

## Teacher's notes

# The Great Discovery

by Mandy Loader



## SUMMARY

**T**im Saunders is an archaeologist who dreams of being famous as the discoverer of Cleopatra's tomb. When he meets, apparently by accident, a beautiful girl called Maria, wearing a cobra-shaped bracelet, he thinks he is on the verge of achieving his ambition. He goes with Maria and her brother Felix to the house of their father, the Professor, in the old city of Alexandria where he is shown other amazing treasures. He is not able to take photographs of the items but is allowed to draw them provided he promises not to tell anybody where he saw them. The Professor tells him that they have been in his family for years, and tells Tim the family story – that he is descended from the treasurer to the pharaohs, entrusted to look after the pharaohs' treasure for all time.

Just after finishing the drawings, Tim is lured away from the house by a message that he is in terrible danger. The message is from Maria, who warns him to leave Egypt immediately. She also tells him of the curse of the cobra, a warning that a white cobra guards the treasure and will kill anyone who tries to steal it. Tim refuses to leave Egypt without his drawings and goes back to the Professor's house to collect them.

Soon after, he is in London, exhibiting his drawings and lapping up the rising fame. But then, a letter from the Egyptian government reminds him that owning treasure from the tombs of the pharaohs is against Egyptian law. He decides to go back to Egypt and prove his innocence.

In Alexandria, he searches for Maria's house but it seems to have disappeared. He decides to return to England but at Cairo airport he is arrested. He is charged with tomb-robbing and sent to prison.

Five years later, he emerges, to be met by Maria. She admits that he was set up to give her father and her brother the publicity they needed for their looted treasures, and also the verification of their authenticity. The treasure has gone to America and the Professor and Felix are dead, killed by a cobra. Tim immediately thinks of the curse, but Maria assures him that the deaths were accidental and that she made up the curse story. She also says that she still has a map of the location of Cleopatra's tomb, and once again Tim dreams of glory. But, as they drive together through the desert, they realise there is a white cobra in the back of the car ...

## ABOUT MANDY LOADER

Mandy Loader spent several weeks in Egypt a few years ago. She visited the tombs of the ancient pharaohs and saw their beautiful jewellery in Cairo Museum. She had the idea for this story in the back streets of Alexandria.

Other Readers by Mandy Loader are *The Magic Ring*, *Can You Believe It?*, *The Lost Room*, *The Black Pearl*, *The Quest* and *The Woman of Iron*.

Mandy Loader also wrote the new *Linguaphone English Language Course* and *Ozmo*, a BBC course of English Language videos for children. She taught in Paris, Tokyo and Rabat and now lives in England.

## BACKGROUND AND THEMES

The story of the curse on Tutankhamun's tomb is famous. On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1922, Howard Carter, a British archaeologist, discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Tombs of Kings. The following year, the chamber was opened, and shortly after that, Lord Carnarvon, Carter's patron, visited the burial chamber. He died shortly afterwards of pneumonia, apparently as a result of complication arising from a mosquito bite. However, his early death was attributed to a curse on the tomb.

Cleopatra is much more famous than Tutankhamun before the discovery of his tomb. Although it is sometimes difficult to unravel the facts from the myths, we know that she ruled Egypt for twenty years until her death in 30 BC, and that she seduced two Caesars, Julius and Mark Anthony, living with the latter in a royal palace built out into the East Harbour of Alexandria.

Her tomb has not yet been found but, as Tim believes in the story, its discoverer would be as famous as Howard Carter. Perhaps it lies at the bottom of the sea in old Alexandria harbour. Excavations have been going on there since 1992 and some amazing artefacts have already been found including a sphinx which is believed to be of Ptolemy XII, Cleopatra's father.

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## Teacher's notes

### Communicative activities

The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the Reader and supplement those exercises. For supplementary exercises covering shorter sections of the book, see the photocopiable Student's Activities pages of this Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers but, with the exception of the discussion and pair/groupwork activities, can also be used by students working alone in a self-access centre.

#### ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

Ask students the following questions and elicit ideas from the whole class.

- 1 What do you know about Tutankhamun and the discovery of his tomb?
- 2 What do you know about Cleopatra?
- 3 What has happened to a lot of the treasures from Ancient Egypt?
- 4 What should you do if you find ancient treasures in a particular country?

#### ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION

##### Chapters 1–3

- 1 Put students into groups to think of a reason why Tim was in prison. The reason must be connected with Maria and the bracelet. Elicit ideas from each group but do not confirm or correct at this stage.
- 2 Put students in groups to discuss these questions.
  - (a) Do you think there is anything strange about the words and actions of Felix and Maria on the train?
  - (b) Do you think Tim is right not to tell Felix and Maria what he thinks about the bracelet? Why/Why not?

##### Chapters 4–6

Put students into groups and ask them to think of arguments for and against each of these statements.

- 1 The Professor knew that the jewellery and other things had Cleopatra written on them.
- 2 Maria took the film out of Tim's bag.
- 3 Tim knew there was no film in his bag.
- 4 Maria deliberately dropped the camera as she gave it to Tim.
- 5 Tim deliberately dropped the camera as he gave it to Maria.
- 6 Maria is lying about her father locking her in her room.
- 7 Maria really believes in the curse on the treasure.

##### Chapters 7–10

- 1 Put students into groups to role play the press conference when Tim first explains what he has seen. One person is Tim, the other people are reporters asking questions. Tim must be careful not to mention

The Professor, Felix or Maria by name or where exactly he saw the treasure, but of course the reporters keep asking for details.

- 2 Put students in pairs to role play a conversation between Tim and the Egyptian policeman. This time Tim is able to convince the policeman that he is not a tomb-robber. How does he do? What does he tell the policeman or offer to do for the police?
- 3 Remind students that they now know the true story of why Felix and Maria were on the train in Tim's carriage (from Maria's words on page 36). Put students into groups of three to role play a conversation between the Professor, Felix and Maria in which he explains the plan to them. Felix is happy with the plan but Maria is not.

#### ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

Say the following to students:

Perhaps Maria and Tim weren't killed by the cobra.

Students work in small groups. They think of an ending to the story in which they survive.

## Glossary

*It will be useful for your students to know the following new words. They are practised in the 'Before You Read' sections of exercises at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on those in the Longman Active Study Dictionary.)*

#### Chapters 1–3

**ancient** (adj) very old

**archaeologist** (n) someone who studies ancient societies by digging up and examining what remains of their buildings, graves, tools, etc.

**bracelet** (n) a band or chain that you wear around your wrist or arm as jewellery

**cobra** (n) an African or Asian poisonous snake

**jewel** (n) a valuable stone such as a diamond

**jewellery** (n) things that you wear for decoration such as rings and necklaces

**museum** (n) a building where people can go and see important objects connected with history, science, art, etc.

**pharaoh** (n) a ruler of ancient Egypt

**snake** (n) a long thin animal that slides across the ground

**tomb** (n) a grave, especially a large one built like a room

#### Chapters 4–6

**appear** (v) to begin to be seen

**article** (n) a piece of writing in a newspaper, magazine, etc.

**curse** (n) magical words that are intended to bring someone bad luck

**perfume** (n) a liquid with a strong, pleasant smell which you put on your skin

**poison** (n) a substance that can kill or harm you if you eat it, drink it, etc.

**professor** (n) a teacher at the highest level in a university department

**treasure** (n) a collection of gold, silver, jewels etc. especially one that has been hidden

**warn** (v) to tell someone that something bad or dangerous may happen, so that they can avoid it or prevent it

#### Chapters 7–10

**arrest** (v) if a police officer arrests someone, he or she takes them away because they are believed to be guilty of a crime

**desert** (n) a large area of hot dry land where not much grows

**publicity** (n) attention that someone or something gets from newspapers, television etc.



## Student's activities

### Photocopiable

Students can do these exercises alone or with one or more other students. Pair/group-only exercises are marked.

### Activities before reading the book

- 1 Read the first two parts of the Introduction – the part from the book and the next two paragraphs.
- 2 Make a list of the questions in the section beginning:  
*Can Tim really discover Cleopatra's tomb?*
- 3 Discuss these questions in pairs.

### Activities while reading the book

#### Chapters 1-3

- 1 Complete these sentences from Chapter 1. Use an adjective from the box in each case.

alone	angry	beautiful	free	friendly
hard	heavy	lonely	lovely	narrow
pale	surprised	white		

- (a) Tim Saunders sat in the ... room with Ahmed.
  - (b) 'You're not very ... are you?' said Ahmed.
  - (c) 'Leave me ...,' said Tim.
  - (d) 'Getting ... , are you?' said Ahmed. 'Tell me about the girl, Maria. And about the bracelet.'
  - (e) Tim was ...
  - (f) His face was ...
  - (g) A guard came in spoke to Tim. 'You look ... What's the matter?'
  - (h) 'Only a few more hours and you'll be ...'
  - (i) The guard took Tim to another room and unlocked the ... door.
  - (j) Tim lay on the ... bed.
  - (k) He heard a woman singing in a ... voice.
  - (l) He thought of Maria and the long, hot ... days for the last five years.
  - (m) He remembered her face and her ... dark eyes.
- 2 Are these sentences about the information in Chapter 2 and 3 true or false or we don't know?
    - (a) Felix and Maria saw Tim get on the train.
    - (b) Felix and Maria were bother and sister.
    - (c) They were Egyptian.
    - (d) The bracelet was 2000 years old.
    - (e) The bracelet came from the tomb of Cleopatra.
    - (f) Felix and Maria spoke together in Arabic.
    - (g) Tim liked Felix.

#### Chapters 4-6

- 1 Complete these sentences about the information in Chapter 4. Use an adverb or a preposition from

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the box in each case.

along	at	behind	down	for	from	in
inside	into	of	on	out	round	
through	to	under				

- (a) Felix and Maria lived ... the old town of Alexandria.
  - (b) Tim followed them and they left ... the wide streets.
  - (c) They began to walk ... narrow streets.
  - (d) Felix and Maria seemed to pass ... the crowds without difficulty.
  - (e) They walked for some time then Tim said, 'Aren't we going ... in circles?'
  - (f) Felix didn't reply and they hurried ...
  - (g) At last they stopped in front ... an old wooden door.
  - (h) The door was opened and an old woman took them ...
  - (i) An old man in white sat ... some orange trees.
  - (j) He welcomed Tim and invited him to sit ...
  - (k) The old woman came ... the room with coffee and a plate of cakes.
  - (l) 'Felix says you have other interesting pieces like Maria's bracelet.' Tim said, 'Will you show them ... me?'
  - (m) The old man took a key ... of his pocket and opened a large wooden box.
  - (n) Tim looked carefully ... the treasures.
  - (o) 'Where did you get all these things ...?' he asked the old man.
  - (p) 'They have been in our family ... a long time,' the old man replied.
- 2 This is the story that the old man told Tim about the treasures, but there are some mistakes.  
*I worked as a treasurer to the pharaohs. This treasure belonged to my grandfather. After the pharaoh died, he was stolen. From that time, the thief had a lot of money. He couldn't sleep, and he couldn't talk. Soon after that, the thief gave the treasure back to the pharaoh's treasurer to look after. Ever since that time, the treasure has been in this box.*
  - 3 Work in pairs. Discuss these questions about the information in Chapter 5.
    - (a) Why didn't the old man want Tim to take photographs?

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- (b) Why did he finally say yes to the photographs?  
 (c) Why couldn't he take photographs with his camera?  
 (d) Why couldn't he take photographs with Maria's camera?  
 (e) Why did he have to stay at the house for two days?  
 (f) Why did he smile as he imagined his return to London?  
 (g) Why didn't he eat his food?  
 (h) Why did he leave the house in the evening?
- 4 Discuss in pairs these questions about the information in Chapter 6.
- (a) What is Tim worried about when he gets to Saad Zaghlul Square?  
 (b) Who has lied to Tim? What about?  
 (c) In what ways is the treasure like the *datura* flower?  
 (d) What is the curse on the treasure?

## Chapters 7–10

- 1 The old man told Tim the story of the treasure. Maria gives Tim a lot more information. Read the old man's story again and think of the extra information. Then check with Chapter 7.
- Our family worked as treasurers to the pharaohs. This treasure belonged to a pharaoh.*
- (a) What did the pharaoh put in his tomb just before his death?  
 (b) Why did he put it in his tomb?  
 (c) What did he order the cobra to do?  
*After the pharaoh died, the treasure was stolen.*  
 (d) Did the thief take all the treasure?  
 (e) What did the thief do with the treasure?  
*But from that time, the thief had terrible dreams.*  
 (f) What did the thief dream about?  
*He couldn't sleep, and he couldn't eat.*  
 (g) What did the thief do with the treasure?  
*Soon after that, the thief died, too.*  
 (h) What did he die of?  
*The treasure was given back to the pharaoh's treasurer to look after. Ever since that time, the treasure has been in our family.*  
 (i) Why must Maria's family keep the treasure?
- 2 Match these statements (a–d) and replies (i–iv) from Chapter 8.
- (a) What do we really know about Cleopatra?  
 (b) I read that she killed prisoners in the prison at Alexandria. Is that true?  
 (c) She chose snake poison for herself?  
 (d) Was her death easy?  
 (i) I don't know the answer to that question.

- (ii) It seems so. Yes.  
 (iii) She was a strange and beautiful woman.  
 (iv) The information comes from Roman writers.
- 3 Discuss in pairs these questions about the information at the end of Chapter 8.
- (a) What does the Egyptian government want Tim to do?  
 (b) What does he plan to do?  
 (c) What is he worried about?
- 4 Put these words from the first part of Chapter 9 in order.
- airport  
 Aisha  
 hotel  
 policemen taxi  
 tea  
 train  
 walked
- 5 Work in pairs. Tell the story of the first part of Chapter 9. Use the words from Exercise 4.
- 6 How has Tim helped the tomb-robbers? Explain in groups.
- 7 Answers these questions about the information in Chapter 10.
- (a) Who met Tim outside the prison?  
 (b) What did she say that surprised him? (two things)  
 (c) Why doesn't Maria believe in the curse of the cobra?  
 (d) What did Maria say to Tim that excited him?

## Activities after reading the book

Work in pairs. Look back at the list of questions you wrote from the introduction. Answer the questions again, now that you have read the book.



His discovery would set the scientific world alight and change medical diagnosis forever. And all this by pure chance - and a little ingenuity on Wilhelm's part, of course. 2. Velcro was not an intentional discovery.Â The great Sir Alexander Fleming noticed, in 1928, a strange growth on one of his Petri dishes. The venerable Professor of Bacteriology had been growing cultures of Staphylococcus bacteria at the time. This curious growth appeared to prevent the bacteria from developing in its immediate vicinity. The greatest discoveries have the potential to advance technology or society in monumental ways. Without the discoveries listed here the world we live in would be a completely different place. This is a list of the 10 Greatest discoveries that changed the world. Rosetta Stone. (CC BY-SA 4.0) / Hans Hillewaert. The Great Discovery is a Thomas & Friends movie released in 2008. The railway is preparing for Sodor Day and Thomas and James are racing to the wharf to be given a special job by Mr. Percival. Thomas wins and is sent into the hills to collect lumber with Duncan. After Duncan teases Thomas by stating that Mr Percival wants him to work with Thomas because Duncan knows the tracks in the hills, Thomas teases back by calling Duncan small. This leads Duncan to pay Thomas out by sending him on an old