appropriate comments/faces.

The scene downstairs will be just like that from the film "Ben Hur". No need to describe it otherwise.

When our three men reach the galley, the slave-masters stand with whips in hand, surprised and unsure what to do.

Curl *stage-fright*

Er ... Stand down, youse blokes. We want to speak to the slaves.

All the slaves have stopped rowing. Reluctantly, the slave masters shamle off, up the wooden ladder to the upper deck.

Curl

Um ... thanks for giving me your ... er ... attention. I ... ah ...

Archie (*South African accent*)

We have gold, gold, gold. All we need to do is get that gold to Byblos, and with your help, men, we can do it.

So here's the deal: You row us at your own speed to Byblos.

There'll be no whips, no punishments.

When we get to Byblos, you'll all be freed from your chains, and paid a small amount to start your new life with. That is to say, your slavery is at an end.

There is complete silence. Curl and Archie look around, surprised (they expected excitement and applause). Now they focus on Feral, as if seeking inspiration.

[Of course, it was Mullet who earlier suffered the "mouse-in-pie" jape, courtesy of Dingo; however, Feral was duly shocked to find that that same trick had previously been tried on him ... twice! That's why he now brings up the vexed subject of "mice".]

Feral raises his arms to call for silence, which is ridiculous, because you could hear a pin drop. Feral takes command of the situation in his own inimitable way.

Feral Settle down ... come on, just settle down!

 Bit of shoosh up the back, youse blokes!

 Now ...

 I've had a gutful, I really have. I'll tell youse that right now!

 I've blown up empty sheep and eaten mice.

 I've been attacked by grave gods, ghosts, armed guards, pirates
 and --

Curl Sand flies?

Feral Yeah! Sand flies.

 So youse blokes just get rowing and do the best you can.

 When we hit shore, there's beer, rum, women and food.

[Rousing]

 Let's get cracking, boys!

After a moment's silence, when the slaves look from one to the other, nodding, they let out a huge roar of exuberance, and start rowing with a will.

Feral looks at the stunned Curl and Archie, then winks at them broadly.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene x: The Rescue, On The Deck Of The Pirate's Galley

The roar of the slaves is heard from below. Stiffy supervises the capture of the pirates, and shakes hands with the other gang members. He looks around. Stiffy turns to address a pirate whom Callum is tying up.

Stiffy Where's the ship's master?

The pirate nods head in the direction of the door.

Pirate Locked in his cabin.

Stiffy What is he? A gutless wonder?

Pirate No, smartarse. He's got a headache.

Stiffy gives him a quizzical look.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene xi: Continuing The Rescue, In The Cabin Of The Pirate's Galley

Stiffy bursts into the cabin of the pirate ship's master.

The ship's Master is seated at his table, his elbows resting on the table, and his head in his hands. He is visibly shaken.

Before him, leaning over the table are Ulpia and Cynthia, angrily haranguing him.

Ulpia ... how are we supposed to take a bubble-bath in that? There's no vanity, no mirror, no proper --

Both Ulpia and Cynthia look around towards the door as Stiffy enters.

Ulpia Oh! Hello there, Stiffy!

[Back to the harangue]

-- no proper toilet, and I have to have **soft** toilet paper, not that sandpaper bumscrub that you provide for your guests.

Cynthia And haven't youse blokes never **heard** of **soap**? Those rowers

downstairs absolutely **pong!**

Ulpia By the way, the wine you served with dinner last night was totally substandard.

[To Cynthia]

That's my word of the day: "substandard".

Cynthia is vicious. She addresses the Master with venom.

Cynthia My word of the day is "**slave-driver**".

Stiffy to the Master Come on, mate. You're under arrest.

The Master looks up. He is thoroughly destroyed by the female tirade.

Master *whispers* Thank you, thank you.

As the poor man rises unsteadily to his feet, Stiffy ties his wrists in chains. The master does not resist his incarceration.

Stiffy Ladies! You've been rescued.

Ulpia *put out* Well, it's about time, Stiffy.

Stiffy Lady Ulpia ... I'm real sorry about Modra.

Ulpia And where's my mourning garb, Stiffy? Didn't youse bring it with ya? You know how great I look in black!

Cynthia This slave galley is lower than a snake's freckle. I'm gonna complain about this.

Ulpia Yeah, we're not coming back **here** again.

Come on, Cynth. I can hear Squizzy's voice. He's always been a real comfort to me in my grief.

Stiffy cannot help himself. He looks innocent.

Stiffy What grief?

Both ladies give Stiffy very speaking looks, then totter off. The Master almost sobs.

Master *shaken, broken* Poor Modra. What a happy man he must be now ...
voice

Stiffy But he's dead!

Master *nods,* Exactly!
knowledgeable

END OF SCENE

V, Scene xii: Finish-Off The Encounter With The Pirates

At sea on the Mediterranean. The camera takes long shot of the pirate galley, with the oars rowing in sync, sails blowing full and catching the wind.

Alongside the pirate galley sails boat #2 (not nearly so impressive). It potters along in the galley's wake.

Music: heroic, seafaring.

END OF SCENE

| |
|--|
| END OF MELANGE OF SCENES related to the Carthaginian manoeuvre and rescue. |
|--|

V, Scene xiii: 1500BC, On The Wharf At Byblos.

So here we have a huge hulking galley, oars shipped. With it, there are 3 smaller sail boats; all are tied up at the dock. They are being unloaded by an army of men, around whom stand a phalanx of heavily armed guards, facing the crowds which have gathered. The stevedores use some very primitive mechanical aids, ropes, nets, camels, asses, horses and slaves (not the galley slaves).

Closer to the camera, Gang #6, Debbie and Howzat are standing about. Stiffy reads the pigeon messages again and scratches his head.

Stiffy Well, I've gotta meet with old Knackers to sort out Modra's cargo, now that Modra's dead, but I'm gonna also get knocked-off by Knackers the former galley-slave. Or his boys might neck me, maybe.

 Either way, I'm hungry, so I gotta eat, and I wanna get married.

Dingo Yeah, now you mention it, I'm hungry too.

Mullet Why don't you and Deb get married, then we'll all eat at your wedding breakfast.

Stiffy Great! Who do we get to perform the wedding service?

Feral A local justice'll do it. Sling him a couple of shekels.

Debra There's some market stalls down that street. We can pick up a nice wedding ring.

Feral *enthusiastic* Let's all get a ring! We're loaded with gold, aren't we? I fancy one of them pinky-rings with a rock in it.

Dingo Why not? Come on!

They disappear from shot, but the camera stays focused on the activity on the dock. There is an almighty shout of joy from the galley, then the now-freed galley-slaves appear, hobbling or running down the gangplank, and tearing off in great joy.

Bring camera up, and we can see (over the ship and sails) the fighting ship of Knackers #1 coming into the port.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene xiv: 1500BC, Down A Crowded Alleyway In Byblos.

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*The alleyway is narrow, and full of bustling life, camels, goats, etc. Outside a middle-Eastern doorway stand Feral, Mullet, Dingo and Howzat. Stiffy and Debbie (it's vital that she's **not** wearing Chain of Ra, as Knackers cannot know where it is) come out of the doorway into the sunlight, beaming and gripping hands. The boys happily throw flower petals over the happy couple. Howzat jumps about, barking.*

The men kiss Debby, and Howzat jumps up for a pat.

Feral Well! Time for tucker.

Mullet There's a food stall or five just up this alleyway here.

The party is seen to wander about in a picturesque, atmospheric market.

They stop at a pokey shop in the market, with steaming cauldrons in the front. As before, people in interesting costumes stand around talking or arguing, and some with donkeys or camels wander past. Stiffy (who still has flower petals on his head and shoulders from the wedding ceremony which we did not see) grabs a slate which is hanging on a hook near the open door. He skims his eyes over it. An old bent, gnarled man shuffles forward.

Stallkeeper What's your choice, Mister?

Stiffy hands the slate over to Mullet.

Stiffy Yeah, I'll have a number 26 and the missus'll have a number 18.

Mullet shrugs his shoulders then hangs the slate back on its hook.

Debra What have you ordered for me?

Stiffy It's a rice dish. You'll like it. Got a sticky sweet sauce on it.
Women go for that, don't they?

Mullet Yeah, I'll have the same as him, thanks.

Debra So then, what are you two going for?

Mullet Hot spiced fish with dough balls. Burns your tongue off.

Debbie makes a face.

The men dig out some shekels and pay the stallkeeper. They are all handed rough bark bowls filled with steaming food, and wooden spoons. The man also gives them drinks. The 3 start eating hungrily.

Feral and Dingo turn up, already eating some similar dishes with gusto, and sweating from the face. Howzat sniffs about, especially at the doorway of a shop opposite. He starts making interesting dog noises. Mullet has sweat pouring off his brow and nose. When he speaks, his mouth is full of food.

Mullet Someone's watching us from that shop over the road.

Likewise, sweating profusely. Eyes flick up then down quickly.

Stiffy Yeah. I can see him, too. Let the dog keep him right there for a minnie.

Feral, still eating, starts to move backwards, secretly watched by Dingo.

Stiffy is still eating. He whispers to Debra.

Stiffy Deb, finish your dinner, then go back quickly to the place where we just got hitched. Go up to the rooms I've booked, and have a rest there. I'll join you when I can.

Debra *bites lip* You ... you're alright, aren't you?

Stiffy *surprised at the question* Yeah, sure. I want to finish a few odd jobs before I concentrate on the honeymoon.

They share a long kiss, and Stiffy looks lovingly at her, stroking her arm.

Stiffy You taste good. That sweet sauce ...

[Licks lips and smiles lovingly at his bride. He is so close to her that the others can't hear him]

Get going, love, and I'll ... no, I'll come with you, to make sure that you're alright.

As Debra flits off, and Stiffy quickly follows, the 4 men square up to the doorway. Howzat now barks in earnest. The man, Knackers #3 (whom we are yet to meet) steps from the shadows and makes an elegant bow.

Knackers #3 Gang #6, the Pubic Punics, I bid you welcome back to Byblos.

The three men relax and shake hands with Knackers.

Feral G'day, Knackers. Long time, no see. Why all the secrecy?

Knackers #3 Ha! You spotted that, did you? Just a few chaps might be keen to see yours truly underground.

Dingo We've all made enemies in our time, mate.

Knackers #3 Exactly so! Follow me. I have a very private courtyard at our disposal.

Mullet Hey! Did you send the pigeon notes?

Knackers #3 Yes, I did. I thought that was obvious.

Feral Y'ever thought about getting into racing pigeons? I know a bloke from --

Knackers #3 Where's Stiffy? I was sure that I saw him ... ?

Dingo Yeah, he's here. Well, he was. Oh, I know: he's taken Debs back to the Bed and Breakfast.

Feral If we go to the private courtyard, how'll he find us?

The men wander off.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene xv: General Chase Scene: A Hue and Cry For Stiffy On Several Fronts 1500BC

| |
|---|
| <p>This is the obligatory chase scene involving Stiffy running through the market in Byblos. Chasers: the Sea People and Knackers #1 et al.</p> |
|---|

It starts with Stiffy receiving another of Knackers #3's messenger pigeons. Stiffy snatches the bird as it hovers over his head, retrieves the message, reads it, nods to himself, chucks bird and message away, and then heads off (at speed) back into the thick of the market.

From then on, he keeps bumping into people who are after him: first it is Squizzy, then a large contingent of male Sea People, who are after the fabulous Chain of Ra. Then it is Knackers #1 along with Topper, Lion and Peewee who pursue Stiffy. This should all be exciting, funny and breath-takingly luscious (scenery-wise).

Stiffy stands out of breath at the waterside, gulping in great breaths. He slakes his hand across his brow, flicking off a spray of sweat and then turns to the camera.

Stiffy Will ya just take a decko at that! What a corker of a day to be out on the water.

Then Stiffy takes a quick look behind him as a throng of people race towards him. He whispers "Shit!" and then dashes off.

| |
|---------------------------|
| Stiffy confronts Squizzy. |
|---------------------------|

Squizzy bobs up in the busiest part of the market, wearing a very frightening African tribal mask. Stiffy pulls up short at the sight of it; Squizzy adds to the aura of fear by jiggling about making outrageous noises. Stiffy dodges about, with Squizzy blocking his exit. Then, just as Stiffy grabs for a nearby spear with which he intends to impale Squizzy, the latter rips off the mask, laughing heartily. Stiffy relaxes, grinning in spite of himself. Squizzy pokes Stiffy annoyingly in the shoulder, as he continues to laugh.

Squizzy *insulting* I had you there, you big girl! Have you wet your panties, Sunshine? Give us the Chain of Ra and I'll hide it for you. No worries!

Stiffy *ignoring the* I'd love to stay here and chat with you, Squizz, on the subjects of

insults jewellery and incontinence. But unfortunately, most of the men on this planet (and a good few of the women) are after my guts to make strings for their lyres ... So ... see ya!

Stiffy leaps out of Squizzy's way, swings back and drops Squizzy with a well-timed punch, then Stiffy continues running.

Stiffy (still running) is joined by Chips and Donger. There is much athletic agility shown herein.

It is all about running to escape. Stiffy manages to meet up with Chips and Donger. They run with him, over walls, onto rooves, through the houses of startled folk (the usual stuff of filmic chases).

Now the 3 men are threatened by a grave god.

An escaped grave god suddenly looms up out of the dark alleys and confronts the 3 men with violent menace. They stand their ground. Chips snarls.

Chips *dismissively* Aw, piss off, ya drongo.

The grave god looks embarrassed, then subsides with a sniff.

The chase resumes. Breathless, Stiffy, Donger and Chips round a corner into a dead-end.

Professor Maurice Phantom in his new guise as an old man wishes to engage the 3 men in conversation.

An old stranger (actually, this is the reincarnation of Professor Maurice Phantom, who died in the beginning of the film) stands in their way. He appears to be a character straight out of the Bible:-

long robes, long white hair, and a long white beard. He wears sandals and carries a staff. When he speaks, he adopts a slight French accent and is over-the-top melodramatic. [We will meet this character again in film #3, towards the finale.]

This stranger holds out a hand imperatively, in order to stop Stiffy and his 2 pals.

Stiffy *urgent* Sorry, mate. Can't stop. There are --

Stranger *theatrical* I have trudged for long time across the desert sands. Cruelly have I --

Stiffy makes to tear off, just as Knackers #1 and all the others arrive. The stranger grabs Stiffy's upper arm, impeding his progress.

Stiffy *angry* Hey! Let me go, you old buzzard! Shit! You're strong for an old geezer, aren't ya?

 Come on, will ya! Let me go!

Stiffy struggles in vain. The old man, looking calm and untroubled, pins Stiffy to his side simply by holding his muscular upper arm.

Stranger These people may not harm you whilst my wings of compassion are stretched over you.

Stiffy *confused* What?

Professor Maurice Phantom in his new guise as an old man has the power to rob Stiffy and his pursuers of movement.

The stranger nods in a telling way towards the entourage. Chips and Donger, along with all the men who have been chasing Stiffy now stand still, as if in a trance. Stiffy takes this in and relaxes.

Stiffy What are ya ... a hypnotist? Anyway, thanks for stitching them up for me. I'd better get going while the going's good, eh? But let me

2 mates go first, will ya?

Although the stranger unhands Stiffy, the younger man (like everyone else) does not (and cannot) move away.

Stiffy amazed

You've locked me in ... I can't ... I can't seem to move ...

*Stranger mysterious
voice, with noticeable
French accent*

Buffeted was I by the sandstorms of the gods and I was driven to despair by thirst and sunstroke. Long have I journeyed, and long will I wander. The creatures of the land followed me, with snarling and with biting teeth. Poison-fanged snakes slithered under my feet. Dogs barked and howled. In the night air, dragons and fearsome monsters spat fire and brimstone, such that cinders rained upon me as I lay in my sleep.

Stiffy languid

Shitoh, eh? That's one tough gig, mate.

Professor Maurice Phantom in his new guise as an old man reveals the real villain of Knackers' incarceration.

A calm quiet and restfulness descends. The stranger looks towards Knackers #1 and points his staff towards him.

*Stranger to Knackers
#1*

Your delusion (that idle words from this good man's tongue were the cause of your grief and toil) is exposed as false and mischievous. And 'twas no man either.

'Twas a **woman's** shrill voice which sent you to the galley, where you were left to rot in horrible pain and squalor.

Stiffy admiring

You've got a really poetic turn of phrase, Cobber. I mean, you can string words together real good. Captivate your audience.

Stranger to Stiffy

Among the adders and vipers of the sand dunes, have I --

Stiffy impatient

Yeah, well, I'd just love to hang around with you, listening to your

travelogue ... but --

Stranger This man will no longer see you as an enemy. He will become a friend to you, even though you stole from Modra the most cherished possession.

Stiffy (worried) looks back at the others. But they are still slightly swaying, entranced.

Stiffy *worried* Hey! Sh, sh! Less said about that the better.

Knackers #1 *far-away voice* So who was ve woman oo consigned me to vat slaveboat? At least tell me 'oo 'e is. Give me 'er name, dude.

Stiffy Na, na, na, na ... Let me guess! She'd be the widow of one Modra, dealer in precious tomb loot, now dead at **your** hands, Knackers. And now, if my memory serves, that same lady is the love-goddess of Squizzy, from gang #5.

Here the stranger nods wisely.

Knackers #1 *arc-ing-up* I never killed Modra!

Stiffy *scathing* Yeah, but you ordered one of your henchmen to do the deed. You're a real piece of work, Knackers!

Knackers #1 *matter-of-fact* I'm starting up a business, here in Byblos. Byzantium's too far away, and anyroad, vem Scythians are muscling in on vat city. I know we've 'ad our differences in ve past, Stiffy ... why not join up wiff me and ve lads? We'll make a pile togevver. Old Knackers is comin' in wiff me. You know, that old fart oo's gorgeous bit of crumpet ran orf wiff --

Stiffy Yeah, I'll think about it.

The Stiffy and Knackers #1 shake hands, and then (somewhat awkwardly), they hug.

| |
|---|
| <p>The Sea People appear with Debra as the captive, along with some of the grave robbers.</p> |
|---|

The stranger vanishes.

Then, the peace is rudely broken by a woman's shrill scream. It is Debra.

Debra *screaming* No! No! Let me go, you brutes! Don't touch me!

The spell is broken! Everyone hares off in the direction of Debra's screams.

The men race into a courtyard which forms part of the marketplace. There, the Sea People have also captured Knackers #3, Dingo, Feral and Mullet, along with Debra. Huge men hold them firmly.

Several other strong Sea People grab Stiffy, who struggles wildly to free himself.

Debbie *screams in* Stiffy! Don't risk your life for me. You can get another woman.
terror Several women.

Feral *aside to Dingo* Actually, she's right. He can have a bucketful of wives. And,
anyhow, I never believed in monotonous marriage.

Dingo gives Feral a savage dig in the ribs with his elbow.

Dingo *stern* Shut up! Now's not the moment, Fer. Keep your philosophical
reflections to yerself, will ya?

Stiffy continues to struggle valiantly against the men who are holding him.

| |
|---|
| The Sea People perform a body search on Stiffy. |
|---|

The man who is obviously head of the Sea People instructs his underlings to check Stiffy for the jewels.

Sea People Leader You know what we seek. A necklace of diamonds and rubies.
Check out his loincloth.

Three men of the Sea People laugh as they gather about Stiffy. One of them gropes about in Stiffy's loincloth. Stiffy yells angrily.

The loincloth checker Nuh. He's got some snazzy jewels tucked away in there, but

laughing they're his own.

The Sea People leader chuckles, then begins to wander about, looking thoughtfully at the struggling Stiffy, then at the terrified Debbie, and then back at Stiffy. All the other Sea People watch him with alert attention. The leader stops when he has made his decision.

Physical pressure will be applied to make Debra talk. They start with Leopard.

Sea People Leader With the correct amount of pressure, the girl (who has just married this stiff) will blab her guts out in order to save the man.

The other Sea People nod, as if they understand.

Sea People Leader Step forward, Leopard.

suave

A muscleman who is got up like Tarzan steps out of the crowd. He faces-off in front of Stiffy, who sizes him up, whilst still being firmly held by the Sea People. The men let Stiffy go. All the Sea People smile knowingly. Stiffy rubs his limbs, whilst staring at the himbo (Leopard), who flexes his muscles and poses artistically.

Without pause, Stiffy lays into the himbo with punches, kicks, head butts and other random acts of violence. The himbo doesn't even get started. He rolls about on the ground, groaning. Meanwhile, Stiffy has bounded towards Debbie, whom he valiantly attempts to free. Once again, Stiffy is grabbed by several Sea People.

Physical pressure will be applied to make Debra talk. Second-up is Bubba.

Looking highly displeased, the leader of the Sea People snaps his fingers imperatively.

Sea People Leader */ess* Bubba!

suave

A wild-looking, long-haired, bearded man covered in tattoos jumps forward. He leaps around amongst the appreciative Sea People, doing acrobatics and appearing both frightening and mad. As he runs at Stiffy, our hero throws the assailant to the ground with some brilliant Kung-Fu moves. The pair indulge in some super-fast, super-exciting tussles. Naturally, Stiffy beats the wild man to a pulp.

The Sea People look at each other with trepidation, mingled with admiration for Stiffy.

Stiffy *very aggressive* Give me my wife! You've played all your aces, punk!

Sea People Leader *now* Not quite yet, Mr Stiffy ...

really angry [Sugar-sweet]

Oh, Gus?

| |
|---|
| Physical pressure will be applied to make Debra talk. Lastly comes Gus. |
|---|

A huge man built like a gorilla shambles forward, picking his nose and looking at the dirt under his fingernails.

This time, it is Stiffy who tries to be frightening, as he struts and roars. The other Pubic Punics barrack and cheer. The gorilla just blinks at Stiffy

Stiffy *insulting* So when does the stooge go into battle? I could just **die** of boredom, here.

Sea People Leader Yes, mate, "die" is a good word for it. I'll wind him up and see what he can do, shall I?

The Sea People Leader calls out such that his words are stretched, in the manner of a ringside announcer at a boxing match.

Sea People Leader ***Let's get ready to scrumble!***

| |
|---|
| In a last ditch effort, the Sea People cheat. |
|---|

Gus rolls his eyes and becomes very pugnacious. Stiffy and Gus immediately go into battle. This is the kind of fighting seen in cage fighting events.

Stiffy is besting the gorilla, by using some devilish, speedy movements and martial arts.

To the shock and horror of the crowd, the Sea People use small blowpipes to fire tiny poisoned darts at Stiffy. He is distracted and falls because he overbalances. The gorilla takes his chance, jumping on the hapless Stiffy, and pinning him to the ground. The gorilla begins to pulverize Stiffy. Debbie screams out that she has the necklace, so leave her husband alone. But she is unheard over the roar of encouragement from the crowd.

Dingo *horrified* Those bastards have cheated! Oi! Play fair!

Mullet *very angry* Well, we can cheat just as good as them. Howzat! Howzat! Sool
'im!

| |
|--------------------------|
| Mullet cheats in return. |
|--------------------------|

With a thunderous musical build-up, and an athletic leap, Howzat appears from amongst the crowd, and launches himself onto the gorilla. Biting, snarling and worrying the man, Howzat manages to free Stiffy; the other man having rolled off Stiffy in an attempt to escape the dog's attack. As man and dog grapple, Stiffy rolls onto his side, and then up onto his elbows. He is all but stonkered.

The Sea People appear to be ready to kill Howzat. At the instant when one man raises his sword to deal the death-blow on Mullet's dog, the members of Gang #4 ("Bunch of Fives") leap forward.

Socks *yelling* "Bunch of Fives" to the rescue, Stiffy old son. Get 'em!

Pandemonium breaks out. Chips and Donger free Mullet, Feral and Dingo. Now, all the men who formerly served Modra join in the fight. The Sea People are vanquished in an all-in brawl. Our boys are seen dusting themselves off, to the cheers of the appreciative crowd. Armshakes and man-hugs all round.

🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪 **Break** 🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪🔪

Then, Stiffy and Debra enjoy a quiet moment alone. Stiffy holds his beautiful wife against himself, caressing her.

Stiffy Tonight is our wedding night. I can't wait to --

Debra Maybe not tonight. We might have to wait a couple of days.

Stiffy Deb, is it the wrong time of the month again? But you always seem to be ...

Debra *matter-of-fact, absurdly happy* Yes, well I'm either pre- or post-. Have a bit of compassion, will you?

Stiffy But I was wondering when --

Debra *reasonable* I have five good days every month. I'll let you know when they are.

Stiffy leaves her, and plonks himself down on a nearby low wall, utterly dejected.

Stiffy *at a low point* Jeez, what a cunt of a day! I've just about been killed by those moron Sea People, and now we find that the chain was stolen. On top of all that, I can't fuck you on our wedding night.

Debra *smug* It wasn't.

Stiffy *confused* Eh?

Debra It wasn't stolen ... the chain of Ra ...

Stiffy looks up, somewhat excited.

Stiffy But ... if the Sea People haven't got it, and I haven't got it, then ... Then where is it?

Debra *smirks* I've got it. I hid it. On my person, shall we say?

Stiffy *confused* Didn't they strip-search you, those blokes? I thought --

Debra *winsome* Up to a point, they did. And then they backed away, looking as pale as albino dolphins. There seems to be a limit as to how far a

body-search will go. When it's males examining females, that is.

And when said female is ... how can we phrase this? ... when she's "untouchable".

Stiffy stares at his bride, gulping. He tries to speak but cannot. He merely points to her groin. Debbie laughs.

Stiffy *somewhat revolted* You're kidding!

Debra *delighted* You are a king-size wooss, Stiffy-boy. Come on, get me somewhere **safe** this time, and I **might** forgive you.

Stiffy But ... you've really got the Chain of Ra?

Debra Yes. It will have to be washed of course.

Stiffy *revolted* I'm gonna puke! You really put it in your ...

Debra *smiling* We've still got it, so what the hey. Come on ...

Head held high, Debra walks off, back in the direction of the bed and breakfast. Stiffy scratches his head for a while, then reluctantly follows her.

END OF SCENE

V, Scene xvi: Byblos, Final Scene of Celebrations 1500BC

The four members of Gang #6 run (at time jumping for joy) from the market place to the harbour, where a selection of boats are tied up. They stop to catch their breath, chests heaving. Feral raises one fist n a power salute.

Feral Woo-hoo! Go mighty Pubic Punics! Gang #6 rocks!

Dingo So, what's the story? Knackers #1 is taking over Modra's old business, in partnership with Knackers #3, and Knackers #2 will

be their chief assistant? Gunna make it funny when someone rings up and asks for "Knackers". Ha-ha-ha!

Mullet Rings up? What's that mean in a fit?

Dingo shrugs Doesn't matter, mate ...

Mullet Awright ... Yeah ... and so Squizzy's landed with Ulpia and Cynthia. May the gods give him strength. He'll have his work cut out for him.

Stiffy And I'm a happily married man. Well, I will be when ...

Suddenly, they erupt into a war dance, with whooping and shouting. They hug and lift each other in an exuberant outlet of joy. They are all breathless but absurdly happy.

Stiffy That was Biblical!

Mullet Whaz that mean?

Stiffy Doesn't matter ...

[They shift around a bit]

Let's go and try out that new boat of ours ... might get in some fishing before nightfall.

Feral 'S there any beer on board?

Stiffy Barrels of it!

Dingo You're on your honeymoon!

Stiffy So? Debra'll be sweet. She won't say anything.

Dingo Don't like your chances ...

Stiffy I'm the husband! The wife does what she's told.

Dingo You reckon?

Mullet *grins* Haven't you ever heard of "pussy-power"?

Stiffy Listen! As the husband and bread-winner, it's one of my duties to go out and catch food. Fishing equals catching food. Ask any wise

man, he'll agree with me. I can do "the other" any time. Well ... sort of ...

Dingo Bulltish! You wait till you've got a couple of nippers under foot, and you're fairly panting for a root. She'll be too busy, too tired, and right off-the-boil.

Feral How'd you know that? You're not hitched.

Dingo Me brother's always whingeing about it.

They start to walk off.

Mullet Yeah, but all this talk doesn't change the fact that Stiffy's on his honeymoon right now, and his absolute main duty is to swing the wedding tackle.

Feral Don't talk dirty about my sister!

Dingo She's not only your sister anymore, Fer ... she's Stiffy's wife. And I agree with Mull that Stiffy has a basic male obligation ... [FADE OUT]

They walk off towards the pier, with a beautiful sunset as the backdrop.

END OF SCENE

END of MILES'S EXPERIENCE

V, Scene xvii: 1931 A Swanky Hotel In London

A drinks party has been organized to promote this film (as if it were first shown in 1931). A large room has been superbly turned-out: huge floral tributes, champagne flutes, liveried waiters bearing trays of canapes and a riot of beautifully dressed glitterati abound.

At an entrance doorway stand a group of eager reporters and photographers. When Ulpia and Cynthia make their grand entrance there is a babble of questions along with a volley of flashlights.

Ulpia and Cynthia are dressed in the most revolting gowns. They have been decked in all manner of feathers, jewels and bric-a-brac. The result is repulsive. The false fingernails are an eyesore.

However, the 2 ladies revel in the adulation; they smile and wave as if they are royalty. The press gaggle follows them to a dais where they sit side-by-side in quasi thrones. Eunuchs assist them to be seated. The little Egyptian boy from ACT I Scene I is fanning the ladies.

Ulpia raises a hand such that the reporters will become silent.

Both women give the impression of being too good for their company: they are disdainful and sneering (in a nasty way rather than in a sophisticated way).

Ulpia *very grand* As the stars of this movie my sister and I have condescended to this interview

The two women go into a cosy pose, smiling beautifully for the flashes of the many cameras. Then they quickly separate, looking both bored and extremely put-out.

As the women speak (with evident disdain and chagrin), the reporters jot down notes.

Ulpia I'm Modra's poor widow: the Lady Ulpia. And I'm the co-star of this movie (with my sister).

Cynthia And I'm her sister: Lady Cynthia. I'm the other co-star. And if youse can point me in the direction of the manager of this chop-house then I can lodge a formal complaint.

Male *voice* What for, Lady Cynthia? What's wrong?

Cynthia *disgusted* I wanna let the manager know that his chef is on the take. The pastries here are filled with nothink but unsweetened blancmange and bits of green veggie.

Ulpia *sour* 'Sparagus. Bloody disgrace! SnackBloke could have whipped up a better burnt offering than that and his chow is rubbish. The horse's doovers are a bloody travesty. I nearly got a splinter off one of those wooden toothpicks. Hasn't plastic been invented yet?

My word of the day is "fraudulent".

The mob of reporters eagerly responds.

Male voice Er ... And your appearances in this film, ladies. Are you able --

Cynthia Most of this flick is just a waste of time, except the bits that we're in.

Watch it up until you see us on the beach in the deck-chairs (it's a very long scene with sexual overtones mixed up with high-class morality: we'll get an Oscar for sure) and then walk out of the picture house in droves.

That's what I think. Roll yer Jaffas down the aisle on the way out and stick yer finger up at the screen.

That's what I'd do if I was youse.

Ulpia A lot of the movie is in very poor taste: gutter humour. That's because Gang #6 are low-lifes.

Cynthia Lower than a snake's ...

Male voice But the delicious romantic ending must have thrilled you ladies, surely?

Cynthia Oh, don't get me started!

Ulpia Don't get her started, whatever you do.

Cynthia That toffee-nosed wanker Miles wakes up at Mahala's place, right?

Ulpia She's shitting herself (pardon my sounding like a Hittite) because that elixir of dreams nearly took him out and it shouldn't have done.

Cynthia "Elixir of dreams"! What a crock! Don't get me started on that.

Ulpia He wants to freshen-up and return to his men and she just wants to know where the Chain of Ra is. They palaver: on and

on and on. Personally I fell asleep.

Cynthia Mahala doesn't have a clue where it is but she thinks that one of the Pubic Punics does know. My word for the day is "elusive".

Ulpia They go: "blah-blah-blah" ... That Summerhill witch (who's really nothink better than that ratbag Feral's sister) is going to Constantinople with letters of introduction to get away from Miles who won't marry her because he thinks she's too good for him. Yawn.

Cynthia She was more or less alright when she was Debbie but as that Theresa bitch: she has tickets on herself. Thinks her shit doesn't stink.

Ulpia They make it up in the end and everyone winds up getting hitched to the right person. Otherwise the start of film number 2 (which we're not in, by the way so don't bother going to see it) is out of whack.

Cynthia Yeah, I'm in it. I'm in film number 2. I got a cameo part. In a crowd scene.

Ulpia How'd ya manage that? Did ya have sex with the director?

Cynthia Nah. With the dolly grip.

Ulpia Oh! And anyway that bit about Debbie shoving the Chain of Ra up her twat is --

Cynthia Slut. Tart. Whore-bag. Pond scum.

Ulpia Is 100% true. So anyway the chain ends up with the Renauld family. Long story ... boring as hell ... Triple yawn.

Cynthia bodily grabs at a waiter who is shocked at being manhandled. Ulpia and Cynthia ravenously gobble the food.

Ulpia *pulling a face* Shit-a-brick! Chuck-a-chunder! Are these prawns cooked? If I start throwing-up youse'll all know about it.

Male voice Lady Cynthia! Were you and your sister disappointed when you learned that your long and involved deck-chair scene had been cut from the film?

We can hear the sisters shriek in protest. Our camera backs right back as the reporters continue to question and the photographers continue to take photos.

END OF SCENE

BLACKOUT

END OF ACT V

CREDITS

As the credits roll through, the missing ending (vision only, no sound) will be screened. This will show Miles and Theresa "finding each other". Refer "Special Notes" for that part of the film.

END OF FILM

| | |
|--|---|
| If you have not been paying attention ... | |
| Here is the legend such that you can understand which “Knackers” is which. The boys of Gang #6 discussed this early in the film. | |
| KNACKERS #1

Babylonian

Hittite

Aka “Telzer” | Cockney accent. Very, very Ray Winstone. An ugly character, yet there's something likeable about him. Dominates those around him. He has been incarcerated as a galley-slave, believing that it was Stiffy who caused this vile servitude. Vows revenge against Stiffy. [Stiffy is innocent of all these charges: the real villain was Squizzy from Gang #5 (“The Eagle Boys”).] By Film #2 they have made it up.

His son is DONGER from Gang #4 (“The Bunch of Fives”). |
| KNACKERS #2

Phoenician | Another member of Gang #4 (“The Bunch of Fives”). Just an ordinary grave-robber. |
| KNACKERS #3

Byzantine | He is an older man with a long white beard. It was this Knackers who thought up the “woman-and-dog” scheme used in the first robbery (Anoheth). His sexpot young wife (his fourth) is having an affair with Squizzy from Gang #5.

It is this Knackers who sends the messenger pigeons to Stiffy. |