

Who, When, Wow! Mystery Edition

The Mummy's Curse

Carly. Hey! It's your favorite secret host here, from your favorite, hopefully-still-secret podcast. Today was one busy day. I took a trip to a famous old tomb, learned all about ancient spores, and had a roller coaster of a time with my main gal Nibbles the rat. So keep listening! I'm Carly Q, and this is Who When Wow, Mystery Edition!

(THEME SONG)

Carly in the background. It is most likely not Lewis.

Carly. I was in an okay mood when I got to the office today. Not bad, but not great either.

Linda. Hey Carly.

Carly. Good morning, Linda.

Carly. Not bad, because there wasn't anything upsetting going on. But not great, because, well the mystery letter-writer was still at large! And there's no leads! We still don't know who it is!

Amber. Morning Carly Q!

Carly in the background. And to you Amber.

Carly. As you may recall, *someone* knows we've been solving time-sealed mysteries, and that someone wrote me a letter. But what do they want? And most importantly, WHO ARE THEY?

(Soundbite of basement door closing.)

Carly. I was curious about the obvious suspects, but more importantly, I was curious about who would be the last person I'd suspect to have written the letter?

Carly in the background. It's definitely not Odie, it's def not my mom, it's def not Nibbles.

Carly. But when I got down to my desk, Nibbles was sitting on it just looking at me, and I had a sudden, horrifying realization. What if it *IS* you, Nibbles?!

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. Yes, you! I haven't considered this before, not for even a minute, but now that I think about it, you've witnessed everything, AND you have excellent penmanship!

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. Well, I HOPE it's not you but how am I supposed to know what you're up to when I go home after work?

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. What? You want me to tell Odie about the letter?! I still hadn't told Odie about any of this. Didn't want to rope her in to the whole mess. Plus, I was kind of afraid that if she knew, she'd stop letting me use the elevator.?

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly in the background. We agreed to keep this double extra special EXTREME top secret. Remember?

(Soundbite of footsteps coming down.)

Lewis. Oh Carly Quuu!

Carly. Hey Lewis.

Lewis. Hey ther-- Uh, what's going on?

Carly. Nothing, just, Nibbles and I are discussing the possibility that, maybe she is the letter writer.

Lewis. What!?

Carly. I shared my suspicions with him, as well as the fact that Nibbles was strongly proclaiming her innocence.

Lewis. Um I'm thinking she's probably innocent on the account of it most likely being a human?

Carly. Well, sure but.

Lewis. Look, I would rather not get involved, this sounds like something you two need to work out amongst yourselves, girl to rat.

Carly. But just then,

(Soundbite of a thumb drive drops down the vacuum tube.)

Carly and Lewis. A new time-sealed file!

Audio File. Event: In 1922 (BEEP) Valley of the Kings (BEEP) Mummy's Curse.

Carly. Mummy's curse!?

Lewis. How would I know? I didnt even know Mummy's could talk? You know all those bandages over the mouth.

Carly. No, not mummies. Mummy's apostrophe S. I pulled out H-dad, my handheld digital assistance device and plugged in the clues from the file. 1922, Valley of the Kings, Mummy's curse.

H-dad. This file most likely refers to the tomb of King Tutankhamun, also know as King Tut. An Egyptian pharaoh from the 11th century BCE. The discovery of his tomb in 1922 was carried out by British archeologist Howard Carter, and funded by the British aristocrat the Earl of Carnarvon.

Lewis. Now *that's* a name!

Carly. H-dad, what about the curse?

H-dad. The Earl of Carnarvon died a few months after the initial excavation of the tomb, which led to rumors of a supposed Curse of the Pharaohs, also known as the Mummy's Curse.

Carly. But what actually *is* the curse?

H-dad. That those who disturb the resting place of a pharaoh will soon die themselves. A number of other individuals who visited King Tut's tomb also died soon afterwards, inflaming suspicions of the curse. Spooky ghost emoji!

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Lewis. You said it Nibbles.

Carly. Maybe it's.

Lewis. Let me guess, *aliens*.

Carly. Actually, I was going to say maybe it's a real curse.

Lewis. Oh. Well whatever it is, I sadly can't go with you to check it out.

Carly. What?

Lewis. I have a hand massage session booked through human resources. No way, I'm canceling. My metacarpals killing me.

Carly. Suit yourself! Guess it'll just be me and Nibbles.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. No, I already told you! We're not telling Odie about the letter! (to Lewis) She thinks we should tell Odie because Odie will let her off the hook. But I don't want to spread the news about the letter to ANYONE, unless we absolutely have to.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. Ugh Nibbles, watch your language!

Lewis. Okaaaaay well, I don't wanna get in the middle of whatever this is, so I'm just gonna go. Good luck with your cursing mummies or whatever.

Carly. Lewis went back upstairs, and I got down to work. Nibbles was giving me the silent treatment, I could tell she was mad at me. But the fact was, no matter how unlikely, Nibbles *could* be a suspect! Anyway, I was able to get some work done despite Nibbles' withering glare, and a few hours later.

P.A. Voice. Attention, Butthead employees: It's woodland creature forager day. Eat like a squirrel and go nuts!!

Carly. Yes! Lunch time! I grabbed H-dad, and Nibbles glared me and angrily hopped into my backpack. I know it's hard to imagine a rat hopping angrily, but trust me, she pulled it off, and we took to see Odie.

(Soundbite of walking.)

Carly. Hi Odie.

Odie. Good afternoon basement companion. No Lewis today?

Carly. Nope, just me and my very good pal Nibs. And she's, well, let's just say we're having kind of a rough day.

Odie. You do both seem a bit uneasy. It's giving Daga sa dibdib.

Carly. Come again?

Odie. It's a Tagalog saying we have in the Philippines, it means fear or uncertainty about what lies ahead. But the literal translation is, "a rat on your chest."

Carly. Well I've certainly got one of those. But you also might be picking up on today's mystery. It's all about the mummy's curse from the tomb of King Tut!

Odie. Ah yes, quite the fright! As I recall, it all began with the death of the person who funded the whole excavation, the Earl of Carnarvon.

Carly. Right, he died just a few months after the tomb was first discovered. I'm thinking we'll go back to after his death and talk to his colleagues about what happened?

Odie. Excellent plan. I'd particularly suggest you speak with the chief archeologist Howard Carter. He and Carnarvon had been working together for 15 years by this point, on multiple archeological digs or excavations. I'm sure you'll want to hear his thoughts given all their history together.

Carly. Great, Howard Carter here we come!

Odie. Ah but first, let's remember our time travel rules.

Carly. No changing the past, and be back by the end of lunch!

Odie. Yes and yes. And you're sure the two of you are alright?

Carly. Yeah. Nibbles and I are fine. Or, we *will* be fine. Probably. There's definitely nothing more to say about that, so let's go!

Odie. Then just remember, a curse of regret is worse than a verse of sorrow.

(Soundbite of wind chimes.)

Carly. Wait what?

Odie. Okay here you go. Watch out for the curse.

Carly. Ok Nibs, time to walk like an Egyptiannnnnn.

(Soundbite of elevator travel noises.)

Carly. We made it! We're in 1920's Egypt. Look at the valley, it's so, sandy. Very sandy. So much sand.

Nibbles. I think the good stuff is probably hidden under that mound.

Carly. Nibbles was pointing towards a small hill near the center of the valley. We could see workers coming in and out of the little entrance at the base.

Carly. Oh! That must be the site of the dig where they're looking for King Tut's tomb! You ready?

Nibbles. I don't know, are YOU ready? To tell Odie about the mysterious note we,

Carly. Nibbles, not now.

Nibbles. I can't BELIEVE you're still hiding it from her. And thinking I'm the one behind it? You're losing your head, Carly Q!

Carly. I hear you, I do, but why don't we pause on all of that, just for a little while, so we can solve this mystery about the Curse of King Tuts Tomb. Ok?

Nibbles. Fine! I can be an adult about this. I'm a big girl rat! Wearing my big kid rat pants.

Carly. Great, then let's go investigate. We walked down the valley towards the entrance. The workers were taking all sorts of interesting items out of the tomb, and then organizing them into categories.

(Soundbite of walking through sand.)

Carly. Wow look at all that stuff. Furniture and jewelry, baskets, pottery. Are those pieces of a chariot?!

Nibbles. I think so. That's a LOT of stuff!

Carly. We kept walking, and eventually made it into the tomb itself. I'll grab this torch so we can see inside. Echo, echo! Is anyone in hereeee? Sounds echoed off the low stone walls. And workers scurried about, lighting the small space. Nibbles ducked down into my pack to hide. Okay, we're looking for the head archeologist Howard Carter.

Layla. Excuse me but if you are looking to interview Mr. Carter, I'm afraid you will find him very unwilling.

Carly. Oh, uh. Hello, who might you be?

Layla. I am Layla Gamal, with the Al-Ahram Newspaper. I take it you are a reporter as well?

Carly. Uh, yes! Yes I am, I am a reporter here to do a report on the tombs. Have you heard about this whole curse thing, the Earl of Carnarvon?

Layla. Of course. The official story of his death is that he got a mosquito bite, cut it while shaving, and died from the resulting infection. But was there more to it than that? Something supernatural?

Carly. That's what I wanna know!

Layla. Here's something interesting. I heard Mr. Carter brought a canary here with him. At first the workers thought it was a sign of good luck. But when a cobra got into Carter's house and ate the bird, the people took it as a bad omen, connecting the cobra to a snake emblem found on statues here in the tomb.

Carly. Oh noo.

Layla. Some people claim there was a curse supposedly written somewhere on the walls in here, but so far it's just a rumor. Nobody can find it.

Carly. Interesting. Well, thank you for your help and good luck. We said goodbye, then I found an empty chamber further into the tomb and let Nibbles out.

Nibbles. Yikes about that canary story! Please do NOT let me get eaten by a, whoaaa Carly! Look at the walls, look where we are!

Carly. I turned around and held the torch up to the wall which were covered with glorious paintings depicting Egyptian Gods and a funeral procession. But even more significant was the golden box in the center of the room.

Nibbles. This must be the burial chamber Carly. We're here! That box holds King Tut's remains!

Carly. Ahh does that mean we're cursed!?

Nibbles. I don't know! Does it?

(Soundbite of people talking.)

Carly. Someone's coming.

Carter. Hold my torch.

Worker. Yes sir. Mr. Howard Carter, sir.

Nibbles. "Howard Carter"? That's our guy!

Carly. Nibbles hid in my pack as the other man left. I sidled up to Carter.

Carly. Uh, excuse me sir.

Carter. Yes, what? Oh. You must be from the newspaper.

Carly. Oh, well, um, actually.

Carter. Wait, you're American? You must be that American cousin of the Carnarvon family, his daughter was just telling me about you!

Carly. She was? I mean, She was! Yes, that's me, the American cousin. What do you make of all these rumors about Carnarvon's death and the mummy's curse?

Carter. Hogwash and poppycock! His infection from the mosquito bite was treated too late and he passed away. End of story.

Carly. Really?

Carter. Yes, really! I am a scientific researcher, I do not believe in foolish superstitions.

Carly. I see.

Carter. Now, just to be safe, I did have a scientist test for possible germs on Tutankhamen's bandages. But he found nothing! I am convinced that all of this hullabaloo about the curse has simply been invented by the media for attention.

Carly. You certainly seem very sure.

Carter. It's dreadfully sad, really. Truly. Absolutely dreadful.

Carly. Um, are you, okay?

Carter. Forgive me, I don't mean to get so emotional. The simple truth is, I'm still mourning the loss of a great friend. Shortly before he died, Carnarvon and I had a terrible fight. A silly debate really, but it did result in work here at the tomb being shut down for a spell.

Carly. Oh no! Did you work it out?

Carter. Oh yes. In the end, Carnarvon apologized. We mended the fence and were able to get back to work. It meant quite a lot to me actually. That was just the kind of person Carnarvon was, willing to admit and accept when he was wrong. He wasn't family, but goodness I do miss him dearly.

(Soundbite of sniffing then H-dad beeps.)

Carter. Good heavens, what is that?!

Carly. Oh, that's just my uh, alarm clock.

Nibbles. (under her breath) Not invented yet.

Carly. Beeper!

Nibbles. Also not invented yet.

Carly. Fax machine!

Nibbles. Really?

Carter. What are the words you're saying?!

Carly. It's, uh, an American thing. See ya!

Carter. Young lady, come back!

(Soundbite of running noises.)

Carly. We raced out of the burial chamber before he could react.

Nibbles. Fax machine?! Oh Carly come on, we gotta get you some improv classes.

Carly. It was the first thing that came to my head. Soon I was out of the tomb and up into a quiet stretch of the valley.

Nibbles. Woowe. H-dad almost blew our cover!

Carly. That was me. I set an alarm so we wouldn't be stuck in the tomb at the end of lunch time. Anyway, I think we got what we needed! Let's recap: there's stories of various supernatural elements at play.

Nibbles. Like the canary getting eaten by the cobra, and the rumor of a curse written on the walls. But Mr. Carter himself thinks Carnarvon's death was just from the mosquito bite.

Carly. Right, and not a curse at all. Okay, H-dad, have you finished analyzing? Is this curse for real?

H-dad. Inconclusive! Shrugging emoji, question emoji. However, contrary to popular belief, no curse was ever found inscribed on any of the walls in King Tut's tomb.

Carly. Okay, so chock one up in the "no curse" column.

H-dad. But the "curse" may be biological. In 1998, an article in the Canadian Medical Association Journal noted certain toxic spores and reports of a "black fungus" inside the tomb.

Nibbles. Yuck! Even rats avoid that stuff, and you know how much I love a good fungus.

H-dad. Also, in 1973 toxic spores of the fungus *Aspergillus flavus* may have killed scientists after opening a centuries old tomb in Poland.

Carly. That sounds bad.

H-dad. While modern testing of Egyptian mummies found traces of the same spores, there is no conclusive evidence connecting the spores to Carnarvon, or any of the other deaths related to King Tut.

Carly. Huh! So it's not an actual magic curse. But it could be related to toxic spores of mold and stuff that can make you sick?

Nibbles. Sounds like it!

Carly. Okay! Well, I'll take a good shower when we get back just in case. But I gotta tell you Nibbles, I was really touched by Mr. Carter's story about his friend, and, well, I'm starting to realize that I said some really unfair things to you about this whole letter situation.

Nibbles. You don't say!

Carly. I was accusing you of writing the letter without any evidence or proof.

Nibbles. Go on.

Carly. It sounds like Carnarvon's apology really helped the two of them get back on track. So in the same spirit, I'd like to say that I am sorry for suspecting you Nibbles. It was an irrational assumption.

Nibbles. Yes it was. Say more.

Carly. Aaaand, just because you've got good penmanship and had opportunities to write the letter, that doesn't mean you actually *did*.

Nibbles. Thank you. I did not!

Carly. And it's important to me that you know I trust you. We are friends. If you say you didn't do it, then I believe you. And I'm sorry I didn't before.

H-dad. Incoming message from BUTTHED HQ.

P.A. Voice. Attention Butthead employees. Two minutes until the end of woodland creature lunch break. Finish burying your acorns for winter, and get back to work!

Carly. Time to go. As we headed back to the elevator, I thought of something that might help fix things between us. Anyway Nibs, I understand if you're still hurt. But I do have something up my sleeve that I think might help make up for it.

Nibbles. That sound promising. But first, let's get back homeeeee.

(Soundbite of elevator travel noises.)

Odie. Basement companion! Rodent! How was your trip?

Carly. Enlightening and thankfully not particularly cursed!

Odie. So, no Mummy's Curse?

Carly. I think we might have figured it out! It's possible that something toxic might have contributed to the deaths of various people who visited King Tut's tomb, like a mold or a fungus or something but generally speaking it sounds like the Mummy's Curse is mostly bunk.

Odie. Bunk!?

Carly. Yeah, bunk! Nonsense! According to Howard Carter, it's just a sensationalized story drummed up because all the interest in mummies and tombs after King Tut was discovered.

Odie. How interesting. This Howard Carter seems like a knowledgeable fellow. Reminds me of a certain bit of wisdom I shared.

(Soundbite of wind chimes.)

Odie. A curse of regret is worse than a verse of sorrow.

Carly. That's right! I get it now! A "verse of sorrow" is an apology, saying you're sorry! Which is way better than the regret you'd feel for NOT saying sorry. Which would be a curse!

Odie. It really would be.

Carly. Well I am glad that I apologized. Nibbles and I were having a bit of a fight earlier, and I was in the wrong.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

Carly. But part of apologizing means making up for what I did, and in this case, this actually involves you, Odie.

Odie. Me?

Carly. Nibbles has been pushing me on something, and I've been really resistant because I was afraid it might change things. But I think she's right. It's high time I come clean about something we've been keeping from you. Buckle up though, cause it's a little wild. It all started about a month ago, when I came down here and found a letter on my desk.

(Soundbite of music as Carly fades out.)

Carly. So, I finally did it. I told Odie about the letter! And our various (mis)adventures trying to figure out who wrote it. To my surprise it turns out that, even though she didn't know the specifics, she herself had been suspecting something was up. So she was really glad I shared the details with her.

Odie. I so appreciate you telling me, basement companion.

Carly. And of course, she agreed that it certainly isn't Nibbles who wrote the letter. She's not sure *who* it is, but she's going to think on it.

Odie. Let me see if I have any brilliant ideas. We'll talk next time you come to see me.

Carly. Wait you aren't going to stop letting me use the elevator?

Odie. Of course not. You are doing important work my friend. Exploring mysteries, sharing them on your (whispers) top-secret podcast. I would never stop you from going on your adventures.

Carly. Really?

Odie. We're a team. You and I. And Lewis. And Nibbles too.

Carly. Can I hug you?

Odie. Yes, but only for three seconds.

Carly in the background. Deal. This is so cozy. Odieeee.

Carly. Needless to say, the search for the letter writer continues. And of course, there's always more time-sealed mysteries to solve! You're apart of the team too listener. So until next time, this is Carly Q, signing off. And remember, you never heard this!