

# Curse of the Pharaoh

## Introduction

The Valley of the Kings, Luxor, Egypt. 23 April 1894. The excavation season will soon be over, as the baking sun makes digging unbearable, but the archaeological team from Oxford University led by Sir William Saville have made a startling discovery.

Tonight, the team and their guests prepare to enjoy a slap-up dinner to celebrate the uncovering of the tomb of a previously unknown XVIth Dynasty pharaoh. But while the archaeologists make merry, dark clouds gather, internal tensions among the group burst to the surface and one of the local diggers is brutally murdered... Welcome to *Curse of the Pharaoh!*

In *Curse of the Pharaoh*, the dinner party to celebrate the tomb's discovery will be played out over the course of a single evening. As well as the five archaeologists, guests at the dig include a diplomat, a museum curator and a dilettante – plus a police officer investigating the killing. However, not everyone is as they seem. Some (well, all) of those attending have mysterious secrets and will do anything to prevent them from being revealed.

All those invited to *Curse of the Pharaoh* are given a character. As they arrive they are greeted by the Servant, and welcomed to dinner. Each character has goals and objectives that they must complete before the end of the meal. Everyone has their own goals – and not all goals are compatible. If one person achieves their goals, another may fail!

The guests have various items, such as weapons and money to help them. They may also have various abilities to help them uncover secrets and achieve their goals.

The guests can form alliances, blackmail each other, steal items and money and maybe even try to kill one another. Along the way they may solve some of *Curse of the Pharaoh's* mysteries. Who was responsible for the grisly murder? What is the secret of the Eye of Horus? How did Harry Flinders die? Who is the sinister 'Mr Big'? And what dread secret lies buried in the Pharaoh's tomb, ready to stir once more? Join us to find out in *Curse of the Pharaoh*.

## Dinner is Served!

# What is included when you buy *Curse of the Pharaoh*?

- A step-by-step guide on how to run the game.
- Character sheets for each guest, including background, goals and objectives, rules and special abilities.
- Items and money for each guest.
- Handouts and other essential items.

## How many people are needed for *Curse of the Pharaoh*?

*Curse of the Pharaoh* has been written for 6 to 19 guests – plus the host or coordinator. The step-by-step guide explains which characters to omit should you have fewer than 19 guests (you do need at least 6, however). Here's how that works:

Number of guests	Male characters	Female characters	Characters that can be played by either sex
6	2	2	2
7	2	2	3
8	2	3	3
9	3	3	3
10	3	3	4
11	4	4	3
12	4	4	4
13	5	5	3
14	5	5	4
15	5	5	5
16	6	6	4
17	6	6	5
18	7	7	4
19	7	7	5

Note – for more than 9 guests, you need to buy *Curse of the Pharaoh Expanded*, which includes the extra 10 characters. And if you have even more guests, we have free extra characters for *Curse of the Pharaoh* available on our website.

## How does *Curse of the Pharaoh* work?

*Curse of the Pharaoh* runs over the course of three or four hours and is particularly suited to a buffet meal. One person is the Servant, and acts as organizer and coordinator, responsible for making sure everything runs smoothly and that all the guests have the information they need.

Your guests will be present at an archaeological dig in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Egypt. They have their own goals and agendas, and how they choose to achieve those goals is entirely up to them. *Curse of the Pharaoh* is an evening of double-dealing, intrigue, mysterious powers and even murder!

### **Where can I get *Curse of the Pharaoh*?**

*Curse of the Pharaoh* is available from [www.freeformgames.com](http://www.freeformgames.com). It costs £20 (UK pounds), or the equivalent in your own currency – or £25 for the expanded version with all 19 characters. We accept all major credit cards – and PayPal.

When you purchase the game, you'll be taken to a page where you can download it right away. We will also email you a download link and password, so you can come back to the site and collect your game later if that's more convenient.

### **What if I don't like *Curse of the Pharaoh*?**

No product is perfect for everyone. We know that and you know that and that's why we offer a cast-iron, no quibble guarantee. If you're not completely satisfied with *Curse of the Pharaoh*, let us know within 30 days and we will refund you. You can read our full terms and conditions here:

<http://www.freeformgames.com/terms.php>

"I thought **Curse of the Pharaoh** was perfect. Absolutely amazing. Me and my friends had the best time, with relatively no work on my part. Four months later and my friends are STILL talking about it. It let us get really creative, and yet we all saw a competitive side of our friends that we hadn't seen before."  
**Emma Bardes, United States**



"My daughter celebrated her 18th birthday this past Saturday by inviting 13 of her friends to join her in enacting the **Curse of the Pharaoh Expanded**. It was a great success! Each participant dressed their part and kept in (frequently very amusing) character. We were initially a bit intimidated by the apparent complexity, as it was going to be played by a group of 16, 17 and 18 year olds. But from the introductions onward everyone remained engaged for three and a half hours. Thank you for creating such an intricate, engaging, exciting game. The flexibility adds challenge, but it is well worth the effort navigating its twists and turns. I recommend your games as a great activity for teenagers."  
**Lynn Robb, United States**



"We played **Curse of the Pharaoh** for my husband's 29th B-day last night. It was awesome!! It was actually a surprise party for him, and when he came in, our living room / dining room was transformed into a Middle Eastern tent (I hung Indian sarrees on the walls and from the ceiling, had Egyptian art on the walls and was playing Middle Eastern music). We were all in costume when we yelled "Surprise!" He was so excited! I gave him the role of the detective and about half an hour to change and read his character sheet. Everyone had an amazing time! I served olives, samosas and a Mediterranean mix of appetizers as the guests familiarized themselves with the rules and had a rice, chicken and beef kebabs with flatbread for dinner when the game started. I went to the dollar store and bought real items for each of the characters' item cards and made a scarecrow with a crimson sash to lay outside the room as the murder victim. We sooo can't wait to play another game over the Christmas Holidays!!"  
**Alcina Prezens, Canada**



"What a great time for all! They are still talking about **Curse of the Pharaoh**. Thank you and I would definitely recommend this one to someone else. They created alliances and wanted to swap abilities and team up against each other. What a hoot! Thanks again."  
**Rhonda Dinsmoor**



# Curse of the Pharaoh

You are cordially invited to *Curse of the Pharaoh*, an evening of double-dealing, intrigue, mysterious powers and murder to be held at

.....  
on ..... starting at .....

## Setting

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Tonight, the team and their guests prepare to enjoy a slap-up dinner to celebrate the uncovering of the tomb of a previously unknown XVIth Dynasty pharaoh. But while the archaeologists make merry, dark clouds gather, internal tensions among the group burst to the surface and one of the local diggers is brutally murdered... Welcome to *Curse of the Pharaoh!*

## Your Character

Your character, the person you will be playing, is indicated below. You will receive more background information, your character's detailed goals, simple rules and a heap of cool abilities and items on the day.

## The Cast

**Sir William Saville:** renowned archaeologist and leader of the dig

**Ariadne Price-Evans:** veteran translator of Egyptian inscriptions

**Hugh Carlaw:** enthusiastic young student

**Helen Mackinnon:** the belle of Oxford

**Shahfeez Merouf:** mysterious Arab, the Curator of the Luxor Museum

**Alvy Spanheim:** Cultural Attaché at the German Consulate

**Eva de Chalons:** dilettante and art connoisseur

**Lindsay Wilde:** also wild by nature, a brooding misfit on the archaeological scene

**Robert Tregarne:** Detective Sergeant in the Colonial Police

**Alex McQueen:** Detective Constable in the Colonial Police

**Armand Lenoir:** leader of a French excavation nearby

**Marie-Claire Guiscard:** hard-working assistant to Lenoir

**Tariq al-Mansoor:** wealthy collector of Egyptian antiquities

**Fatima al-Mansoor:** wealthy collector of Egyptian antiquities

**Professor Reginald Mathers:** respected archaeologist from Cambridge

**Lady Jane Fortescue:** noble widow and archaeological dilettante

**Chris Kovacs:** young Hungarian student

**Reverend Godfrey Fox:** Cambridge-based church minister

**Angela Fox:** administrative assistant to Mathers's team

# THE CAIRO GAZETTE

23<sup>rd</sup> April 1894

The main English-language newspaper of the Egyptian colony

## Oxford Team Strikes It Lucky

The archaeological team led by Sir William Saville, which has been digging in Luxor's Valley of the Kings since September last, has hit the jackpot with the exposure of a fine XVIIIth-Dynasty tomb doorway in apparently undisturbed ground. Who knows what may lie beyond? 'This could be the answer to all our dreams – a fully intact pharaonic tomb!' exclaimed Sir William, his eyes gleaming with that passion we all know and respect.

The site will hold particular poignancy for the team's esteemed leader, as it is just a mile from where he first made his professional name as a rising young archaeological star, in 1870, with the discovery of the Eye of Horus, the striking malachite plaque recently stolen from the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Sir William's partner on that dig was the talented Harry Flinders, tragically stuck down by scorpion bite that same day – how great a loss to archaeology he may have been, we shall never know. 'I dedicate this new find to Harry's memory,' said Sir William, wiping away a tear.

Assisting Sir William on the excavation are noted lady archaeologist Miss Ariadne Price-Evans, and students Mr Hugh Carlaw and Miss Helen Mackinnon.

## War More Likely In Colonies Than Europe, Says PM

The Prime Minister spoke to calm the nerves of Parliament, after the recent flood of ill-informed gossip about the proximity of European War. 'Her Majesty's Government is fully aware that our bellicose neighbours are arming themselves more capably and in greater numbers than we have seen for generations. A newly-united Germany keen to prove itself on the world stage, and a France desperate for a last chance at greatness, represent real dangers, and in response we too have commenced a military build-up.

'But the people of Britain need have no fear. If there is war, it will be a war of Empire, and will be fought in the far-flung provinces and colonies, not here in our homes. And, it need hardly be added, Britain will be victorious!'

(Shouts of 'Huzzah!' from all sides of the House.)

## Superstitious Natives Restless

The *Gazette* notes with concern that relations between the native Egyptian community and their British superiors has taken an alarming trend for the worse in recent months. It seems the local folk are no longer willing to meekly kowtow to the policies we institute on their behalf.

Rather than attempt to secure an interview with a native Egyptian, from which little of value could likely be learned, we spoke to renowned expert on native affairs Major Ray Siste.

'Your Egyptian Johnny's a peaceable enough fellow six days out of seven. But prod him in a sensitive spot, and he'll be hopping up and down with rage as quick as Jack-be-nimble! And one thing he can't abide is the idea that his precious artefacts are being smuggled out of the country! Seems he don't mind so much if they're going to museums or universities – it's the private collectors he can't abide. Something to do with ritual significance of the items concerned, or some such stuff and nonsense – he's a superstitious chap, your basic Egyptian in the bazaar. Forever worrying about ancient evils being raised from the tomb by careless Westerners, and such. Why, it fair makes us old Egypt hands laugh, to hear the natives wail about tampering with knowledge man was not meant to wot of. What I say is, if man weren't meant to wot of it, why was he given the wherewithal to wot with, what?'

It is certainly true that the theft of artefacts from archaeological excavations in the Luxor area has been sharply on the rise lately, under the nefarious influence of a smuggling ring led by a shadowy figure known only as 'Mr Big'. It is not only the natives who are irked by this gentleman's antics!

Another theory is that the Egyptian political-intellectual class is wary of their land being used as a pawn in the rivalries of European nations. Understandably perhaps, they have no desire to see bloody battle waged on the banks of the Nile, over an affair which is no quarrel of theirs. However reasonable this belief may at first sound, though, the clear fact is that Egypt is far better off under British rule than German or French. (The 'independence' some are calling for is not even worth discussing.) So any sacrifices the Egyptians are called upon to make for the defence of British power will be well worthwhile. And we may be assured that any further attempts by rabble-rousers to foment peasant unrest will be met with firmness by the colonial authorities!

# Costuming for *Curse of the Pharaoh*

These tips are suggestions only - you should wear whatever you find comfortable. However, photographs usually come out better when you're wearing a costume!

Although the game takes place at a dinner, preparations have been rather disrupted by the murder, so the archaeologist characters might be wearing 'work' clothes rather than evening dress.

**Sir William Saville:** 'professor' clothes – tweed jacket, maybe a pipe. Or evening dress.

**Ariadne Price-Evans:** a long dress or blouse and long skirt, with a high collar and long sleeves.  
Hair could be scraped back into a severe bun.

**Hugh Carlaw:** 'archaeologist' clothes, khaki, pith helmet – maybe shorts and knobbly knees!  
Or evening dress.

**Helen Mackinnon:** a delightful frock, preferably with a high neck – the 'English Rose' look.  
Ideally, with a straw hat.

**Shahfeez Merouf:** elaborate Middle Eastern robes, with a head-dress.

**Alvy Spanheim:** dress as formally as possible, with a top hat if male.  
Maybe a monocle, to look more Germanic.

**Eva de Chalons:** glamorous evening dress with plunging neckline, gloves, cigarette holder...  
the works!

**Lindsay Wilde:** dress as described for Hugh or Helen, depending on gender.

**Robert Tregarne:** police uniform if available, if not then everyday clothes with a sturdy jacket.

**Alex McQueen:** dress as described for Robert

**Armand Lenoir:** dress as described for William, but with added French stylishness

**Marie-Claire Guiscard:** practical outdoor clothes, with lots of pockets

**Tariq al-Mansoor:** dress as described for Shahfeez

**Fatima al-Mansoor:** covered from head to toe, with just eyes showing

**Professor Reginald Mathers:** dress as described for William

**Lady Jane Fortescue:** a glamorous dress as if for a garden-party

**Chris Kovacs:** shabby but hard-wearing outdoor clothes

**Reverend Godfrey Fox:** clerical dress, with a dog-collar

**Angela Fox:** dress as described for Helen

**The Servant:** either in smart white uniform, or in Egyptian clothes such as a djellabah (long plain tunic with sleeves)