

Christie and Agatha's
DETECTIVE AGENCY

TOMBFUL OF TROUBLE

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PIP MURPHY

Illustrated by
ROBERTA TEDESCHI

Christie and Agatha's
DETECTIVE AGENCY



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Published by Sweet Cherry Publishing Limited
Unit 36, Vulcan House,
Vulcan Road,
Leicester, LE5 3EF
United Kingdom

First published in the UK in 2022
2022 edition

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

ISBN: 978-1-78226-816-1

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Christie and Agatha's Detective Agency:
Tombful of Trouble

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Cover Design by Roberta Tedeschi and Amy Booth
Illustrations by Roberta Tedeschi

www.sweetcherrypublishing.com

Printed and bound in Turkey

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CHAPTER ONE

Agatha had never been so hot in all her life. She had known that Egypt would be hot, just not *this* hot. She had already gone through all of the synonyms that she could find in the thesaurus she had brought with her from England. ‘Baking’, ‘scorching’, ‘boiling’ and ‘roasting’ all fitted her feelings perfectly.

‘Now I know how a cake feels in the oven,’ she said to her sister.

‘Me too,’ Christie groaned. ‘I don’t know how you can stand it in that suit, Auguste.’

Auguste, the girls’ Belgian friend, wasn’t sure how he was standing it, either. He was terribly sweaty despite the looseness of his suit’s fabric. Once or twice, he had even felt faint. However, the mere idea of dressing down in public made him positively nauseous. He would just have to put up with it.

The heat aside, the three children were all extremely excited

to be in Egypt. None of them had ever been so far from home before. Mrs Dupont, Auguste’s mother, was a famous writer. When she had proposed that Christie



and Agatha accompany her and Auguste on her research trip to the North African country, the two sisters had jumped at the chance. Agatha thought it would prove a huge inspiration for her own writing. Christie, meanwhile, daydreamed about the thrilling adventures they might have there.

At that moment, they were bumping along a dusty road, in an equally dusty car, on the way to meet Mrs Dupont's friends.

'What are they called again?' asked Christie. 'Your friends, I mean.'

'They're called Lord and Lady Carnarvon,' Mrs Dupont told her. 'They're the ones funding that big dig that was in all the papers last year. The one led by Mr Howard Carter.'

'The tomb of the Egyptian king?' asked Agatha.

'Pharaoh,' said Auguste. 'Egyptian kings were called pharaohs.'

'What's this pharaoh called then?' asked Christie.

Auguste hesitated. 'Toot ... toot ...'

'Tutankhamun,' said his mother, smiling.

‘It’s a shame we weren’t here for that,’ said Christie, thinking how exciting it would have been to investigate a tomb.

Agatha privately agreed with her. She had read that when Mr Carter first entered the Pharoah’s tomb, someone asked if he could see anything. He had exclaimed ‘Yes, wonderful things!’ She would have liked to see such wonderful things herself.

‘Oh, it’s not all over and done with yet,’ said Mrs Dupont. ‘Apparently it’s going to take years and years to remove and catalogue everything in

the tomb. They’ve only just started on the burial chamber. They’re being very careful about it.’

Auguste, the biggest lover of order and method that the girls had ever met, looked thrilled at the idea.



‘If you were hoping to see the excavation in progress, you’re going to be disappointed I’m afraid,’ said Lady Carnarvon. She was leading the group into the drawing room of the fabulous house they were renting. ‘Everything’s suspended at the moment.’

‘Oh dear, why?’ asked Mrs Dupont.

‘Was there a murder?’ asked Christie, her eyes sparkling with excitement.

There was a laugh from one of the chairs in the drawing room. A moustached man with grey hair stood up, supporting his weight on a stick. ‘Well, we suspect that the pharaoh whose tomb it is might not have died peacefully,’ he said. ‘But nothing for the last three thousand years or so. I’m Lord Carnarvon, by the way. Pleased to meet you.’

‘Pleased to meet you, too,’ said the children.



The man looked rather sickly, thought Agatha. Was it really all right for him to be running around ancient tombs?

‘So what *is* the problem?’ asked Christie.

‘Is it too hot?’ asked Auguste.

Lord Carnarvon laughed again, although his laugh turned into a cough. ‘Believe it or not, this is actually the cooler season,’ he said. ‘No, the official story is that Mr Howard Carter – he’s the man in charge of the excavation – and myself have had a falling out. Difficulties with the press and the Egyptian

authorities. Something like that.’

Mrs Dupont raised an eyebrow. ‘I see! And if I may ask, what is the *unofficial* story? What really happened?’

Their hosts exchanged a glance, then Lord Carnarvon nodded.

‘I’m afraid,’ said Lady Carnarvon, ‘that things have been going missing—’

‘Ha!’ said Lord Carnarvon. ‘There’s no need to be so diplomatic around friends, dear. “Going missing.” I *wish* things had been going missing! No, the truth of the matter is that a number of important, valuable artefacts have been stolen. There is a thief at the dig!’



CHAPTER TWO

All four visitors gasped aloud at the news.

Agatha was shocked that someone would do such a thing. Christie was already imagining the moment that they caught the thief in the act. Auguste, on the other hand, was thinking sadly about how the thefts must have thrown all that wonderful cataloguing into disarray.

‘How dreadful!’ said Mrs Dupont. ‘Are there any suspects?’

Lord Carnarvon looked grim. ‘Unfortunately, the local authorities are blaming Carter. They say that he’s the one in charge and therefore must be the one responsible.

Absolute poppycock, of course.

Carter sticks to rules better than anyone else I know.’

‘Do not worry,’ said Auguste, a deep frown on his face. ‘We will find your thief for you and clear this Mr Carter’s name.’

He gestured to the two girls and himself.



Lord Carnarvon looked sceptical. 'You? But you're just children.'

Auguste, absolutely determined to help a fellow lover of order and method, shook his head. 'There is no "just" about it,' he said firmly. 'For these two sisters are detectives. They have already successfully solved cases that left adults baffled. They come with the recommendation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle himself.'

Shyly, Agatha held out one of their business cards.



'Conan Doyle?' said Lord Carnarvon. 'The mystery writer?'

'The very same,' said Mrs Dupont. 'He was so impressed by their skills that he became their patron.'

'Well I never!' said Lady Carnarvon. 'My husband and I are rather fond of his work. I must say, that's quite the recommendation.'

'And now I come to think of it,' said Lord Carnarvon, 'it might not be such a bad idea for you to lend a hand. I don't suppose anyone will be suspicious of children running around and asking questions. Yes, why not? You

can try to help us sniff out a few clues.'

'Thanks!' said Christie, beaming. Her dream of desert adventures was already coming true.

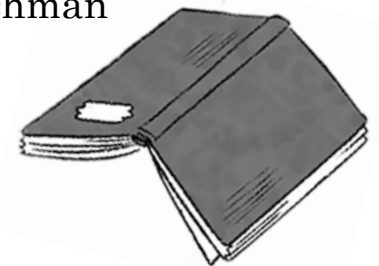
'If you don't mind me asking,' said Agatha, 'do you have any suspects so far?' From what she'd read about archaeological digs, there could be hundreds of people involved. Would they have to interview them all?

'Honestly speaking, there aren't all that many people it can be,' said Lady Carnarvon. 'Most of the locals working on the site simply wouldn't have the opportunity.'

'It would have to be someone higher up in the pecking order,' agreed Lord Carnarvon. 'I suppose we should make a list. Do you have a noteboo—'

Before he had even finished his sentence, Agatha's notebook and pencil had appeared in her hands.

'Goodness me, was that some kind of magic trick?' he asked. 'Let's see ... the thief surely cannot be someone we've chosen to be at the dig ourselves. But it could be the Frenchman from the Museum of Antiquities





of Egypt who is supervising the cataloguing. He can be most disagreeable and has clashed with

Carter a number of times.

His name is Monsieur Couture.’

Agatha wrote the man’s name down, hoping that she’d spelt it correctly.

‘There’s also that jewellery expert – Mr Russell – that the

Metropolitan Museum

group sent over to

help us. We do have a jewellery expert of



our own – Mr Clarke – but there’s so much jewellery to catalogue that we needed the extra help.’

‘It could also be our pottery expert, Mr Potts,’ said Lady Carnarvon. ‘Yes, that *is* his real name. Most of the items that have gone missing so far have been in his field, so it would make sense. He would know what is of most interest to collectors, after all.’

‘Then there’s the photographer,’ said





Lord Carnarvon. ‘Miss Hall. Of course, she gets a good look at all the objects, both in person and afterwards, in the photographs. She could easily pick out which pieces to take.’ He drummed his fingers on the end of his cane. ‘That’s everybody, I think, apart from Carter and ourselves.’

‘Not quite, dear,’ said Lady

Carnarvon. ‘You’re forgetting Mr Kelly, the newspaper reporter.’



Her husband shifted uncomfortably in his seat. ‘Only because it had better *not* be him,’ he said. ‘I’d feel responsible, seeing that it was me who gave him and his newspaper exclusive access to the dig. Not that it did him much good. The other journalists did a fine job at ferreting out information themselves. They rather got the jump on him in the British newspapers.’

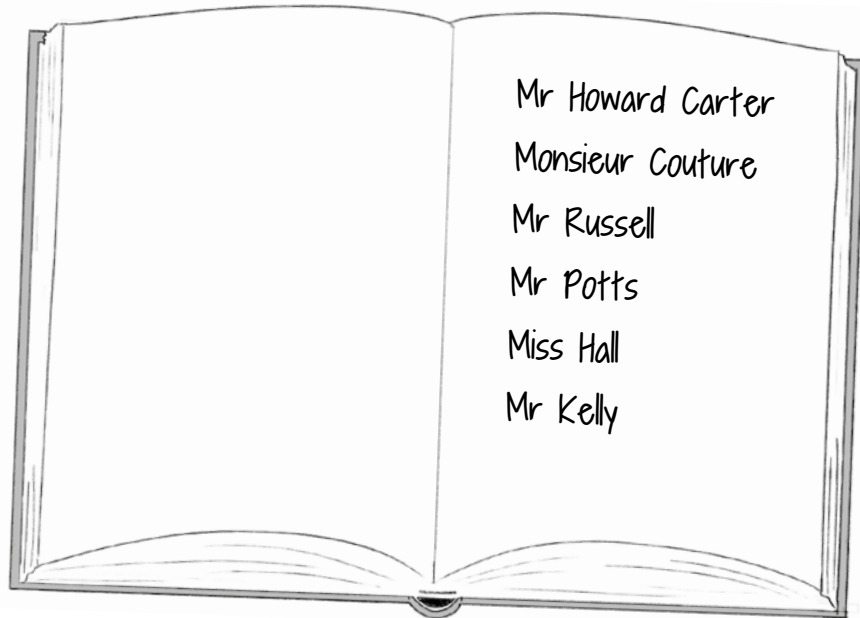
So Mr Kelly might well have a reason to want to cause trouble for Mr Carter, thought Agatha. If he felt like he’d been cheated somehow.

‘That’s it, I think?’ said Lord Carnarvon, looking at his wife for approval.

She nodded.

‘Who would you like to start with, then?’ Lord Carnarvon asked the children.

‘I think,’ said Auguste, ‘that we should meet this Mr Carter.’



CHAPTER THREE

Auguste was most pleased by Mr Howard Carter’s moustache. It was small, neat and very much symmetrical. The man’s workroom was also happily minimalistic and well-organised. His mood, however, was less well balanced.

‘It’s so frustrating,’ he told them. ‘There are all these fascinating objects sitting there in the

tomb, waiting to be checked and researched. And not only do we have to wait, but someone is pilfering the ones we've already taken!

'I'm sorry,' said Agatha.

'Don't worry,' said Christie, 'you can go back to work as soon as we've caught the culprit.'

Mr Carter gave them a tired smile. 'Thanks. I appreciate that *some* people are making an effort, instead of just pointing fingers. It's frustrating enough that the tomb is out of bounds until these thefts are resolved. But if the culprit isn't found soon, the Egyptian

government will revoke Lord Carnarvon's permit. We'll never be allowed back in the tomb again.'

'What?' gasped Christie. 'Lord Carnarvon never said that!'

Mr Carter sighed. 'I imagine he didn't. I think he's trying to put the worst-case scenario out of mind for now. After all our hard work it would be devastating to lose the Valley of the Kings permit to some other team. We've poured so much time, effort and money into this. Another team might not be nearly as careful with everything as we are, either. We simply must be

allowed back into the tomb. So if there's any way I can help you, just let me know.'

The children looked at the notes Agatha had made in her notebook, trying not to think about how much pressure Mr Carter's words put on them.

'I think our biggest question right now,' said Agatha, 'is why someone might have stolen the artefacts. Is it just to sell them? They couldn't put stolen items into a museum, surely?'

Mr Carter laughed. 'You children have obviously not been to many British museums!'

'I have been to a great number,' said Auguste, confused.

'Well, most museums steal from other countries,' Mr Carter said. 'But you're right that they don't steal from individual archaeologists or collectors. If one of the objects from Tutankhamun's tomb turned up in a museum, it would be rather awkward for them.'

'So you think they're going to a private collector?' asked Christie.

'Most likely, yes. There was an American collector who was digging up and buying up almost everything excavated in the Valley

of the Kings. But he left Egypt before Tutankhamun's tomb was discovered. He might well be looking to complete his coll—'

'There you are!' cut in a loud voice.

They all jumped.

A clean-shaven, impatient looking man was standing in the doorway.

Mr Carter frowned. 'I didn't hear you knock, Mr Kelly.'

The reporter, remembered Agatha.

Mr Kelly folded his arms. 'The door wasn't locked so I let myself in.'

You were *supposed* to come for an interview an hour ago.'



‘I must have forgotten,’ said Mr Carter.

‘I’m sure.’ The reporter scowled at the children. ‘Buzz off. I’m here to interview Mr Carter about the accusations that have been made against him. You’re in the way.’

‘Less in the way than some people,’ said Mr Carter.

‘It’s no problem,’ said Agatha, eager to keep the peace. Christie looked like she was ready to explode. ‘We were about finished anyway. We can talk again later, if you don’t mind?’ she said to Mr Carter.

‘Not at all,’ he replied.

‘Thanks very much,’ said Agatha. ‘We’ll see ourselves out.’ She hastily pulled her sister out the door.

Auguste followed, closing it behind them.

The raised voices lingered as they left the building.

‘We should never have agreed to give your newspaper an exclusive deal in the first place!’ Mr Carter shouted.

‘Some exclusive deal that turned out to be!’ retorted Mr Kelly.

The children glanced back over their shoulders.

‘You were right to leave,’ said a cheerful voice. ‘They’ll be arguing for ages.’

Who now? wondered Agatha.

This time, however, the surprise newcomer was not an annoyed reporter but a young girl of about their age with bright

red hair. Auguste was horrified by her loose, casual attire. She looked like she was ready to restart the dig single-handed.

‘Ada Lemon,’ she told them, sticking out



a hand. ‘You can call me Ada. And you’re Agatha, Christie and Auguste, right?’

‘That’s right,’ said Christie, ‘but how did *you* know?’

‘Oh, my father’s connected to the dig,’ said the other girl, waving a hand dismissively. ‘I’m so excited to meet you at last. You’re interviewing suspects for the thefts, I presume? In that case, you’ll probably want to visit Mr Potts next. He’s the—’

‘Pottery expert,’ said Christie. ‘We know. Agatha wrote everyone’s names down in her notebook.’

‘Brilliant. Well, since a lot of pots have been going missing, we should probably go and see him next, don’t you think? Don’t worry, I know the way.’

And with that, she danced off ahead of them.

The sisters and Auguste exchanged bewildered glances. Just what were they to make of this strange girl? And who did she think she was, inviting herself along?



CHAPTER FOUR

‘You mustn’t mind James,’ said Ada, on their way to the pottery area.

‘Who is James?’ asked Auguste.

‘The angry man you just met.’

‘Mr Kelly?’ asked Agatha, shocked that this girl would use an adult’s first name.

Ada nodded. ‘He’s not always that rude. He’s just been in a bad mood ever since those other

journalists trampled over his exclusive coverage of the dig.'

How does she know all of this?

Agatha wondered. Lord Carnarvon hadn't mentioned her at all, but she seemed to be very familiar with the people and the situation. Agatha tried to think of a way to ask that wouldn't sound rude.

Christie had fewer reservations. 'How do you know that?' she demanded.

Ada shrugged. 'Like I said, my father's connected to the dig.'

'Connected how?' Christie pressed.

'He works with James,' said Ada, smiling mischievously.

'Anyway, here we are.'

She gestured to a large, single storey building. It wasn't pretty, but Agatha couldn't help but notice how sturdy the door looked. The windows were also barred, like a prison.

'I don't think someone can have been breaking in,' Agatha said. 'They must have had a key.'

'I bet they made a copy,' said Christie.

'I'm impressed,' said Ada. 'You two really are detectives, aren't you?' She peered in through one

of the barred windows. ‘Oh, Jenny and Cotty are there cataloguing stuff, so you can meet them too.’

How nosy! thought Auguste.

Christie meanwhile, was wondering what size of crowbar would be needed to prise apart such thick bars. Then, bringing herself back to the matter in hand, she said, ‘Well, what are we waiting for? Let’s go in and interview them.’ Christie pushed open the heavy door.

The others didn’t need any excuse to get out of the baking hot sun. They hurried after her into the building.

Once inside, the children and

adults introduced themselves to each other.

Mr Potts, thought Agatha, was the sort of person who would make a very poor character in a book. He had no distinguishing features at all. The best word to describe him was simply ‘ordinary’.

The other two, thankfully, were much more interesting. Miss Hall, the photographer, was young and her afro hair was relaxed into a very fashionable bob haircut. She was tall for a woman, certainly much taller than Monsieur Couture. The Museum of Antiquities of Egypt

supervisor was short. He also had the most perfect eyebrows in the world for scowling, and did not waste this fact. He was watching Miss Hall's every move like a hawk.



'Hey!' he barked. 'That vase. You missed that vase.'

'I didn't miss it,' said Miss Hall, looking irritated. 'I'll be coming to it later. I have my own way of doing things, you know.'



‘Yes, like taking blurry photographs!’

Miss Hall drew herself up to her full height. She glared down at Monsieur Couture. ‘I wouldn’t take blurry photographs if you didn’t keep breathing down my neck like that! And if you’re so worried about the photographs, maybe you shouldn’t keep losing my negatives!’

‘I didn’t lose them!’

‘I suppose they grew legs and walked off by themselves, then?’



Mr Potts cleared his throat loudly and the other two lowered their voices, continuing their quarrel in hushed tones. Agatha wished he hadn’t. She’d slipped out her pencil and notebook and felt like she’d been getting some really good material for her writing from the pair’s argument.

‘Don’t fret,’ Ada whispered in her ear, making her jump. ‘There’s plenty more where that came from!’

Blushing beetroot, Agatha hurriedly crammed her notebook back into her bag. *Oh dear*, she thought. *What a terrible thing to be caught doing!*



CHAPTER FIVE

‘Now,’ said Mr Potts, after quiet had more or less been restored.

‘Please take a look at this chalice, children.’ He showed them an ornately carved drinking vessel, made to look like a flower and decorated with little symbols.

‘It’s made of alabaster, which is a very heavy material. Just feel its weight for yourselves.’

Monsieur Couture, who apparently had remarkable hearing when the artefacts were in even the slightest peril, called out, ‘Feel its weight *carefully!*’

‘Crikey!’ said Christie, taken aback by the item’s heaviness even after the warning. It definitely wouldn’t make a very practical cup.

‘Crikey indeed,’ said Mr Potts, smiling. ‘So if the marketplace sellers offer you a genuine alabaster vase or flask, make sure it weighs a lot. If it’s too light then I’m afraid it’s a fake.’

‘If you don’t mind me asking, is there any other way to tell?’ asked

Agatha, who was thinking it might be nice to take a genuine souvenir back to their mother.

‘Let me see ... well, real alabaster items always have unique veins.’ He pointed to a pair of vases. ‘They may look similar, but there is no way to make identical copies using alabaster.’

The children examined them and noted that the pattern was indeed different.

Brilliant, thought Christie. Now we can get Mother a real ornament and explain how we know its pedigree.



The pottery expert sighed.
‘I wish I could show you my favourite piece: an ointment vase shaped to look like an ibex.’

‘What’s an ibex?’ asked Auguste.

‘It’s a type of goat,’ said Ada.
‘You can sometimes find them in mountains, but also in deserts.’

Mr Potts nodded. ‘Exactly, Ada, thank you. This particular vase is of a sitting ibex. Its body is made from a stone called calcite. But its horns – or horn, for only one remains – was taken from a real ibex, would you believe?’

Poor ibex, thought Agatha.

‘Alas, this beautiful object is one of the ones that has been stolen. I still hope it and the other pieces might yet be recovered, but ...’

‘Don’t worry,’ said Christie. ‘I’m sure we can get it back for you.’

‘Thank you,’ said Mr Potts, although he still seemed very melancholy. ‘I suppose, on the bright side, we still have some other wonderful pieces, like this alabaster jar.

What do you think of it?’

They looked with interest at the object. They might never have guessed



it was a jar if they hadn't been told. It was in the shape of a lion standing in a very human-like way on top of a pedestal, one paw raised in the air. Christie thought she looked like she'd just won first place at sports day.

'What's that the lion's leaning on?' Christie asked.

'It's a hieroglyph, isn't it?' said Auguste.

Mr Potts beamed. 'Yes, very good.' Seeing the twins' blank faces, he added, 'A hieroglyph is a character in the Ancient Egyptian writing system. It's so complicated

we couldn't actually understand it until Monsieur Champollion and the Rosetta Stone came to our rescue about a hundred years ago.'

Sounds a bit like Christie's handwriting, thought Agatha. That might also take scholars over a thousand years to decipher.

'You see,' Mr Potts continued, 'the characters didn't just represent sounds, but could contain a whole meaning in one symbol. This one, for example, is 'sa'. It looks like a rising sun.'

'That one's supposed to be for protection, isn't it?' said Ada.

‘It is,’ said Mr Potts. ‘They are on the chalice I showed you before, too.’ He smiled. ‘Who knows, maybe the symbol does have some power? Maybe it’s thanks to the ‘sa’ that these particular items were not stolen.’

Honestly! thought Christie in disgust. *Magical protection indeed! He’s as bad as Sir Conan Doyle.*



CHAPTER SIX

Peace reigned in the jewellery cataloguing room. After all the bickering and bad feeling that they had witnessed so far, the children were quite taken aback by the calm on entering the room.

Two experts were sitting drinking some local tea and discussing a gold buckle when the children arrived.

‘Hi,’ said Ada. ‘I’ve brought some detectives to interview you about the thefts: Agatha, Christie and Auguste.’

‘Detectives?’ repeated the older of the two men, smiling.

American, thought Christie. Even from a single word, his accent was unmistakable. Unfortunately, so was his amusement.

‘That’s right, *Mr Russell*,’ she said, folding her arms. ‘We’re detectives. That’s how we know that you came from the Metropolitan Museum team to help Mr Clarke, here – the

expedition’s original jewellery expert.’

‘Ooh, very impressive,’ said Ada, clapping.



‘Quite,’ said Mr Clarke.

Mr Russell, however, was not so bowled over. ‘You’re rather pint-sized detectives, aren’t you?’ he chortled.

Christie glared at him.

‘Height is not a measure of ability,’ said Auguste. ‘Napoleon Bonaparte was of below average height and he achieved a great deal in his lifetime.’

‘A fellow countryman of yours, I presume, judging by your accent.’

‘He’s Belgian,’ snapped Christie, who was growing more and more annoyed by the man’s assumptions.

Ada nodded. ‘Of course he’s Belgian,’ she said. ‘Can’t you hear the difference? Belgian ‘R’s are much harsher than French ones.’

Agatha wondered if the girl was making this up. She thought Auguste’s accent sounded as French as could be.

Mr Russell gave a small bow of defeat. ‘My apologies,’ he said. ‘I stand corrected. My ears are not what they once were.’

What a good line, thought Agatha. She really must remember it. As she got out her notebook to write it down, one of their business cards fell out.

Ada pounced on it. 'See?' she said, leaning across the table as she slid it towards the two men. 'They have a business card and everything. They come recommended by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, too.'

Wait, that's not on the card, thought Agatha. How does she know about that?

'You can't possibly doubt their professionalism now,' Ada continued.

'Most certainly not,' said Mr Clarke.

'It's all here in black and white,' agreed Mr Russell.

As the red-headed girl pulled back, looking triumphant, Christie thought she saw her hand glint. Was Ada wearing a ring? She hadn't noticed earlier. Before she could look more closely, though, Ada shoved the hand into her pocket, while she carelessly returned the business card to Agatha with the other.

'Even if you are genuine detectives,' said Mr Clarke, 'I'm not sure how much help we can be. You see, none of the jewellery has gone missing at all.'

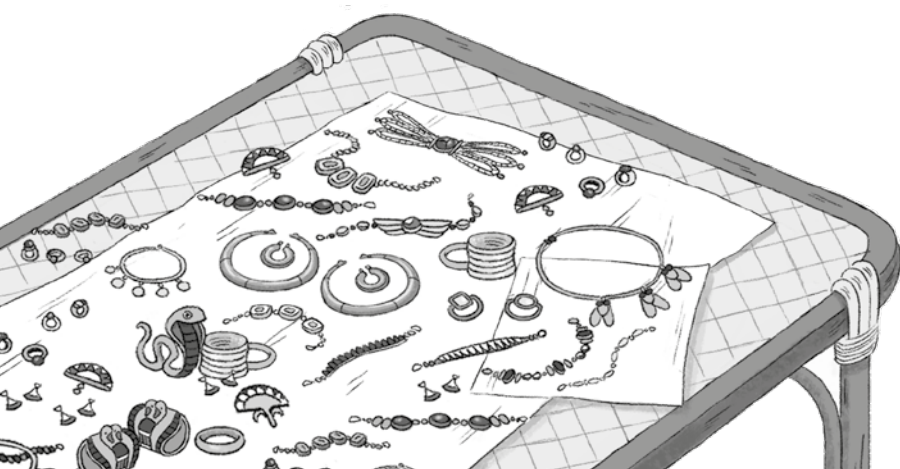
The children stared at him. Was that true? There seemed to be

dozens upon dozens of bracelets and pendants and earrings covering the table. Would they really notice if one or two were to disappear?

‘Are you sure?’ asked Agatha.

‘Absolutely sure,’ said Mr Clarke. ‘We have catalogued them extremely carefully.’

‘If you ask me,’ said Mr Russell, ‘it’s the locals who are stealing all those things. As to why they haven’t taken any of the jewellery,



maybe they think a pot or a vase is easier to sell in a hurry. Less unique. Fewer questions.’

Agatha thought back to Mr Carter’s comment about how so many treasures from around the world had been taken for British museums. Did Lord Carnarvon’s expedition really have more right to these artefacts than the locals did?

The children couldn’t get much more useful information out of the two experts. Starting to feel peckish, they decided to take their leave.

As they walked back to the residential area, Ada said,

‘I wonder how long it will take for them to notice.’ She tossed a small item up in the air and caught it again in her hand. It shone brightly as it reflected the sunlight.

‘But surely that’s one of the gold rings from the collection, isn’t it?’ gasped Agatha.

‘So you’re the thief!’ cried Christie.

‘Of course not,’ said Ada. ‘I’d hardly show you lot if I were. I want to see whether or not they realise that part of their collection is missing. If they don’t ...’



‘Then their claim that none of the jewellery has been taken might not be worth much?’ said Agatha.

‘Exactly. I knew you were smart.’

‘There are more ethical ways to go about checking,’ said Auguste, frowning almost as much as Monsieur Couture.

‘Yes,’ said Ada. ‘But none as stylish.’



CHAPTER SEVEN

It took approximately three hours for the alarm to be raised.

Mr Clarke burst into the room where most of the others were eating dinner together. He was breathing heavily and was trailed by some alarmed looking servants.

‘A piece of jewellery has gone missing!’ he cried. ‘A ring. A gold ring.’

An even more out-of-breath Mr Russell wheezed into view. 'I ... can't think ... how it happened,' he gasped. 'It was ... there earlier. We're both ... positive ... about that.'

Christie glared at Ada, waiting for her to confess.

The other girl, however, was all wide-eyed innocence. 'Are you quite sure?' she asked. 'There were ever so many things on that table, after all. If I were you, I don't think I could say if I'd lost one or not.'

'We didn't ... lose it!' said Mr Russell. 'It was ... stolen! It must have been.'

'I can tell you how many there should be,' said Mr Carter. 'There were originally eight rings. They were found together in a chest in the antechamber, wrapped in linen. I remember thinking how lucky it was that the tomb robbers missed them.'

'Precisely,' said Mr Clarke, wringing his hands. 'There *were* eight. But now there are only seven.'

'Goodness me,' said Ada.

Annoyed at Ada's dishonesty, Christie aimed a motivating kick at the girl under the table. It was a difficult feat since the table was quite

broad. She had to slip almost off her chair to achieve it. Unfortunately, the yelp that resulted came from Auguste, not Ada.

Everyone looked at him.

‘Sorry,’ he said, frowning at Christie.

‘You know,’ said Ada, ‘sometimes when I think I’ve lost something I end up finding it in my bag or pocket or somewhere like that.’

‘Of course it isn’t—’ began Mr Russell, plunging his hands into his pockets to demonstrate. Then he froze, turning white. Slowly, he withdrew his hand from his

pocket, staring at the item on his open palm with wide eyes.

The others stared, too. It was undoubtedly a gold ring.



‘I ... I don’t know ... I can’t imagine for one moment ...’ the man spluttered. ‘I promise you, I’m not the thief!’

The twins and Auguste waited for Ada to say something, but she remained silent. Giving the red-headed girl a fierce look, Christie said, ‘Don’t worry, Mr Russell, I’m sure nobody thinks that.’

‘You would never have raised the alarm if you’d taken it on purpose,’ said Agatha, feeling sorry for the man.

‘A real thief would have hidden it in a place less obvious than their own pocket,’ added Auguste. ‘And

you would never have shown it to everyone like that.’

The adults joined in, mostly sympathetically, although Monsieur Couture did berate him for such absent-minded foolishness. The only person to say nothing was Ada. To the other children’s annoyance, she merely sat back in her chair, grinning away like the Cheshire Cat.



The twins and Auguste confronted Ada immediately after dinner.

‘How come you didn’t own up to taking the ring?’ Christie demanded.

Ada shrugged.

Agatha came from a more sympathetic angle. 'I know you were just checking if they'd notice,' she said, 'but by putting the ring in his pocket, I think you put poor Mr Russell in a bit of an awkward position.'

'When *did* you put it in his pocket, by the way?' asked Auguste.

'I went back again later. I'd "accidentally" left my bracelet there.' She winked at them. 'Like I said, people accidentally lose things all the time, don't they? Luckily, Mr Russell has a very loose jacket.'

'You could have saved yourself the trouble by just telling them you'd taken it,' insisted Christie.



'I agree,' said Auguste. 'It would have been the right thing to do.'

Agatha was far less decisive in her thinking than the other two, which allowed her to see other points of view better. In this case, she realised that if Ada *had* told everyone she'd taken it, everyone would have assumed she was the actual thief.

'You're awfully quiet, Agatha,' said Ada. 'What do *you* think I should have done?'

Agatha hesitated. 'Maybe it would have been better to put it back where you found it,' she said. 'After they realised it was missing. That way, it would seem like they had both just made a mistake. Mr Russell wouldn't have been so embarrassed.'

'I see,' said Ada thoughtfully. 'So you think we should always put things back where they came from. Thank you. I'll remember that.'

The others hoped that she would.



CHAPTER EIGHT

The next morning, Agatha, Christie and Auguste wandered sleepily into the drawing room. They had spent a long time going over their list of suspects the night before and had gone to bed far too late.

They were not so surprised to find Mrs Dupont there ahead of them, but they were definitely surprised to see Ada sitting in one of the chairs.

‘Good morning, my dears,’ said Mrs Dupont. ‘Did you sleep well? We have a visitor.’

‘I felt sorry for poor Mr Russell after what happened the other day,’ said Ada, her eyes as wide as could be. ‘So I thought I should get him something nice to cheer him up. Mrs Dupont was kind enough to take me to the marketplace early this morning to buy him some sweets.’

She held up a box filled with enticing looking colourful cubes.

‘Is it Turkish delight?’ asked

Agatha. She was used



to shop-bought ones which tended to be more uniformly pink. These ones looked much prettier.

‘Yes,’ said Mrs Dupont. ‘It’s sometimes called “loukoum”, but Turkish delight is also a common name for it.’

‘You see,’ Ada continued, ‘I found out last night that Mr Kelly and I are leaving today. There’s another story that he wants to cover. So I thought I simply must do it before I leave.’

‘How thoughtful,’ said Mrs Dupont.

‘Very,’ said Christie. She was annoyed that Ada wasn’t owning up directly, but she supposed that

at least the girl was trying to make amends somehow.

‘Only, we’re actually going to be leaving earlier than I thought,’ said Ada. ‘So I was wondering if you might take them to him on my behalf?’

Running away! thought Christie indignantly, any kind thoughts she had about Ada vanishing in an instant.

‘Um, of course we can take them,’ said Agatha, ‘but wouldn’t you rather—’

‘Goodness me, is that the time?’ said Ada, jumping up. ‘No, I’m

afraid I’ve really got to go. Mr Kelly’s going to be as mad as a box of frogs otherwise.’

The redhead pushed the box of Turkish delight into Christie’s hands. ‘Thanks awfully, you lot. I do hope we meet again. Good luck with your case. I just wish I could be there to see you solve it. Ah well.



Until then, *au revoir!* And with that, she bounded out the door, waving as she left.

‘What a nice, kind girl,’ said Mrs Dupont.

‘*Very,*’ Christie muttered again. ‘Why *is* she here with Mr Kelly and not her father, anyway? She said that the two of them work together, but he doesn’t seem to be around at all.’

‘Oh, I imagine her father is back in London,’ said Mrs Dupont. ‘As the owner of a national newspaper, he’s probably far too busy to come here himself.’

The *owner*? The children stared at her in astonishment. There was definitely a lot they didn’t know about Ada.



‘Do *you* think Ada’s the culprit?’ Christie asked her sister as the three of them got ready to leave.

Agatha considered. ‘I’m not sure,’ she said at last. ‘I might be wrong, but I feel like she’s not a bad person. I think she wants to catch the thief as much as we do.’

Auguste shook his head. ‘I disagree. I do not think she wants

to catch the thief. I think she wants *you* to catch the thief. She acts like a ... a spectator.'

'Spectators don't steal things,' said Christie firmly. 'They just watch.'

'Not in your ... what are they called? Pantomimes? I feel she is like an audience member of such a play. She wants to shout, "It's behind you"; she wants to see you kill the giant. Maybe like me, she is interested in watching your order and method.'



CHAPTER NINE

Christie volunteered to carry the Turkish delight, or "Turkish delicacies" as Auguste insisted on calling them. They shed far too much powder for the boy's tastes. He had no idea why anyone would purposefully create such a messy food.

They trooped along to Mr Russell's accommodation and Auguste rapped smartly on the door.



They waited.

Silence.

‘He must be out,’ said Agatha.

‘Maybe he’s in the cataloguing room with Mr Clarke. We could take it there.’

‘But then he’d have to share it with the others. It wouldn’t be much of a present. Come on, let’s try the door and see if it’s open.’

‘We can’t just go into someone’s private room,’ said Auguste, appalled.

‘We’re going to give him something, not pinch his things,’ Christie pointed out. ‘I’m sure he

wouldn’t mind. Go on, just try the door.’

Reluctantly, Auguste reached out a hand and did so. The handle turned easily.

‘There you go. If he was worried about people going in when he wasn’t there then he’d have locked it, wouldn’t he?’

Agatha wasn’t sure about this logic.

‘Come on,’ said Christie. ‘This stuff is going to be a delightful Turkish puddle if we stand around outside much longer.’

Auguste finally gave in. ‘Very

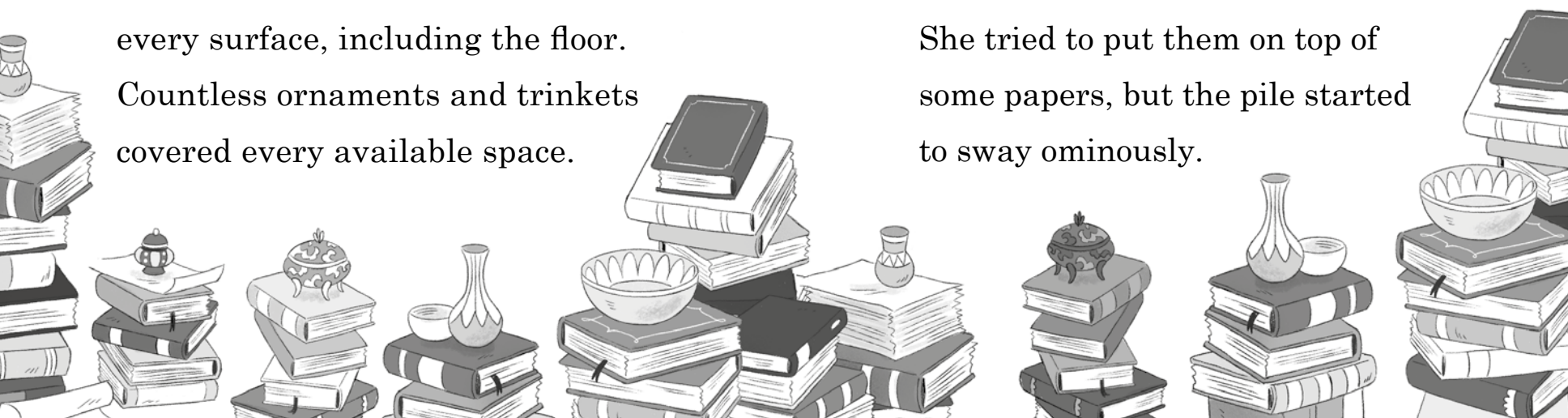
well,' he said, 'but we will just leave the Turkish delicacies and then go.' He pushed open the door, but a split second later let out a terrible moan.

'What is it?' asked Christie, pushing past him, followed by her sister.

The two sisters saw the problem at once: Mr Russell's room was, as their mother would say, a complete pigsty. Towers of books and piles of papers teetered precariously on every surface, including the floor. Countless ornaments and trinkets covered every available space.

'How can anyone live in such a place?' asked Auguste sorrowfully.

Christie looked around, wondering where to put the Turkish delights. After all, it would be so easy for them to get lost amongst all the mess. Mr Russell might not discover them for weeks. She thought about putting them on the bed but what if he accidentally sat on them? Perhaps the desk would be best. She tried to put them on top of some papers, but the pile started to sway ominously.



‘Oh bother, why is everything so horribly cluttered?’ Christie complained.

‘Should I clear some space?’ asked Agatha.

‘No, don’t worry,’ said Christie, nudging a vase with her elbow. ‘If I just – oops!’

Christie tried to grab the vase as it started to fall, but it was impossible with her hands full. There was a loud crash as the vase hit the floor. Despite all the things lying around to soften its fall, it didn’t survive the impact terribly well.

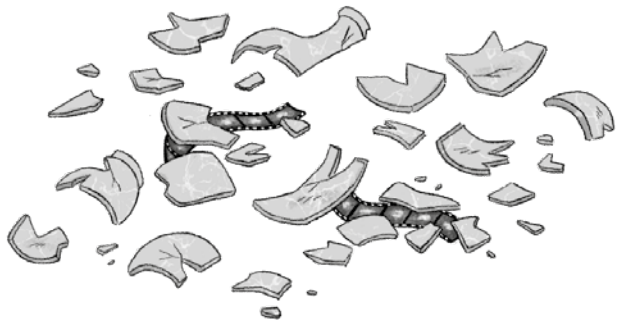


‘Oh crumbs!’ said Christie, surveying the damage. She and her sister enjoyed doing jigsaws, but there was no way they could put that vase back together. ‘That must be at least a thousand pieces!’

‘About a hundred,’ said Auguste, in the interests of accuracy.

Christie sighed. ‘I suppose I’ll have to go and tell him I broke it. It’s not his week, is it?’

‘Oh dear, some negatives must have fallen off, too,’ said Agatha,



picking them gingerly out of the shards of pottery. She hoped that they hadn’t got scratched.

Auguste frowned. ‘No, there were no negatives on the desk.’

‘But where else could they have come from?’ said Agatha. She knew that Auguste had very good observational skills, especially when it came to tidiness, but surely he must be mistaken in this case.

‘I can only think they must have been inside the vase.’

‘Why would he have put them in the vase?’ asked Christie. ‘Do you think he’d run out of dark places

to keep things?’ She knew that negatives weren’t supposed to be stored in sunlight but a vase still seemed like a funny location. She held one of the negatives up to see what it was of, then froze. ‘Hang on!’ she said. ‘Look at this!’

The other two peered around her shoulders.



‘Oh my goodness!’ said Agatha. ‘But surely that’s the goat thing that Mr Potts was telling us about! He did say it only had one horn, didn’t he?’

‘He did,’ said Christie. ‘It has to be this one. And Miss Hall said that some of her negatives had been going missing. I bet these are them!’ She narrowed her eyes. ‘I wonder what Mr Russell is doing with stolen negatives of a stolen artefact?’

‘I think,’ said Agatha, ‘that he might not deserve the Turkish delight after all.’



CHAPTER TEN

The thing to do, the children decided, was to catch Mr Russell in the act. The evidence of the stolen negatives was, as Auguste put it, circumstantial. All Mr Russell had to say was that he had no idea how they had got into his room and that would be that. He may never admit his guilt, let alone reveal where he had stashed the loot.

They needed hard proof. They needed witnesses.

Moreover, for their plan to work, they also needed some assistance.

‘Specifically,’ said Christie, ‘we need Mr Potts as bait, Miss Hall for evidence and Mr Carter for the satisfaction of clearing his name.’

Firstly, however, they needed to clean up the mess that they had made. Christie volunteered to do most of the sweeping, since she had been the one to break the vase in the first place. By the time they had removed the final piece, even Auguste said he wouldn’t have

noticed anything amiss. Of course, there was the fact that the vase was missing. But hopefully Mr Russell would assume he had misplaced it somewhere amongst all the clutter.

‘I think it might be a good idea to try Mr Carter first,’ said Agatha. ‘Maybe if we have him on board, the other two will be easier to persuade.’

Happily, Mr Carter was convinced both by their reasoning and by the soundness of their plan. After a little discussion, the other two adults agreed to their roles, too.



By lunchtime, everything was prepared.

‘Where should we go?’ Agatha asked, standing in the door of the pottery room.

‘We can hide under the table,’ said Christie at once. ‘It’s big enough that he shouldn’t see us coming in.’

‘*You* can hide under the table if you want to,’ said Auguste. ‘I will wait outside with Mr Carter and Miss Hall, where it is marginally less dusty.’



Everybody but the twins and Mr Potts went to wait around the corner. Mr Potts had the vital role of luring Mr Russell to the treasure trove. From their hiding place under the table, the two girls held their breath.

After a few minutes, they heard two sets of footsteps: the returning Mr Potts and—

‘It’s no trouble at all,’ said Mr Russell. ‘I’m perfectly happy to mind the fort for an hour. Mr Clarke can get by without me for that long.’

Phew! thought Agatha. The suspect had come. Their plan was off to a good start, at least.

‘It’s very good of you,’ they heard Mr Potts saying. ‘Only, I don’t want to leave everything unattended. I mean, there’s not only all these flasks and things but there’s also Miss Hall’s camera equipment to think about.’

‘Where *is* Miss Hall?’ asked Mr Russell.

Ha! thought Christie. *Of course he wants to check that.*

‘She had a problem with one of her photography thingamabobs,’ said Mr Potts. ‘I’m not really up on modern technology, but the long and the short of it is that she had

to go into town to get some spare part or other. And now *I* need to go into town to collect my medication. It's all rather frustrating. We were supposed to photograph all of these objects today. But we haven't had a chance to so much as look at them yet, let alone take pictures of them.'

'Really?' said Mr Russell. 'What a shame.'

Agatha clutched the edges of her dress with her hands. Could it be? Was Mr Russell taking the bait?

'Well, see you later,' said Mr Potts. 'Thanks again.'

'You're welcome,' said Mr Russell.

He walked over to the door, presumably watching Mr Potts out of sight. Then he came back over to the table. He paced around it slowly.

He has to be looking at the objects, thought Christie. *Now let's hope he has the nerve to pinch another one.*

If he was going to steal something, it had to be the lion ointment jar. Anyone could see that it was the most interesting piece on the table. It was sure to



excite any collector. In preparation, Christie had rubbed charcoal on the jar. That way, even if he managed to hide it, they would still have proof by the dust on his hands that he'd been the one to grab it.

After a moment, a pair of legs leant in to the table as their owner plucked something from it. Then at once the legs moved briskly towards the door.

The twins crawled after him, peering out from under the edge of the table. They were just in time to see Mr Russell slip outside, clutching something in one hand.



Yes! thought Christie. He had chosen the lion.

They scrambled to their feet and raced after him.

Barely had Mr Russell gone more than a few steps from the building, when a voice called out, ‘Smile for the camera!’

Mr Russell spun round in the direction of the shout, the stolen artefact clearly clasped in his hand, and there came the loud click of a shutter.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

For a moment Mr Russell just stood there stupefied. Then, recovering from his initial shock and still holding the jar, he made a dive at Miss Hall and her camera. However, Mr Carter darted forwards and grabbed his arm, pulling him back.

‘I don’t think so, old boy!’ he cried.

Unfortunately, being yanked so suddenly caused the man's other arm to shoot up, releasing his grip on the jar. It went flying through the air in a perfect arc. The adults' faces went white, as the precious object plummeted towards the rocky path. They had caught the thief – but at the cost of losing a wondrous, irreplaceable piece of history.

Then, just as it seemed as if the lion's fate was sealed, someone threw themselves towards it, catching it milliseconds before it hit the ground. The artefact's saviour rolled to a dusty stop, clutching it



safely in their arms. The others could only stare, open-mouthed.

‘Auguste!’ gasped Christie and Agatha in unison. Neither of them had ever seen him so active.

‘Where did you learn to do that?’ asked Christie.

The boy looked up at them, then, wincing, down at his dirty and crumpled suit. He closed his eyes as if in pain, but Agatha suspected the pain might be more mental than physical.

‘I have told you before, I think, about how I am sometimes forced to play cricket at school,’ he said.

‘The sports master, he makes us dive after the little ball in the most undignified of manners.’

‘I’m sorry about your clothes,’ said Agatha. ‘But that was amazing. You definitely saved the day.’

‘Please, do not mention it,’ said Auguste, with feeling.

‘Well, anyway, we’ve caught you red-handed,’ Christie told Mr Russell. ‘Or at least black-handed in this case.’

Auguste looked sadly down at the charcoal covering his own hands and sleeves, then closed his eyes again.

Mr Russell, on the other hand, glared at them furiously.



A little while later, the other suspects were assembled in Lord and Lady Carnarvon's big drawing room.

'Whatever is going on?' demanded Monsieur Couture.

'Why is everyone so dirty?'

At that moment Miss Hall burst into the room, flourishing her freshly developed photograph. 'Hello Monsieur Couture,' she said triumphantly, striding over to him.

'Thank you for waiting. I think you'll find this shot isn't blurry at all.'

Monsieur Couture's eyebrows immediately furrowed into his customary scowl. Upon seeing the photograph, however, they at once shot up to chase his receding hairline.

'What!' he cried. 'Is that Mr Russell stealing one of the jars?'

'It is,' said Christie. 'We caught him in the act, and on camera, too, just in case you needed more proof.'

'I was wrong to suggest that you were losing my negatives,' Miss Hall admitted to Monsieur Couture. 'It



seems that it
was actually

Mr Russell here taking them.'

The others clamoured to see the photograph and it was rapidly passed around between them. Mr Russell glowered at them all, but especially at the children.

'But why take the negatives of the items as well as the items themselves?' asked Lord Carnarvon.

'I think the kids should be the ones to explain,' said Miss Hall. 'After all, they're the ones who worked everything out.'

'Go on Aggie,' said Christie.

Agatha looked shyly up at her audience. 'Um, I think he had two reasons,' she said. 'Firstly, he could use them to document what he had taken and perhaps show them to potential buyers. Secondly, it would be harder to prove that the items had come from this dig if there was no photographic evidence to back it up.'

'How devilish!' said Mrs Dupont.

'And what has he been doing with them?' asked Lady Carnarvon. '*Has* he been selling them?'

'I had a little word with Mr Russell earlier and it's just as I

thought,' said Mr Carter grimly. 'The scoundrel has been selling the pieces he pinched to our old American rival.

'I'd advise you to cooperate with us, Mr Russell. Otherwise I'll recommend to the local police that they lock you up and throw away the key.'

Grumbling, Mr Russell agreed to take them to his stash. Although he warned them that he had sent the greater part of it away already.

'It's a shame Ada wasn't here to see us catch the thief,' Agatha said to Christie and Auguste, as they

followed after the others. 'Now she'll never know who it was.'

'It's a bigger shame that so many of those objects are gone for good, to some greedy, devious collector,' said Christie, frowning.

'It's a victory,' agreed Auguste. 'But somehow it isn't such a satisfying conclusion.'

The three of them let out a big, simultaneous sigh.

None of them realised yet how wrong they all were.



CHAPTER TWELVE

When they arrived at the small storeroom that Mr Russell had been using, the children cheered up a little. At least they'd recovered *something*.

Christie and Agatha examined the objects with interest. What an amazing collection it was! It reminded Christie of a magpie's nest she had found once when

climbing up a tree. This hoard was at least as shiny. In fact ... She frowned. Wasn't it *too* shiny? The other items Mr Potts had shown them had glittered and glimmered, but not quite so much as these.

Agatha, too, was having doubts. The more she looked at the set, the more she wondered why Mr Russell had chosen to steal these particular artefacts. The quality didn't seem nearly so high as the other ones they had seen. They lacked little details and the overall shapes seemed much less defined.

The girls looked at each other.

‘You don’t think ...?’ Agatha asked her sister hesitantly.

‘I do.’

Christie grabbed the nearest alabaster flask and Agatha picked up its twin.

‘No touching!’ snapped Monsieur Couture. ‘I would remind you that these are priceless artefacts that we have only just recovered and—’

‘They’re not,’ said Christie.

‘They’re not priceless at all.

Actually, I’d say they’re rather cheap.’

The adults stared at them.

‘You told us that real alabaster

is very heavy,’ Agatha said to Mr Potts. ‘But this is rather light.’

‘And you said that the veins should be random, not identical,’ Christie added. ‘But look: these two have exactly the same pattern!’

Mr Potts scrambled to pull his glasses from his shirt pocket, then crammed them onto his face. ‘Great Scott!’ he cried in amazement. ‘They’re right! These pieces aren’t from the tomb at all. In fact, they’re not from any tomb! They’re just common marketplace counterfeits!’

‘What?’ roared Mr Russell. He looked more shocked than anyone.

‘You mean you weren’t the one to make the switch?’ asked Miss Hall.



‘Of course not! Why would I want cheap copies when I could send the originals to ... to ...’ He trailed off, his eyes widening. ‘Oh no! He is *not* going to be happy when he realises the pieces I sent him aren’t genuine.’

Everyone gawped at Mr Russell, shocked at the unexpected turn the case had taken. So they hadn’t got the artefacts back after all? Mr Russell, the thief, had in turn been stolen from? By whom? What had they done with them? And most importantly, where were they now?

Agatha, just as bewildered as everyone else, looked up at the surprised faces surrounding her. Then something clicked. Maybe it was all those wide eyes that reminded her of someone else. Someone who was very good at sleight of hand, and equally skilled at looking innocent: Ada Lemon.

‘Christie,’ she whispered. ‘Do you think it might have been Ada who switched them?’

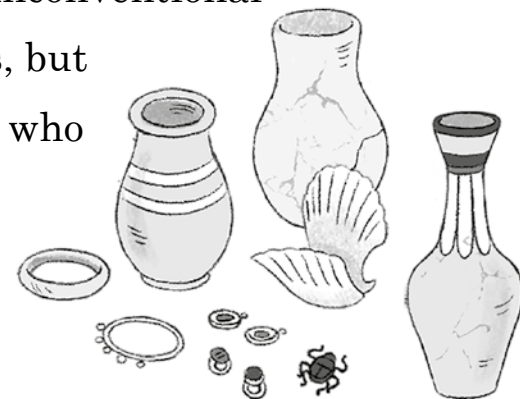
Christie loved her sister far too much to say ‘I told you so’. ‘I bet you’re right!’ she hissed back. ‘No wonder she raced off in

such a hurry this morning. She’s probably halfway across Europe by now.’

Auguste shook his head. ‘I doubt they could have left the country in such a short time, let alone made it to another continent.’

‘Well, either way, she’s long gone,’ said Christie gloomily. ‘And the artefacts with her.’

Agatha wasn’t so sure. She really *didn’t* think Ada was a bad person. An unconventional one, perhaps, but not someone who would make



off with a small fortune in stolen treasures. She felt that Ada must have made the switch to keep the actual items safe, while waiting for someone else to come along and solve the mystery. *Why* the girl had done it, Agatha wasn't entirely sure.

Unfortunately, Ada wasn't there to give them any more hints. Her final act before being dragged away had been to send them to Mr Russell's room. She must have hoped they would find some clue in there as to the man's guilt. Surely she must



also have given them some clue about the real items' location?

Agatha wracked her brains, thinking back to their earlier conversations with the girl. Then it hit her. *Of course! That must be it!*

'I can see your little grey brain cells working,' said Auguste.

'You've got something?' asked Christie.

At her raised voice the others turned in their direction.

'Well, I, er, I might have a sort of idea about where they are,' said Agatha, blushing. 'The real objects, I mean.'

‘Where?’ asked Mr Carter and Mr Russell simultaneously.

Mr Carter gave the thief a cold look. ‘I don’t think it’s any concern of yours,’ he said. ‘It’s not like we’re going to let you anywhere near them.’ Turning back to Agatha, he said more gently, ‘Where do you think they might be?’

‘I, um, think they might be where you found them.’

Mr Potts looked at her in confusion. ‘No, no, you were right first time, my dear: these objects are most definitely fakes.’

‘Of course that’s not what she meant!’ said Christie, cross that he would think her sister was that silly. She forgot that having known her twin her whole life, she found it far easier to guess her meaning than strangers did. ‘She doesn’t mean *now*. She means where you first found them: in the tomb!’



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The policeman guarding the tomb was reluctant to let the group in. After a lot of pressure from Monsieur Couture, however, he reluctantly agreed.

Waiting for him to slide open the locks on the gate was agony to the small party. When the final bolt was drawn back, Mr Carter struck a match and, with cries of ‘Careful!’ from Monsieur Couture, led the charge inside.

There, in the middle of the anteroom floor, was a gilded chest surrounded by a collection of beautiful objects.

‘The ibex!’ cried Mr Potts joyously, scooping up his favourite piece.

A few more of the adults shone torches to illuminate the display.

As exciting as the artefacts were, though, something else had attracted the children’s attention. Placed neatly on top of the chest was an envelope. It was addressed, ‘To Agatha, Christie and the Boy with the Peculiar Dress Sense.’

‘She is the one with the peculiar dress sense!’ muttered Auguste.



Christie had already darted forwards to seize the envelope. She tore it open and the three of them pored over the contents. Luckily, the adults were far more interested in the older objects in the room.

The letter read:

Congratulations! You found the missing items! I was able to sneak them back in here while the policeman was making a call of nature. Now the dig can restart. Another successful case for Christie and Agatha's Detective Agency. I enjoyed reading about your Scottish adventure in Daddy's newspaper, so it was fantastic to meet you in person.

If you want to know where the substitute items came from, I bought most of them from

market traders. I tried to pick ones that were close to the originals, but made a few changes when necessary. Mr Russell is far too much of a snob about anything that's not jewellery to notice. Did you realise the objects were fake or did Mr Potts tell you? I like to think you noticed it yourselves.

I knew it was Mr Russell, by the way, because I saw him going to his storeroom late one night when I was taking a walk. I walk very quietly and he's rather deaf, so he didn't notice me at all. I wondered what he had in there so I picked the lock. This is a very good trick - if you don't know how to do it already, I recommend you learn. There I found, well, what you're looking at now.

So, basically, it was just luck that I found out, not proper deductions like you did to get here. I know we didn't get to spend much time together, but I had a lot of fun playing with you, so thank you.

Ada Lemon

'Playing!' repeated Christie, with a snort.

'I suppose it *was* a game to her,' said Auguste. 'She is indeed a very unique individual.'

'I think there's something written on the other side of the paper,' said Agatha.

They turned it over.

P.S. I think James is going to be upset that we left before the stolen objects were found. He doesn't have much luck, does he?

P.P.S. I hope we can meet again one day!

Christie, still annoyed by the absent girl's attitude, said, 'I hope we don't!'

Agatha, however, had the feeling that they might.

'So,' said Lord Carnarvon, coming over, 'how *did* you know that the items would be back in the tomb?'

Because I told Ada that it's better to put things back where you found them, thought Agatha. And she told me she would. But I can't tell them that without getting Ada into trouble.

'It was just a hunch,' said Christie. However much Ada annoyed her, she wasn't going to drop her in it.

Monsieur Couture fixed them with a suspicious eye. 'A hunch?' he repeated.

'Their mother is a well-known psychic,' said Mrs Dupont, coming to their rescue.

‘Is that so?’ said Monsieur Couture, but he didn’t question them further.

The children breathed a sigh of relief. They would have to explain properly to Mrs Dupont later.

Mr Carter clapped his hands together. ‘I think we had better take these artefacts straight to the Egyptian Museum for safety, don’t you?’ he said.

So the items will stay in Egypt, where they belong! thought Agatha, relieved.

‘But before we pack them away again,’ Mr Carter grinned,

‘what do you think of the genuine pieces? How do they compare to those fakes that Mr Russell sent off to America?’

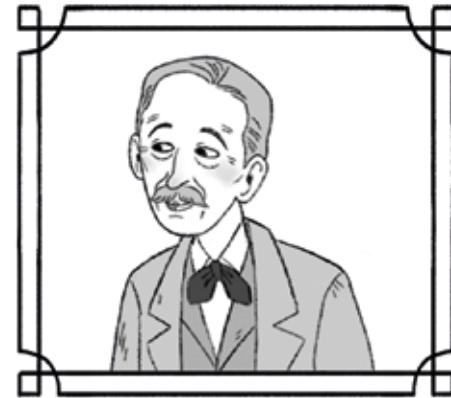
The children looked again at the shining collection of treasures: a gateway to the past, rescued for them and for generations to come.

‘I think you were right, Mr Carter,’ said Agatha simply. ‘They really are the most wonderful things.’



HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This story is a work of fiction but some of the characters and events are based on real historical people and the things that happened to them.



Lord Carnarvon (1866–1923),
Mr Carter's sponsor.

REAL PEOPLE:



Howard Carter (1874–1939), a British archaeologist and painter who discovered the intact tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922.

REAL EVENTS:

The excavation Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon worked on really was halted for a time in 1923, but this was probably because of a disagreement, not because of thefts – just like in this book, the real Howard Carter had quite a hot temper!



PIP MURPHY



Pip (Philippa) is a British author and spent her early life in England on The Wirral. She has loved reading her whole life, and some of the books that influenced and inspired her the most were ones she read when she was little. Pip studied Classics at Edinburgh University, before moving to Tokyo, Japan, to teach English.

ROBERTA TEDESCHI



Roberta was born in Milan, Italy. As a child she spent her time drawing, reading and watching a lot of animation on TV, which was her first inspiration. After attending an illustration school and finishing a comic book course, she began working as an illustrator. Roberta has worked with various publishers around the world.