

EGYPTSHMEGYPT

You are living during the Old Kingdom Period in Ancient Egypt. You are an Egyptian fisherman from what was once Lower Egypt, before king Menes united the two Egypts. You begin your day by casting your little papyrus boat off the Nile delta into the cool waters of the Mediterranean Sea. The sun is out in full force today. It beats down on your already burnt neck and shoulders. You smile and think to yourself how good the sun-god Ra has been to warm this fertile region, known as the Black Land. After hours of fishing you return with your nets empty, not as joyful as you had been earlier in the day. You grab the long oars that lay along the side of your boat and begin to row toward the mouth of the mighty Nile River. After some time, your arms begin to ache from rowing against the current but you realize that you will soon be able to anchor your papyrus craft and try your luck with the nets again. You say a quick prayer to the mighty Nile with the hope that it will bless you with a school of unsuspecting fish. As you wait you splash some of the cool water on your face. You see that the sun is at its highest point in the sky, and think to yourself that this is beginning to look like a wasted day. Your gaze falls on a family of ducks paddling slowly across the surface of the water without a care in the world.

Do you:

A) Continue fishing in deeper water

B) Try your luck at a little duck hunting

A) You continue to fish. You throw a light cloak over your shoulders to protect against the sun's angry rays. A bead of sweat trickles into your eyes temporarily blurring your vision. "Ahhh! This is worthless! ", you cry. The cool waters look more and more inviting. You slip into the refreshing flow of the Nile River. Amazing! You feel like a new person. "Who cares about fishing?", you think out loud to yourself? You feel your foot touch the river bottom. The fiery sun doesn't feel so brutal right now. "Ahh. Much better.". Suddenly you remember that the water you are in is rather deep. "How did I touch bottom?", you wonder. Panic begins to seize you! Your papyrus boat has drifted a few yards away from you. You splash and thrash around in the waves, looking for anything to hold on to! Your hands finally grasp the side of a floating log. As you pull yourself closer, you realize that the "log" is really a long reptilian creature with hungry eyes and cruel teeth! The last sight you ever see is the open jaws of a ferocious Nile crocodile.

THE END

B) You quietly raise your anchor and silently row after your dinner. The ducks quacking and splashing slip into the long, swaying reeds of papyrus growing along the riverbank. You hop quickly out of your little boat and into the cluster of reeds. Your meal is nowhere in sight. A few feathers float by, so they must have been this way. You hear splashing a few feet away! "Ahh! Dinner is served!" You draw your copper knife and

slowly creep nearer to the commotion. "Gotcha! Oh my . . . !!!". You found the ducks all right, going down the throat of a ravenous crocodile! You explode toward the shore with the croc close behind! You slip in the soft black mud as you scramble up the bank. Breathless you watch as the reptilian eyes glare at you from the shallows of the river. Suddenly, a you feel a sharp jab in your back. You turn around to see an old farmer holding a knotted staff. "Its the flood season. Why are you by the river? You can't farm now." You try to explain that you are a fisherman, but he doesn't seem to acknowledge the fact. "You should be at the pyramids, working for pharaoh. If you want to follow me, I'm heading for the land of Giza now."

Do you:

C) Go your own way

D) Follow him

C) "I'd have to be crazy to follow that old man! Who wants to slave in the hot sun building a giant tomb? Who cares if they say the pharaoh is a god? Let him build his own pyramid!", you tell yourself. You walk along the bank of the river trying to find a way to get your boat back. Its drifting further and further away. You check the waters, looking for any sign of the old crocodile. He appears to have been satisfied with his snack, maybe he won't be back. As you walk you realize that you are now tired, muddy and hot. At least the boat has drifted into some of the papyrus reeds moving gracefully in the light breeze. You again hop into your boat, realizing that if you don't catch any fish, you won't eat tonight.

GOTO A

D) "Well, if I'm not catching any fish, at least I could be doing something constructive. Especially for pharaoh, after all, he is a god." When you arrive at the construction site in the Red Land you see the enormous tombs reaching to the sky. Thousands upon thousands of workers chiseling away at the limestone casing to make the sides of the pyramid smooth and white. You and the old farmer pick up hammers and chisels and begin the long journey up the earthen ramps to the top of the pyramid. Finally, you reach the halfway point. An overseer tells you to begin smoothing the northern face of the pyramid. Hours go by. It hardly seems as if you had done anything at all. You can tell from the position of the sun in the sky that it must be late in the afternoon. Sweat rolls down your face and arms. Suddenly, you feel a light breeze. Taking a closer look, you observe that there is a shaft leading into the pyramid. The opening is about two feet in diameter leading down into the dark unknown. Your curiosity is peaked.

Do you:

E) Decide that it would be too dangerous to explore

F) Explore the shaft

E) You decide that it would be far too dangerous to climb into a dark tunnel of that size. After all, you might get stuck halfway down with no one to hear you scream. No thank you. The sun is finally setting and priests sing one final hymn to Ra as he sinks into the western horizon. As the workers descend the pyramid, they are each given a sack of grain and some dried figs. At last dinner! As you prepare your meal that night, you feel a sense of pride that you are a part of this great project that will last down through the ages.

THE END

F) Your curiosity gets the best of you. When no one is watching, you slip head-first down the narrow shaft. At times it feels as if you can't take a full breath. You have to remind yourself to remain in control and not to panic. Your pitch black surroundings don't help either. After what seems like hours you see a light at the end of the tunnel. As you crawl nearer to the light, you begin to realize that you must be near the King's chamber. As you crawl out into the light you rub your arms and legs just to check to see if they are still there. You think to yourself that this must be where Pharaoh's mummy will be placed one day. You get the feeling that you probably shouldn't be here. Just as that thought materializes, you hear a gruff voice shout "GRAVE ROBBER!!". Two priests wearing robes and carrying torches rush toward you. Their bald heads glisten in the firelight. One grabs your arms from behind while the other bashes a copper rod on the top of your head. You awaken to the muffled sounds of hymns being sung to Ra the sun-god. "It must be sunset", you think to yourself. "Ouch! " It hurts to think. That priest really gave you a wallop. You shift your gaze from one side to the next, completely dark. You try to sit up but knock your head against something solid. To your horror, you begin to realize that you have been sealed inside a coffin alive!

THE END

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The above story is an example of your basic step-by-step "Choose your own adventure". In the next adventures, you will see some possible variations to the standard model. The following story focuses on the life of an Egyptian scribe during the New Kingdom period: