

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June

Do you believe in the curse of  
Tutankhamun?



# What is a curse?

A curse is a kind of promise that something bad will happen to someone or something.

Curses can be spooky, because people who believe in them claim that a supernatural power is responsible for the curse coming true.

# King Tut's Curse

When Tutankhamun's tomb was opened in 1923 by Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon, rumours started to circulate about a terrible curse that had been placed on the tomb by Tutankhamun's priests, to punish anyone who disturbed the Pharaoh's rest.

Let's take a look at some of the stories...

# The Writing on the Wall

It was reported in many newspapers at the time that the following was written in heiroglyphs on the walls of Tut's tomb...

**“Death shall come on swift wings to him who disturbs the peace of the King...”**



# FALSE!

There was never any such inscription anywhere in the tomb. Reporters at the time were simply trying to find interesting stories to tell about the amazing new discovery.



# The Canary



Howard Carter's pet canary was apparently eaten by a cobra on the day that the tomb was opened.

The cobra was associated with the Egyptian royal family, and so people thought it was a warning to Carter.



# FALSE!

Howard Carter did have a pet canary, but he actually gave it to his friend, Minnie Burton, to look after.

No canaries were harmed in the opening of the tomb!

# Death of Lord Carnarvon

On 5<sup>th</sup> April 1923, Lord Carnarvon died of blood poisoning after he nicked a mosquito bite whilst shaving.

When Tutankhamun's mummy was unwrapped, a mark was found in the same place on his face as the mosquito bite on Lord Carnarvon's face.



# TRUE!

Lord Carnarvon did indeed die because of blood poisoning.

The wound on Tutankhamun's face showed signs of healing, so had occurred before his death.



# The lights went out

The moment Lord Carnarvon died, all the lights  
in Cairo went out...



# TRUE!

This story was true.



However, blackouts were very common in Cairo at that time, so this was not really that spooky.

# The curious case of the Dog

Back home in England, Lord Carnarvon's dog,  
Susie, let out a mournful howl at the exact time  
of his death...

... then died herself!



# FALSE!

Carnarvon died at 1:55 am, which would have been midnight in England, whilst his son reported that Susie died at 4 am.

This means that, if correct, their deaths were hours apart.



# Mysterious Deaths

In a book he wrote about mummies, an author named John Vornholt says that 13 out of the 20 people who were present when Tutankhamun's burial chamber was opened, died within a few years.

# FALSE!



Out of the 26 people who were involved with the opening of Tut's burial chamber and sarcophagus, and the unwrapping of his mummy, only 6 of these had died within 10 years!

# The truth is out there

It seems very unlikely that any curse ever existed, but mold spores were found in the samples of dirt taken from inside the tomb.

Some scientists believe that a few of the deaths that occurred could be explained by people being unlucky enough to breathe in the spores, which could poison them.



What do you think?

Did Tutankhamen's curse claim the lives of those who disturbed his final resting place?

Today I want you to write a paragraph saying what you think – was there a curse or not?

You can use all the information that is in this PowerPoint to help you organise your ideas.



What do you think?

I guess we'll never know...

