



Cainus the Jackal shivered. He'd lit every one of his torches and candles, but tonight his tomb was colder than death itself.

"What one wouldn't give for a cosy cape," he moaned. While Cainus's voice was posh and silky, his precious clothes were anything but. They lay in tatters, thanks to some nasty moth business. Now, Cainus had only his own jackal fur to warm him.

"Even my glorious fur has turned patchy," he complained. "Ever since I accidentally applied fur removal cream in that ghastly Cat Mummy's salon. Bah, the draughts!"



He tried to stuff his missing fur patches with sand, but that only made him itchy.

With dread, Cainus realised why it was so chilly. It wasn't because the desert grew cold at night. No, this icy air could mean only one thing.

His mistress was devising one of her appalling plans.

Every time the Unpharaoh plotted, the temperature in the Real World seemed to plummet. People didn't know it, but whenever they shivered from cold, it meant the ancient sorceress was brooding over dark thoughts.

Cainus jumped as the vast stone wall across the room made an eerie noise.

NEB, NEBBA NEB NEB, rang the wall.

Cainus padded over and swiped a patchy paw across it to answer the call. The wall worked like a huge video screen, only it was magic. A gorgeous scene of palm trees and a huge swimming pool

appeared before him – spoiled by the hideous face looming in the foreground.

The face of the Unpharaoh.

She looked all of her four thousand years, and then some. Her elephant skin was riddled with yellow and grey cracks. Her red eyes glowed with hatred, and two black fangs jutted over her crusty lip.



“Your Majestic Majesty of Majesties,” Cainus fawned, bowing as low as he could. This morning, he’d even dug a hole in the floor so he could bow lower. He jammed his pointy face into the hole.

Cainus hoped the Unpharaoh wouldn’t guess the other reason he’d dug the face hole. It was to hide the blush that appeared on his face every time he gazed upon his beloved mistress. No matter how scary she was, Cainus adored her. And his patches of missing fur meant the colour of his skin was now on show.

“How do you do on this mild and balmy evening?”

Cainus asked, shivering with cold. His trembling voice was muffled as he spoke into the face hole. He couldn't see a thing.

"I'm brooding over dark thoughts," replied the leathery face on the wall.



"What a lovely way to spend a Sunday!" said Cainus, his face still in the hole. One of his back legs began to twitch with fear. "What are you thinking of? Cupcakes, perhaps? Pretty little birds tweeting melodies by the duck pond?"

"Revenge!" the Unpharaoh hissed. "I'm thinking of bitter revenge on the boy!"

"Let me help, Your Greatness. Shall I disguise myself as Bab Sharkey again? Or turn you into a Moth Mummy again? I'm very confident about those ideas."

"Those ideas failed, you four-legged nincompoop," the Unpharaoh snapped. "Now look me in the eye! I've been recalling the days of my childhood, Cainus, four thousand years gone.

Did I ever tell you where I learned my frightful spells?”

Cainus shook his pointy head. “I’ve not had the pleasure of this jolly tale, Your Superbness.”



The Unpharaoh snorted mist from her nose. It **WHOOSHED** from the wall into Cainus’s hall and blossomed into a cloud. Scenes from ancient times appeared on the cloud. Cainus

saw a man and a woman, dressed in wonderful woven robes. Beside them was a small, brown-eyed girl.

“My father and mother were wealthy, Cainus,” said the Unpharaoh. “So rich, they were part of Pharaoh’s court – the people in charge of Egypt. I too wanted to learn the ways of the powerful. But in those days, only boys were allowed to attend the Prince’s School. So I snuck into the entrance exam and topped the class. It wasn’t very hard – the boys were ninnies!”

The Unpharaoh flicked her twiggy fingers and the scene changed. Now the small girl was surrounded by other children. They sat in a classroom, writing the little pictures that Egyptians called hieroglyphs. The girl finished first, proudly waving her papyrus in the air.

“The teachers scoffed. They said a mere girl like me could never reach the *very* top. Could never become Pharaoh. At every stage, people stood in my way. So I set out to prove them all wrong.”

“What did you do?” asked the jackal. “Politely explain the error of their ways?”

“Haccch, hardly! There was a man in the city. Everyone knew to keep away from him, for he was said to practise magic. Not white magic, the good kind. Nor black magic, the bad kind. But the *really* bad kind – purple magic!”

Cainus panted in fear. “I don’t suppose this story will have a happy ending, Your Sweetness?”

“Not for Bab Sharkey, it won’t,” his mistress purred.