
The Pharaoh's Trap
Liyana Shah

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The Enigmatic Hotel

Angelina arrived at her cousin's huge hotel at around 12pm. She slowly walked to the grand staircase dragging her feet along, exhausted from her long trip. Angelina was fourteen years old with soft hazel eyes and silky light brown hair that she constantly tied into a messy bun. She wore a comfortable oversized denim jacket over a plain white t-shirt with her favourite worn out trainers. Unlike, her energetic cousin, Beacon, Angelina was normally found with a good book about wild adventures, but today she just wanted to drop her heavy canvas backpack and take a snooze.

All around her she saw hundreds of butlers climbing up the stairs carrying silver trays and heavy luggage for guests. As she arrived at the top of the steps and walked through



the grand entrance, she smelled all the fruits of the rainbow mixed with a strong smell of wine. A rich and pure scent filled the massive lobby. The carpet beneath her feet felt like fluffy sheep's wool, so thick her trainers practically sank into it. Decorated sheep heads lined the walls looking proud and bold. At that moment, Beacon came bouncing into the room, pulling Angelina into a tight embrace and blanketing her with her goth makeup.

"Angelina, I thought you were never coming. I am so glad you're here as we've got so much to explore and discover."

30 minutes later.

Dear Diary,

I will tell you about Beacon. She's age 11 and although we are exact opposites, I still love her.

She is loud and energetic, adores goth makeup, and is infatuated with creepy-crawlies. One thing to know is that she hates Barbies and boys. She is hilarious and I am dead serious when I say I can't tell a joke. Her preferred books are murder mysteries whereas it's Find-Outers and Famous Five for me.

Bye until tomorrow.

PS we both like Egypt, the Pyramids and the Sphinx in Percy Jackson novels. Excited for tomorrow.

The Radiant Crystals

The delicious scent of fried eggs and sizzling sausages still lingered in the air as Angelina followed Beacon down a narrow, twisting corridor. It was the morning after her long, exhausting journey, and a good night's sleep had finally driven away her fatigue. True to her word, Beacon was practically vibrating with excitement, her dark goth makeup applied with a bit more precision today, though a stray smudge of black eyeliner still dusted her cheek.

"Hurry up, Angelina!" Beacon hissed, her voice a loud whisper that echoed against the stone walls. "The hotel guests never come down this wing. It's totally off-limits, which means it's the best place to explore."

Angelina adjusted her oversized denim jacket, her worn-out trainers making silent thuds against the floorboards.

She would have preferred to curl up in a corner of the grand lobby with the Enid Blyton mystery book she had tucked under her arm, but Beacon's infectious energy was hard to resist. Besides, Beacon had promised a mystery of their own. Beacon stopped abruptly in front of a heavy, iron-bound oak door. With a dramatic flourish and a grin that showed she loved the thrill of a creepy adventure, she pushed it open.

They stepped into an ancient study room, and Angelina immediately held her breath. The contrast between this room and the plush, sheep-wool luxury of the main hotel was staggering. It smelled heavily of dust, dampness, and decaying paper. Cobwebs draped like lace over towering bookshelves that were crammed with rotting old letters and maggoty old books. Many of the covers were warped and peeling, looking as though they hadn't been touched in a century.



While Beacon immediately scrambled towards a desk covered in strange, dried-up insects, Angelina's gaze floated towards a dark shelf across the room. There, casting a surreal glow over the decay, sat a row of illuminating crystals. They vibrated with a strange, internal light, humming softly in the quiet room. Angelina walked closer, mesmerised by their weird colours. One pulsed with a thick, murky green fumes, reminiscent of smoke billowing out of a witch's chimney. Another shifted like a deep, stormy ocean, blending blackish-blue hues together. A third crystal glowed with a dull, heavy brick-brown.

“Look at this, Angie,” Beacon called out, holding up a cracked magnifying glass. “There are old letters here from Egypt! Real ones, I think!”

Angelina didn't answer right away. She reached out a hand towards the witchy green crystal. As her fingers brushed the glowing surface, a sudden inexplicable chill ran up her arm. The shadows in the ancient study seemed to lengthen, and Angelina realised that their holiday was about to become exactly the kind of wild adventure she usually only read about.

Goings On in Giza

Suddenly beams of light shot through them like daggers from the past. Both started cascading down and then they stopped dead, the room eerily silent.

“Hey what happened, Angelina? I didn’t realise we were going through a portal,” uttered Beacon.

“Things like this happen in the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and in this, the witch captures the children and shaves the magical lion’s head,” responded Angelina.

“Dummy, this will be exciting,” snapped Beacon.

She grabbed Angelina’s hand and they jumped through.

“When we get back, I'm going to trash your goth makeup and clothes. Aaaaaaaahhhhh!” yelled Angelina in an angry voice.

They landed with a bump and started to stare. Smooth silky sand was to be seen for miles around except for the occasional prickly porcupine cacti. Massive pyramids that reached the sky and muscly men working individually like 100 men all together. The stench of body odour filled the air.

"Wow this place is amazing, Angelina," remarked Beacon in awe.

Angelina was in a grump because she'd let an 11-year-old drag her through a mysterious gemstone without a fight, but she had to admit Beacon was right; this place was wonderfully wonderful. And their clothes had changed too; she was wearing a magnificent Egyptian robe with a marvellous head dress decorated with precious studded gemstones, as was Beacon. Just as she had finished admiring herself, Beacon grabbed Angelina's hand and

pulled her through the scorching heat towards the pyramid of GIZA!!!

"Let's go for a tiny peek," whispered Beacon.

"Fine, just this time Beacon," retorted Angelina.

"Ha, I can definitely drag you away from your books once again!" smiled Beacon.

A Trustworthy Stranger?

Before Angelina could even answer, a long, dark shadow stretched across the sand, blocking the blinding sun. Standing right in front of them was a towering man dressed in a patchwork robe of silk and linen that shimmered like a snake's scales. He had deep, glistening eyes that seemed to hypnotise anyone who looked at them for too long. He smiled a slow, sly smile, revealing a gold tooth.



"Welcome, little wanderers, to the golden sands of eternity," the man said. His voice was smooth like honey but at times sharp like glass. "I am Sobek Knef, the Master of Paths, the seeker of hidden truths... or, for simple minds, your tour guide!"

Angelina immediately stepped in front of Beacon, clutching her book tightly. "We don't need a tour guide. We're just looking around!"

Sobek Knef's eyes darted down to Beacon, and his expression instantly twisted into a look of deep disgust.

"Ugh, children. Sticky, loud, and constantly asking questions. I despise them. But..." His eyes locked onto Beacons' heavy silver goth chains and the gleaming gemstone dangling from her pocket. His gaze then drifted to the bronze dagger strapped to his own hip, which he tapped lovingly. "I do adore shiny things and swords,

especially rare treasures. Come, I know a secret entrance into the Great Pyramid. A place away from the filthy, sweaty workers," he muttered.

"Let's go, Angelina," Beacon whispered, completely mesmerised by the guide's strange charm. Before Angelina could grab her, Beacon sprinted after Sobek Knef.

"Fine! Wait up!" Angelina yelled.

At that moment, the three of them stepped through a narrow, hidden slit in the limestone wall. A deafening *CRACK* echoed through the chamber. A massive stone block crashed down from the ceiling, completely sealing the entrance behind them. They were trapped in total darkness.

"Ah!" Sobek Knef chuckled in the dark, his voice entirely unbothered. "The classic pharaoh's trap. It seems the only way out now is straight through the heart of the pyramid.

If we survive the trials, of course." Suddenly, torches along the walls burst into blue flames, revealing a long, narrow corridor filled with hieroglyphs that seemed to move. "To pass the first gate," Sobek Knef purred, pointing a long, sharp fingernail at a carving of a Sphinx, "we must solve the pyramid's riddle. Fail, and the walls crush us. Listen closely…I refuse to get crushed by the wall today. Only answer when you're sure you know."

"Okay," they both chanted.

The Riddle

"So, you have been chosen to answer my mighty riddle," echoed the Sphinx in a hollow weary voice. "Step forward our two new contestants; here is the riddle. I am a strike from the sky that never hits the ground. Pharaohs carved me out of single blocks of stone, so my pointed, golden tip could catch the first morning sun. What am I?"

"Pss, Angelina, I never learnt this in school," murmured Beacon.

"I am a strike from the sky that never hits the ground" muttered Angelina.

"A shooting star?" said Beacon.

"Pharaohs carved me out of single blocks of stone so my pointed golden tip will catch the first golden sun," carried on Angelina ignoring Beacon.

"The Sphinx?" responded Beacon.

"Halleluiah! I know, I know," whooped Angelina.

"Then don't get it wrong or I will crush you," returned Sobek Knef.

"No, the walls will crush us," beamed Angelina in a merry mood. "Now, great Sphinx, I will give you the answer and let us proceed - an obelisk!" The walls started to creep forward crunching sand with their heavy weight. "Wait, what!" cried Angelina. Then suddenly, silence. The walls were stuck, still-like waiting for a command. The thick stone walls groaned and locked into place with a violent shudder.

Angelina let out a shaky breath and threw her arms around Beacon in total relief. They squeezed each other tightly in the dim blue light, terrified but overjoyed to be alive.



"We did it!" Angelina cried out, pulling back from Beacon's embrace with a small grin.

"Don't celebrate yet," Beacon murmured, pointing ahead.

The wall behind the Sphinx sank into the floor, revealing a dark, freezing archway. Sobek Knef glided past them, his sharp fingernails clicking.

"You survived the first gate," he groaned, gesturing to the pitch-black tunnels ahead. "Now, enter The Maze of Doom. A wrong turn here means wandering the dark forever while the creatures in the shadows hunt you down."

Angelina's smile vanished instantly. Frightened, she grabbed Beacon's hand as they stared into the terrifying labyrinth.

The Chaotic Labyrinth

The blue flames behind them flickered out, plunging the corridor into a suffocating, pitch-black darkness. Angelina and Beacon bolted forward blindly, choosing a path out of sheer panic as the dragging sound grew louder.

Within minutes, they were completely turned around.

The maze was a shifting puzzle of cold stone. Every hallway looked identical to the last, lined with the same endless rows of blinking hieroglyphs. They turned left, only to hit a solid dead-end wall that hadn't been there a moment before. They doubled back, but the corridor they had just walked down had vanished, replaced by a narrow, claustrophobic crawlspace.



"We've been here before," Beacon said, her breath hitching as her hands scraped against the rough stone. "I recognise that carved eye on the wall."

"No, we haven't," Angelina cried, her voice trembling. "That eye is on the left now. It was on our right two minutes ago. The walls are moving when we aren't looking!"

They ran until their lungs burned, but the labyrinth only grew deeper. The freezing air seemed to swallow their voices, making every frantic whisper sound distant and hollow. Every corner they turned revealed three more identical paths stretching into the blackness. The shadows

seemed to lengthen and stretch, twisting the corridors into impossible shapes that defied logic.

They were utterly, completely lost, with no idea which way was forward, and no way back.

Time lost all meaning. Minutes felt like hours as they stumbled through the suffocating blackness, the air growing thick with the scent of stagnant water and decaying linen. The maze wasn't just a physical structure; it felt like a living entity trying to wear them down.

"Stop, Beacon, just stop," Angelina gasped, dropping to her knees on the cold, sandy floor. She gripped her head in her hands, her hair damp with cold sweat. "We're walking in circles. Every time we turn a corner, I feel like the ceiling is getting lower."

She wasn't imagining it. The walls had drifted so close together that they could only walk single file, their

shoulders scraping against the moving hieroglyphs. The stone surface felt hot and pulsing to the touch, entirely unnatural against the freezing air of the tunnels.

Beacon knelt beside her, hands shaking as she reached out into the dark. "We can't stay still. If we stop, the walls might just close up on us completely."

She dragged her fingers along the floor, trying to find a seam, a crack, or any clue indicating a way out. Instead, her hand brushed against something metallic and cold buried in the loose sand. She dug it out. It was an ancient, rusted bronze compass, its glass cracked into a spiderweb pattern. The needle inside didn't point north; it spun frantically in a continuous, dizzying circle, mirroring the chaos of the labyrinth around them.

"Someone else was here," Beacon whispered, staring at the useless tool. "And they didn't make it out."

Right on cue, a soft, dry, scratching sound echoed from the ceiling directly above them, like thousands of tiny claws scraping against stone. The blue torches further down the passage suddenly flared to life again, illuminating a horrifying sight. The tunnel ahead didn't just bend, it spiralled downward into a dizzying vortex of shifting stone blocks, rearranging themselves like a giant, grinding Rubik's cube.

Half Bird Half Lion

The frantic scratching above them suddenly intensified. With a sharp crack, a stone slab in the ceiling fell away, and a magnificent creature dropped into the narrow corridor, lowering its massive wings and hovering just inches above the sand.

It had the sleek, muscular body of a golden lion, but sprouting from its shoulders were powerful, iridescent wings. Its head was that of a majestic bird of prey, with fierce, intelligent, amber eyes that locked onto the terrified teenagers.

"A Ba-bird," Beacon breathed, backing into the wall. "An ancient Egyptian soul-creature."

The creature let out a low, melodic cry that echoed through the stone tunnels, instantly silencing the grinding

walls. It didn't attack. Instead, it tilted its head, sensing their desperation, and lowered its golden back towards them in an unmistakable invitation.

“I think it wants us to climb on!” Angelina urged, not waiting another second.

They scrambled onto the creature’s warm, feathered back, gripping its thick golden mane just as the walls gave another violent lurch, threatening to crush them. With a powerful leap, the creature launched itself straight down the twisting corridor.

The flight was a breathless, dizzying blur. The creature navigated the shifting maze with impossible speed, banking hard around corners, just as stone doors slammed shut behind them. It dived through closing gaps, its wings brushing against moving hieroglyphs, completely immune to the labyrinths’ illusions. The suffocating darkness broke



as the creature soared upward through a massive, vertical shaft, breaking out of the freezing tunnels entirely.

With one final, triumphant sweep of its wings, the creature glided down and landed softly on a wide, open stone platform. As Angelina and Beacon slid off its back, the creature gave a respectful nod, snapped its wings, and dissolved into a cloud of sparkling golden dust.

The Broken Deal

"Well, that was unexpected and cool, riding a dragon," uttered Beacon.

Suddenly, in blinding white light, there appeared a mystical tattered old portal, coloured with arches of forgotten tales and pictures of cravens and long-lost beasts.

"Well, I know what you're going to do, Beacon, so I'm going to save you the bother." Angelina grabbed Beacon's hand and together with horror-struck faces, they jumped like scared action figures.

The ray of light transported them into a cell of darkness, fitted with canes and spiked hammers of all sorts. Suddenly, out of the blue, came a fierce creature with features of both an onyx and a bird. He snarled in an

eagle-like way, warning them to go or be crushed into bone dust.

The beast looked eerily familiar. It was the hypnotic eyes, bronze dagger and golden tooth which were the giveaways!

“Hey, Sobek Knef, it’s you who has metamorphosised? What’s this all about? We had a deal; if people come with you, then you get crushed too,” exclaimed Beacon.

Sobek Knef’s newly formed tail suddenly came crashing down with immense force; the impact was absolute. “I am Sobek Knef, ‘the monster’, and I deceive everyone.” The massive, scaly tail slammed into Angelina and Beacon with the force of a swinging battering ram, sweeping their feet clean off the ground, and throwing them through the pitch darkness. They hit the stone floor hard, coughing up dust, as their breath was knocked out of them. Around them,

the spiked hammers and heavy canes hanging on the walls rattled violently against iron brackets.

“So much for a deal!” Beacon wheezed, scrambling backwards on her elbows, as a massive shadow loomed over her.

Above them, Sobek Knef let out a piercing shriek that echoed deafeningly within the cramped stone cell. He was terrifying up-close; a shifting nightmare of sleek, razor-sharp onyx antlers and a jagged beak that looked capable of snapping iron. His hypnotic eyes locked onto Angelina, his muscular, bird-and-beast hybrid torso flexing as he raised a clawed hand to crush them into dust.

Angelina didn't wait to be pulverized. Adrenaline surging, she grabbed a heavy, metal-tipped cane from a nearby rack. With a scream of her own, she swung it like a baseball bat, aiming straight for the joint of the beast's

armoured wing. The strike landed with a sharp crack, forcing the creature to recoil with an angry hiss.

"Get up, Beacon!" she yelled, her palms suddenly sparking with a faint, volatile, magical glow that she didn't even know she possessed.

Sobek Knef snapped his jaws in fury, completely ignoring Beacon's earlier protests about their broken agreement. He whirled around, his talons slicing through the air, just inches from Angelina's face. The final battle had begun, and the exit was nowhere to be seen.

Angelina and Beacon were once again swept off their feet. Angelina managed to dart to the array of swords and metallic hammers hanging on the crumbling wall. Grabbing a hammer, she swung it with every inch of her strength. The hammer soared over the monster's head, heading straight for Beacon.

"Duck!" Angelina yelled at the top of her lungs.

"Where's the duck?" Beacon cried out.

"Move! Get out the way," Angelina hollered back.

Finally, Beacon got the message and in a split second, side-stepped out of the way just in time. With an almighty crash, the hammer hit the floor causing limestone and sand to fly up. Sobek Knef, incensed by the girls' actions, lashed out with all his might, claws and teeth sent into frenzy.

Suddenly, Angelina stood up erect as she had an epiphany, and beckoned Beacon closer. Angelina quickly explained her plan as to how they would battle the warring monster. She had realised that their power alone could not defeat the beast; it would require wit to overcome the physically superior opponent.

"Hey ugly, over here," screamed Beacon. "I need to check your golden tooth!"

The monster turned around, its screech resonating off the walls. As it pursued Beacon, she was careful to manoeuvre it strategically into place. Unbeknown to the beast, Angelina had been tiring herself out, by throwing hammer after hammer at the limestone walls. Panting like a dog, her arms about to fall off, she was almost overcome by the last-ditch effort.

Beacon brought the beast to a sudden stop. The creature froze and a sickening realisation rippled through its massive frame. The wall was now giving violent shudders and dramatic groans. As Angelina hurled the final hammer and Beacon jumped out of the way, the mighty wall collapsed into a heap, right on top of the monster. A deafening scream filled the air, as Sobek Knef breathed his last breath.



Suddenly, a square-like portal appeared, patterned with ice. It was weird because they were in a bone-dry desert, but the ice wasn't melting. Without hesitating, Angelina and Beacon just stepped through the portal, glad that their adventure had been successful, and looking forward to a well-earned whippy hot chocolate and cookie.



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Beacon and Angelina are now off on a super adventure, traveling through different realms and tackling blood thirsty creatures. Will they come back alive? Will they beat the Pharaoh's trap?