

The Egyptologist Study Guide

The Egyptologist by Arthur Phillips

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

The Egyptologist Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Letter/Journal 1 - 9.....	5
Letter/Journal 10 - 19.....	11
Letter/Journal 20 - 29.....	14
Letter/Journal 30 - 39.....	17
Letter/Journal 40 - 49.....	19
Letter/Journal 50 - 59.....	21
Letter/Journal 60 - 69.....	24
Letter/Journal 70 - 79.....	28
Letter/Journal 80 - 89.....	30
Letter/Journal 90 - 99.....	32
Letter/Journal 100 - 109.....	35
Letter/Journal 110 - 111.....	38
Characters.....	40
Objects/Places.....	45
Themes.....	48
Style.....	50
Quotes.....	53
Topics for Discussion.....	57



Plot Summary

Ralph Trilipush seeks the tomb of Atum-hadu, an ancient Egyptian king who supposedly wrote a book of erotic poetry. Ralph translates the poetry and publishes the work, which quickly becomes notorious as pornography in the early 20th century. However, with only this questionable evidence of the king's existence, Ralph secures the financial backing of a group of Boston businessmen, one of whom desperately needs the treasure that Ralph promises to find.

While Ralph travels to Egypt and begins his expedition, trouble brews back in Boston. Harold Ferrell, a detective from Sydney, Australia hunts for information about Paul Caldwell, an illegitimate child of Barnabas Davies. Davies wants all his illegitimate children to change their names to his, and he pays well to encourage them to do so. Ferrell has learned much about Paul—how he became interested in Egyptology, served in Egypt during the First World War, and that he allegedly died in the desert along with a British army officer, Hugo Marlowe. The search for information leads to Ralph because he had been stationed with Marlowe.

Ralph is engaged to Margaret Finneran, the daughter of Chester Crawford Finneran (CCF), one of Ralph's investors. A romantic interest develops in Ferrell for Margaret, and this causes him to talk badly of Ralph's true motivations. CCF withholds the money that Ralph desperately needs. Margaret calls off the engagement.

Ralph discovers something at about the same time that Howard Carter unearths King Tut's tomb. To Ralph's dismay and at the cost of his sanity, he opens empty room after empty room. Ralph loses his mind and tries to create a tomb where none exists. CCF goes to Egypt expecting to find treasure, but all he encounters is death by a madman wielding a sledgehammer inside a ghastly set of rooms.

Some evidence points to Ralph as not being who he claims to be. The Ralph Trilipush who goes to war with Marlowe is homosexual. The Ralph Trilipush who proposes to Margaret does not seem to have this sexual orientation, or if he does, he takes no action and expresses no fantasy. Ferrell is convinced that Ralph killed both Marlowe and Paul, but his investigation techniques lack discipline and are therefore untrustworthy. Ralph gives Ferrell several possibilities of what might have happened to Marlowe and Paul. In one, Paul sees a reflection on a motorcycle gas tank of Marlowe drawing his pistol, and Paul shoots first. This could be the real story, where Paul learns from Marlowe certain behaviors of Ralph and takes on the identity after killing Marlowe.

The author tells the story through letters, journal entries, telegrams and notes. The missives have dates but no grouping into chapters or sections, as if the reader holds a bundle of papers without explanation. No objective story emerges, only the viewpoints of people with different agendas. Ralph wants to become a famous Egyptologist. CCF wants to get out of his financial crisis through the treasure that Ralph is supposed to find in Egypt. Ferrell wants to solve murder cases and does not care if he accuses an



innocent person. Exactly what Margaret wants boils down to something she does not want—boredom. She becomes addicted to opium and alcohol as a means to have fun.

The story is both a mystery and a tragedy. Ralph murders CCF and kills himself, which are tragic events. Ralph's descent into insanity is a tragic process. Ralph's true identity is a mystery, along with the existence of Atum-hadu's tomb. The author uses irony and plot twists, along with droll humor, in fashioning this tale of someone who is a failed Egyptologist, but perhaps a successful seeker of immortality. Ralph creates his own tomb at the end, the work of a madman, but a work that may last for millennia. People will remember his name; not as a great man, but as an enigmatic crazy person.



Letter/Journal 1 - 9

Letter/Journal 1 - 9 Summary

31 Dec. (pp. 3-8)

Ralph Trilipush writes to Margaret Finneran, his estranged fiancée, a letter that he intends to open himself upon returning to Boston from Egypt. Margaret is to read the letter only if he does not return, something that Ralph suspects could happen. While exploring the tomb of King Atum-hadu of the XIII Dynasty, Ralph seems to have made enemies. He plans to make arrangements for a second expedition to Egypt once back in Boston. He has sealed the tomb, but more needs to be done.

In the letter he mentions the problems that he and Margaret have been having, and how he very much wants a reconciliation. Margaret's father, Chester Crawford Finneran (CCF), an investor in the Egyptian project, has also had problems with Ralph, but Ralph claims these difficulties have been reconciled.

Ralph gives Margaret directions on how to handle the publishing of his book about the Egyptian exploration. He asks her to edit out the personal letters and not to use his early drawings, as they are inaccurate. Ralph's desired ordering of the book is Kent first, Oxford, the discovery of Fragment C with one of Ralph's friends, the death of this friend and the solution to the Tomb Paradox. Ralph sends this letter and three bundles of documents to Margaret as a single package.

December 3, 1954 (pp. 9-25)

Laurence Macy III receives a reply to an inquiry about Margaret Finneran, his deceased aunt, from Harold Ferrell, a retired private investigator. Ferrell lives in a Sydney nursing home and once knew Margaret, and claims to have been one of her romantic interests.

Ferrell wants his cases published in New York City and repeatedly makes the assumption that Macy will help. Otherwise, he tells the first part of a case that eventually leads to his involvement with Margaret. The case begins with a dying old rich man, Barnabas Davies, who wants to track down his many lovers from his youthful days while he worked in the merchant navy. The list of lovers covers a good portion of the world, including Sydney. Ferrell learns of the search and joins Tailor Enquiries Worldwide to cash in on the search fees. The idea is to locate Eulalie Caldwell and find out if she has had a child by Davies. If so, Davies will give the child a certain amount of money if the child, grown by now, promises never to seek any further money from Davies' estate and to change his or her last name to Davies.

Finding Caldwell turns out to be easy, but finding her son by Davies, Paul, proves more difficult. Paul Caldwell joined the Australian army and went missing at the end of the World War I. Ferrell pulls some of his local strings and discovers that Paul had once been in the Flipping Hoyt Brothers circus and had listed his next of kin in the military



records as Mrs. Emma Hoyt. He had also been assigned to Egypt for some mysterious reason and had been honored by a British captain, an uncommon occurrence.

Ferrell finds Mrs. Hoyt and interviews her. Paul had been an artful pickpocket, which is why Mr. Hoyt, a circus clown, brought him into the circus. Paul used to pick the pockets of the audience as they sat for the performances. He also did an act with a snake that was popular. An additional wrinkle was that he became Mrs. Hoyt's lover.

Mr. Hoyt turns in Paul to the police as a pickpocket. Paul joins the army to avoid prison, and that fills in the story enough that Ferrell doubts that Davies will pay much money for information about his dead pickpocket son who joined the army to avoid prison. But Ferrell also decides to keep with the case and at least collect his investigation fees, which he pads substantially.

Tuesday, 10 October, 1922 (pp. 25-30)

Ralph arrives in Cairo by train and writes in his journal at the Hotel of the Sphinx. He dreams of the book that will come from his expedition to find the tomb of King Atum-hadu. The front piece should have the royal cartouche of the King, and the prose should be appropriate for general readers, not just scholars. He has already been published with a translation of the King's erotic poetry, *Desire and Deceit in Ancient Egypt*. Ralph lists possible epigraphs, speculates on the cover design and dedication page, and composes his own biography in the third person. In the dedication page, Ralph disparages Howard Carter and his search for the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen.

Through the biography, the reader learns that Ralph had been a prodigy in Egyptology, attended Oxford early, and started a doctoral program that he suspended to serve in World War I. He was stationed in Egypt and worked with counterintelligence. Along with his friend Hugo Marlowe, Ralph discovers Fragment C of Atum-hadu's Admonitions, proof (according to Ralph) that the King existed. Ralph translates Fragments A and B and the newly discovered Fragment C for his first book. He builds an academic career in the United States, and with a leap ahead, assigns himself to the Harvard Chair of Egyptology, assuming his second book is successful. Not lacking for ego, Ralph also predicts he will be knighted.

Wednesday, 11 October, 1922 (pp. 30-42)

Ralph goes to the Cairo markets and picks up dominoes, fruit, and gramophone styluses. He composes a letter to the readers of his yet-written book, assuring them that it is unique among any other book on Egyptology. An account of his travel itinerary to Cairo follows, and he justifies his opulent surroundings in the Hotel of the Sphinx as being necessary for the work space, not his creature comforts. He sips lemonade and gin as he writes.

His thoughts turn to a party thrown in his and Margaret's honor—partly for their betrothal, partly for the expedition—arranged by his benefactors at CCF's Commonwealth Avenue mansion. Decorations and costumes worn by the guests and serving girls follow an ancient Egyptian theme. CCF stops the Black jazz band's music



in order that two guests, Kendall and Hilly Mitchell, can sing a farcical song regarding the funding of Ralph's Egyptian expedition. Ralph comments on the inaccuracies of the Egyptian references in the song, which ends with a repeated chorus that expresses the investors' desire to make money on the expedition.

The party moves outside. CCF talks to Ralph in an intimidating and transparently circumventing manner about his responsibilities to the investors. CCF then presents a humidor full of custom cigars to Ralph.

Ralph will soon turn thirty years old. He feels that he is on top of his professional game and deeply appreciates his engagement to the beautiful, rich Margaret. He relates a story to her about his youth, in which a village vicar made life miserable. The vicar resents Ralph's study of the Egyptian religion, politics, language, and culture. The vicar thinks the Egyptians had a religion of death, while Ralph knows that the religion was in fact among the first to promote an eternal afterlife.

December 6, 1954 (pp. 42-55)

Ferrell continues his correspondence with Macy, starting with his theory of human behavior. Only five motives exist for humans: money, hunger, lust, power, and survival. He bases this conclusion on his practical observations of humanity in Australia as a private detective working in Sydney.

He moves on to the story of Paul Caldwell, Catherine Barry, and her brother, Ronald Berry. Ferrell describes Catherine as a beautiful, treacherous woman, partly for her Communistic political leanings and partly because she refuses his sexual advances. He does not like her brother either for his politics, also Communistic.

Catherine takes care of Paul after he expresses interest in Egyptology while taking a class from Ron. Ron introduces Paul to Catherine at a small public library where she works as a librarian. Paul is still a child, not having reached puberty, and he appreciates the help and attention that Catherine gives. She orders all the books that he wants on Egypt over the following years and arranges a place for him to stay, due to Paul's family life being so terrible. Ferrell thinks a sexual relationship existed between the two, but Catherine's story indicates that she kept as distant and cool with Paul as she is with Ferrell.

Catherine and Ron dedicate themselves to the causes of the Communist party, something that Ferrell equates with treason. When Paul turns fourteen, he invites Catherine out to dinner with the stated intent to talk politics. This turns out to be a romantic dinner, and Paul confesses his love for Catherine. She refuses his advance, which causes Paul to leave. Catherine sees him only once more before his death.

Ron thinks that Paul had turned the Communist movement in to the police by accusing the activists of planning political assassinations. Most of the people arrested were released, including Catherine. Ferrell decides to interview Inspector S. George Dahlquist, because he had arrested Paul at the circus. Then Ferrell ends the correspondence with a story about a dream he had in which Catherine quietly waits for



him to say something specific, but he has no idea what that might be. He also mentions a trip to England.

Thursday, 12 October (pp. 55-63)

Ralph promises to write journal entries just for Margaret during his expedition. He turns then to describe how he manipulates his investors at the outset in CCF's drawing room, decorated in Egyptian style. Ralph gives a presentation to CCF, Kendall Mitchell, Roger Lathorp, Julius Pdraig O'Toole, and Heinz Kovacs. All are wealthy men in construction and finance.

Mitchell raises the first objection on whether any further treasure is to be found in Egypt. Ralph counters with an observation that hundreds of Egyptian kings have lived, but only a few dozen tombs have been discovered. A sudden bout of diarrhea strikes Ralph and he must leave the room. Upon his return, he sees Mitchell and Roger giggling over a passage in Ralph's first book, apparently ancient Egyptian smut.

CCF throws Ralph a softball with a question about why Harvard does not fund the expedition. Ralph points out that this would put the artifacts in Harvard's museum, whereas private collectors would benefit by contributing their artifacts to museums under their names, and thus attain immortality.

Heinz brings up another objection. A Harvard professor has told his son that Ralph's Egyptian king never existed. Ralph argues that he has enemies in Harvard, not for any wrongdoing but because he ignores the professors. He then points to his own discovery of Atum-hadu's writings, sure evidence, Ralph insists, that the king must have existed.

Closing the sale, Ralph describes all the riches that are to be found in the tomb yet to be discovered. CCF declares that he is sold, and everyone else follows along after Ralph finishes the more boring parts of his presentation.

December 8, 1954 (pp. 63-74)

Ferrell describes the results of his interview with S. George Dahlquist to Macy. Dahlquist apprehends Paul Caldwell at the circus in 1916 for picking the circus patrons' pockets. Paul at first does not talk. Dahlquist tries to wear him down, but Paul resists. Then, upon Dahlquist's mention of being sent to war as punishment, Paul offers information to be assured that he would be sent to war, but only in Egypt. The information that he gives to Dahlquist involves the Communists in Sydney. This leads to the arrest of Catherine and Ron Barry.

Barnabas Davies calls Ferrell to London and pays for all the travel expenses. But Davies dies before Ferrell arrives. Nevertheless, the Davies estate continues paying for investigations into the illegitimate children fathered by Davies. Ferrell suggests that when he and Macy write the book, which Macy has not yet agreed to do, that dramatic elements can be brought in, with Macy as Ferrell's inexperienced American assistant.



Ferrell continues his investigation by next interviewing the parents of Captain Hugo Marlowe, the British officer who had recommended Paul Caldwell for promotion. The parents know less than Ferrell has already learned, except a connection with Ralph Trilipush. Marlowe's parents have a copy of Ralph's first book, inscribed to their son, with Ralph claiming to know them well, referring to himself as their other son. Marlowe's parents deny that they had ever met Ralph.

The next subject for Ferrell's investigation is Beverly Quint, a homosexual man and an Oxford friend of Marlowe's. Beverly remembers Marlowe well and has photographs to prove it. He also claims to have known Ralph, but photos of him are blurry. Additionally, Oxford has no record of Ralph Trilipush ever attending. Beverly hints that both Marlowe and Ralph are also homosexual men.

Thursday, 12 October, 1922, continued (pp. 74-77)

Ralph makes arrangements with the bank to receive money wire transfers from overseas. He accounts how the Egyptian government delays his request to excavate, and this puts him into a financial bind. He needs the wire transfers to go through without a hitch. Meanwhile, he contacts real estate agents to find a villa for him near the excavation site, still fretful over obtaining permission.

Friday, 13 October, 1922 (pp. 77-87)

Ralph tells of his relationship with Captain Hugo Marlowe while he waits for the money transfer and permission to excavate. They had been to Oxford together and shared a deep interest in Egyptology. At that time, they neither believed nor disbelieved in the existence of King Atum-hadu, but they were aware of the translations and publications of Fragment A and Fragment B of the supposed king's pornographic verses.

Later on they serve together in Egypt as captains. Whenever they can get away from their duties in interrogation and counterintelligence, they take a motorcycle and sidecar out to the desert and look for any evidence they can of Atum-hadu's existence.

On a six-day pass, the two search in earnest and discover Fragment C, but are soon attacked by four horsemen. Ralph grabs the scroll and takes off on the motorcycle. Marlowe diverts the attackers, breaks off, and dives into the sidecar. They make their escape. Ralph is transferred to Gallipoli, a Turkish peninsula, and leaves the scroll in Marlowe's safekeeping. Three years later Ralph returns to discover that Marlowe is dead and retrieves the scroll from Marlowe's tent.

Letter/Journal 1 - 9 Analysis

The Egyptologist is a novel written in a journal and missive structure. No omniscient narrator explains anything. The reader must determine what actually happens or has happened from the various viewpoints given, a task that can seldom be accomplished faultlessly. Mystery naturally flows from this form, as characters withhold, exaggerate, ignore, and invent information to protect and promote themselves.



Ralph Trilipush's voice leads with his instructions to Margaret Finneran, his fiancée, and he establishes the first mystery—he may not return to her in Boston. Misdirection abounds with Ralph. He does not reveal the truth because he does not see the truth, a personality trait that becomes more apparent as his character unfolds. His language often gives him away with its lofty and inflated overstatement.

Contrasting with Ralph, Harold Ferrell's voice is that of an Australian private detective—to the point, self-aggrandizing, full of prejudice. He thinks himself an expert on human behavior, a distinction that garners no acknowledgment from anyone else other than Ferrell.

Ferrell's story comes from his memory of the Paul Caldwell case, a character only described and without a voice of his own. All other characters in the case also flow through Ferrell's mind filter, quoted only from his notes. He tells this story to Margaret's nephew, Laurence Macy III, in 1954, while all the action takes place in the early 20th century. This puts another layer of reality distortion on the overall story.

Nevertheless, a story shows through the journal entries and letters. Macy wants to know more about his departed aunt, Margaret. Ferrell wants to tell his story to Macy with the hope that he will help publish a book of true crime, based on Ferrell's cases. Ralph adventures in Egypt on an expedition to find the tomb of Atum-hadu, but the expedition investors are troublesome. Paul Caldwell apparently shares Marlowe's fate in Egypt. The mysteries increase and start to intersect, a solid technique for drawing the reader into and through the story.

The character of Macy never chimes in or answers Ferrell's letters. Macy does not state his purpose for compiling all this information, but obviously a story exists among the journal entries, letters, telegrams, and notes. The purpose then is to present the reader with the mysteries to sort out however the reader deems probable, a combination of history, biography, and detective story. Atum-hadu represents the main history, Ralph Trilipush the main biography, and Ferrell's case the main detective story. Paul Caldwell adds an amount of doubt that lingers throughout. Exactly who is this man calling himself Ralph Trilipush?



Letter/Journal 10 - 19

Letter/Journal 10 - 19 Summary

Saturday, 14 October, 1922 (pp. 87-93)

Ralph gives examples of the bad translations that had been done in the 19th century of Atum-hadu's poetry. F. Wright Harriman dilutes the erotica that is central to the themes and adds his own brand of Christianity as a framework to explain a pre-Christian religion and king. Jean-Michel Vassal also translates to please the French government rather than staying true to the original poetry. Only Ralph, as he self-proclaims, dares to bring out the true pornographic nature of Atum-hadu's verses.

One of the problems all translators have with written Egyptian is determining pronunciation. Vowels are left out of the writing, and so rhyme and meter are, at best, guesswork. Ralph feels his translation effort is far superior to the others.

Since he believes he will soon receive money from the investors by wire and because he feels sad about recalling Marlowe's death, Ralph gives away money to the poor people he finds in the Cairo markets and slums. On his way home he picks up a letter from Margaret at the post office. The letter is short and puzzling, possibly because Margaret has taken some sort of drug.

December 16, 1954 (pp. 94-98)

Ferrell writes to Macy that he has been sick, thus the delay in his usual routine of sending mail. He does not look forward to the trip to Boston because he has not fully recovered from his illness. After commenting on the nursing home conditions, Ferrell swings back into the case story.

First comes a listing of the known facts to date. Ferrell knows that Trilipush, Marlowe, and Quint went to Oxford together, but no record exists of Trilipush's attendance—but current students know of him. Trilipush and Marlowe go to war together and may have had a homosexual relationship. Trilipush claims to have known Marlowe's parents, but they deny it. Also, the British government has no record of Trilipush's service—Ferrell has only Quint's account, and Ferrell distrusts Quint. Marlowe's recommendations for promoting an Australian soldier, Paul Caldwell, puzzle Ferrell, along with the odd fact that both disappear shortly after the war ends.

Arriving on October 13, 1922, Ferrell interviews Trilipush's employer, Professor Terbroogan (a misspelling of the name). Terbroogan dislikes Trilipush intensely and looks forward to the discredit that Ralph will face once he returns from a fruitless expedition in Egypt. The academic community will then shun Ralph, thus ending his career. Professor Terbroogan shows Ralph's office to Ferrell, where a recently delivered package from Quint sits on the desk. Ferrell wants to take the package as evidence in his investigation, but Terbroogan stops him.



Sunday, 15 October, 1922 (pp. 98-101)

Ralph expresses concern for Margaret's health and warns her not to take too much of her medicine, his assumption being that this is what caused the disturbingly short and disengaged letter. He assures her that CCF, soon to be father to both, has informed him fully about her illness and her imminent recovery. Ralph then goes into a memory of his childhood, the rich estate in which grew up, and his world-traveling adventurer father.

Monday, 16 October, 1922 (p. 101)

A short journal entry, Ralph describes his day. He has lunch in Cairo, checks on his application for excavation and has several portrait photographs of himself made for Margaret.

Tuesday, 17 October, 1922 (p. 101)

In another short entry, Ralph accounts for the brevity of the previous day's writing. He suffers from diarrhea and hopes to be over it soon.

Sep. 22 (pp. 102-104)

Margaret explains her odd initial letter. She indeed was on medication, very strong painkillers on top of alcohol. She had snuck out of the house for the drinks, and when she returns, her Swedish nurse Inge insists that she take the medicine. Margaret does not like Inge and wishes to be rid of her soon.

Imagining what life will be like after their marriage, Margaret asks Ralph if he would consider opening up the family estate in England and live there. She expects Ralph to return from Egypt rich and famous. A dream she had disturbs her—they have their first child, and the child says nothing but curse words.

Tuesday, 17 October 1922 continued (pp. 104-107)

Ralph receives Margaret's longer second letter, which prompts him to reminisce on their initial meeting. While giving a talk about his first book on King Atum-hadu, Ralph notices Margaret dozing in the front row. He directs a reading of the book directly to her, and this captures her attention. After the meeting, according to Ralph, she comes to him and wants a date.

Wednesday, 18 October, 1922 (pp. 107-109)

Four days before money should be wired, Ralph buys excavation gear and clothing, including custom-tailored suits. On the way back to the hotel, he sees a street artist painting the likeness of a tourist boy on a shard of pottery. This gives Ralph the idea to have a portrait made, and he makes arrangements for the sittings.

Thursday, 19 October, 1922 (pp. 109-114)



Ralph sits for his portrait for two hours as the artist pencils in the general idea. He finds a good luggage maker and spends the evening in a cabaret.

He relates to Margaret a story from his childhood, when the village vicar beats him for studying Egyptian theology and giving the Egyptian answer on the question of immortality. The Egyptian royalty gained immortality by preserving the body and keeping their names in the culture's mind after they died, which is different from the Christian idea of immortality through Jesus Christ.

Ralph explains that one of the problems with putting riches into a tomb involves the theft of those riches. One solution to this tomb paradox is to hide the tomb, but this requires killing anyone who knows of its location and how to enter it. Another method involves building the tombs in the open and making security of the tombs a government responsibility. Living kings would protect dead kings' tombs because a living king will eventually need the government protection too.

19. Oct (pp. 114-116)

Ralph writes to Margaret from the cabaret. He describes the dancing women and how many things remind him of her. He reaffirms his love for her and describes how good things will be once they are married. In a postscript, he expresses concern that she is not receiving proper medical attention for her illness.

Letter/Journal 10 - 19 Analysis

Ralph believes Margaret to be something she is not. An irony develops because Margaret believes Ralph to be something he is not as well. Margaret has an addiction to opium, pain killers, and alcohol, all depressants, while Ralph thinks she has an illness that will soon pass. Ralph chases a fortune that may not exist, based on Egyptian pornographic poetry that may very well be a hoax.

The characters lack common sense out of desperation. Margaret's father, CCF, needs money despite his façade of wealth, and so invests in Ralph's expedition with the expectation of tremendous returns. Ralph needs his successful expedition to boost his standing at Harvard—publishing his first book has hurt more than helped his career. Margaret needs something besides her drugs. Ferrell needs to tell his stories, and all are heading for disappointment or doom.

Dark humor results. Ferrell, supposedly attuned to detail, misspells Professor ter Breuggen's name. Margaret sends a disturbingly short and senseless letter to Ralph. Ralph composes a romantic letter to Margaret while enjoying the dancing women at a cabaret. He also spends his own money freely before actually having the funds from the investors safely in the local bank. Ralph tends to build expectations with no solid base, a distinct lack of discipline.



Letter/Journal 20 - 29

Letter/Journal 20 - 29 Summary

December 24, 1954 (pp. 116-129)

Ferrell tells Macy more detail about Margaret. He meets her on October 13, 1922, when he visits CCF for more information on Trilipush. Margaret charms Ferrell, who withholds from her and CCF the information he already has on Ralph. Ferrell learns that Margaret likes to party at a speakeasy and has an opium addiction.

Professor Terbroogan alerts CCF that Oxford has no records on Trilipush, but Ferrell counters this by observing that records can be wrong, thus keeping CCF as a client for his investigative services regarding Trilipush. Ferrell will soon be traveling to Egypt with CCF funding the trip; along with billing the Davies estate, Ferrell will make out well financially.

Another thing Ferrell learns is that both sides are misrepresenting each other. CCF and Margaret are not being entirely forthright with Trilipush, but Ferrell thinks Ralph is a straight-out conman. Ferrell also has feelings for Margaret and wishes he could win her heart, which is not a very likely outcome.

Friday, 20 October, 1922 (pp. 130-132)

Ralph receives a telegram from CCF requesting clarification on his Oxford studies, although the cryptic wording puzzles and worries Ralph, perhaps for good reason. He expects the wired funds from the investors to land in his account soon and writes a letter to Margaret that explains his concerns. He then sends a telegram to CCF that describes the geographic location of Oxford, that he does not know Ferrell, and that he expects the funds to be transferred on time.

Saturday, 21 October, 1922 (pp. 132-137)

With the intention of greasing the bureaucratic skids, Ralph goes to the Director General's office of the Antiquities Service. The DG's secretary tells Ralph to wait, during which time he has a bout of diarrhea. While in the lavatory, he meets Howard Carter, famous archaeologist. Carter acknowledges Ralph as the pornographer, meaning the author of *Desire and Deceit in Ancient Egypt*, his book of poetry by Atum-hadu. A well-known critic had panned the book, and Carter comments on this.

The DG welcomes Carter into his office immediately, while the DG secretary tells Ralph to come back on a less busy day. Ralph seems not to understand that neither the DG nor Carter have any respect for him.

Sunday, 22 October, 1922 (p. 137)



The Cairo bank is open but not the American banks due to this being Sunday, so Ralph spends time deciding which gramophones to take to the villa near the dig site and to the site itself. He remembers what Carter had told him about the worker's songs, which may be entertainment enough.

Monday, 23 October, 1922 (pp. 137-140)

Ralph checks with the bank about the funds transfer, which has not gone through. He takes lunch with his real estate agent at the Explorer's Club. Portraits of famous archaeologists hang on the walls, and Ralph recognizes them all. While looking at property photographs, Carter stops by. Ralph picks a villa near to where Carter lives while in the field, paying the deposit with his own money.

Tuesday, 24 October, 1922 (pp. 140-143)

The wire transfer of funds still has not gone through, which worries Ralph.

An undated letter from Ferrell to Macy follows. CCF softens toward Ralph and asks for Ferrell's advice. Ferrell tries to steer him away from Ralph, whom he believes is a conman, but CCF continues to put trust into Ralph's expedition regardless of the doubts. Ferrell ends with Margaret's opium addiction and an observation that she must have eventually gotten over it because she had married Macy's uncle and perhaps lived a happy life.

Wednesday, 25 October, 1922 (pp. 143-145)

The Director General sends Ralph a note that disallows him from digging where he wants because Professor ter Breuggen of Harvard University refuses to support Ralph's expedition. Ralph complains in his journal that ter Breuggen is simply afraid of him and protective of his position. The Professor may also resent Ralph for his not giving Fragment C to the University. Meanwhile, the funds have not transferred to Ralph's account.

Thursday, 26 October, 1922 (pp. 145-154)

Ralph prepares to travel by boat down the Nile River to his field villa. He checks for the funds transfer—which has not come through yet—picks up only two of the suits he ordered from the tailor, tells the portrait artist to seek his pay from the Explorer's Club, and puts a small amount of money on his hotel bill.

Aboard ship he meets an elderly couple from Minneapolis, Len and Sonia Nordquist. The couple takes an interest in Ralph's book of Atum-hadu's poetry. After hearing him recite some of the juicier verses, the Nordquists invite Ralph to their cabin for a séance. The spirit of Atum-hadu—or some other spirit—tries to communicate by putting out candles and making the table bump the floor. Ralph believes these phenomena to be tricks, but goes along with the Nordquist's desire to use their Ouija board. Whatever moves the pointer spells out nonsense words that Ralph later interprets as Egyptian phonetic spellings. The messages turn out to be "a fighter for honor" and "you know the



place," reassurance to Ralph that he will find the tomb of Atum-hadu. Ralph then relates a dream of his to Margaret in which he gives a speech to many people, including just about everyone he has encountered so far.

Friday, 27 October, 1922 (pp. 154-156)

Upon hearing about a native Egyptian's defense of an American tourist's honor, where he takes knife wounds in a kitchen fight, Ralph hires the man, named Ahmed, to be the head of his excavation team. He gives Ahmed his villa address and a few instructions, promising him a good salary but not a share of the finds. Ralph then eats breakfast with the Nordquists and invites them to visit his villa and dig site.

Ralph arrives in Luxor, the location of his villa, and rides to it with a real estate agent. He then surveys possible dig sites while still worried about the fund transfer, which has not gone through yet.

Saturday, 28 October, 1922 (pp. 157-160)

Accounting for how tombs are lost over the ages, Ralph explains that some tombs were hidden from the beginning. He thinks this is exactly the way Atum-hadu had done it, since the poetry that he translated for his book refers to a devastating invasion of Egypt at the time. Ralph is convinced that Atum-hadu somehow managed to build the tomb, fill it with as many treasures as he could, and somehow guard the secret for all this time.

Letter/Journal 20 - 29 Analysis

Realities, self-delusions, and fictions swirl around the main characters. Professor ter Breuggen tells Ferrell that Ralph's academic career will soon end, especially with the doomed expedition. Ferrell tells CCF, and CCF demands clarification from Ralph about his Oxford degree. Ralph avoids the question by taking it too literally, a transparent ploy to buy time.

An especially telling scene occurs at the Director General's office. Ralph writes about being chummy with Carter, the famous archaeologist who is about to discover King Tut's tomb. Yet Carter puts him off in ways that Ralph detects but misinterprets. Ralph has a quixotic knack of elevating himself beyond his actual level, a pathetically obvious behavior trait revealed in his writing.

The séance with the Nordquists encourages Ralph, but even if a spirit had been trying to communicate, no assurance exists that the spirit was being honest. But Ralph must believe in his expedition and the existence of Atum-hadu's tomb full of treasure. Parlor tricks or not, he grabs onto the straw. Yet with all his flaws, Ralph comes across as somewhat likable, a comical and harmless dolt. That is, harmless to most others. He does himself no favors.



Letter/Journal 30 - 39

Letter/Journal 30 - 39 Summary

Sunday, 29 October, 1922 (pp. 160-163)

Ralph wakes up to find three cats outside his villa, two toms and an orange female. He feeds them and pets the female, which turns his thoughts to his father's hounds. Scouting his intended dig area, he takes a route that keeps him out of sight because he has yet to obtain official permission.

Monday, 30 October, 1922 (pp. 163-166)

The Nordquists come by to visit Ralph, and Ahmed shows up to start work. Ralph and Ahmed line up a few workers, which is easy to do because the other major digs in the area have not yet started. Ralph writes to Margaret about a sculpture of her that she gave him before he left for Egypt.

Tuesday, 31 October, 1922 (pp. 166-168)

Ralph and Ahmed lead the workers to the dig site. Ralph becomes wary of Ahmed, suspicious that he works with the merchants to overcharge for the expedition supplies he buys. The first day involves looking for signs of the tomb at the lower level of a cliff and marking the top of the cliff for rope placement.

Wednesday, 1 November, 1922 (pp. 168-173)

Ralph lowers himself on a rope to a ledge that might be the opening to King Atum-hadu's tomb, but it turns out to be a dry hole never touched by humankind. Another ledge in the cliff has been cut into, but for whatever reason, the tomb-building had been aborted. Ahmed tells Ralph about his deep hatred for Australians. They leave for the day, and Ralph runs into Carter that evening. Ralph receives a telegram from CCF about the money, which has not been wired yet on his end. Ralph describes what the last days of King Atum-hadu might have been like.

Thursday, 2 November, 1922 (pp. 173-177)

The exploration of the cliff wall continues and makes headway, but there still is no discovery of the lost tomb. Ralph receives a sarcastic letter from ter Breuggen that reveals the true reason for CCF doubting Ralph's honesty—the lack of Oxford records. The letter also notifies Ralph that he is fired from his Harvard position. Ralph sends two telegrams, one to Margaret and one to CCF, warning them not to listen to either ter Breuggen or Ferrell.

Friday, 3 November, 1922 (pp. 177-178)



The search for tomb evidence on the cliff wall yields nothing conclusive. Ralph considers excavating the valley floor, but this will take permission from the Antiquities Service and the hiring of many more workers.

Saturday, 4 November, 1922 (pp. 178-179)

While continuing the tomb search farther along the cliff face, Ahmed brings news to Ralph that Carter has uncovered a stair. Ralph dismisses the importance of the stair. The Nordquists visit and join Ralph for supper.

Sunday, 5 November, 1922 (pp. 179-180)

Ralph visits Carter's dig and asks to see the stair. Carter reluctantly lets him take a look. Instead of a single stair, an entire staircase leading down to rubble and a wall has been excavated. Ralph guesses that Carter has uncovered an ancient granary and starts to feel ill.

Oct. 13 (pp. 181-182)

Margaret writes to Ralph about Ferrell and his story about Paul Caldwell. She cannot believe that Paul had ever been Ralph's friend. She complains about her boredom and wants to accompany Ralph to his next dig—that or stay in Paris.

Monday, 6 November, 1922 (p. 182)

Ralph pays his workers and sends them home. He is too sick to work.

Letter/Journal 30 - 39 Analysis

Determination, hard work, and fearlessness are Ralph's strong qualities. Jealousy is his weakest. He has no problem rappelling down a cliff with only a simple rope and no other mountaineering gear, but he cannot stand the idea that Carter may have uncovered a significant find. Ralph dismisses the find as nothing more than a granary or some other meaningless building.

Ahmed has only one motivation—to find something of value. His headstrong ways serve well to discipline the other workers, but he does not know when to stop, thereby irritating Ralph, who wisely sees Ahmed as untrustworthy. As long as Ahmed thinks that a tomb is to be found full of treasure, Ralph is safe.

Ferrell's news about Paul Caldwell upsets Margaret, although bringing up Paul in a letter to Ralph indicates some uncertainty. Ferrell's suspicions about Ralph having murdered Paul motivate him to consider an Egypt visit, but he has also developed a feeling for Margaret that drives him to act as the family protector. The protection is not welcomed all around, as Margaret feels insecure in her relationship and CCF withholds needed funds for Ralph's expedition, fearing fraud. The uncertainty that Ferrell brings to the table may be contributing to Ralph's illness as well.



Letter/Journal 40 - 49

Letter/Journal 40 - 49 Summary

Wednesday, 8 November, 1922 (pp. 182-183)

Recovered from his illness, Ralph visits Carter's staircase at night. For some reason, Carter has reburied his find, and Ralph interprets this to mean the stairs had led to nothing of significance. He then looks in on Carter through a window as he sleeps in his villa. Ralph feels sorry for the man.

Thursday, 9 November, 1922 (p. 184)

Ahmed and the workers are happy that Ralph is healthy enough to work again. They continue the cliff face exploration, but not much remains to be probed.

Friday, 10 November, 1922 (pp. 184-185)

Ralph orders his workers to stake out a 100-yard square area of the valley floor for trench digging. He needs more men and tools, but this will require money from the Partnership, CCF, and his other investors.

Saturday, 11 November, 1922 (pp. 185-193)

One of the workers finds a small patch of smooth white rock in the cliff face at about eye level. Ralph carefully excavates and the find turns out to be a stone door, which he concludes must be the door to King Atum-hadu's tomb. He cables CCF with the good news.

Ferrell writes to Macy about how CCF reacts to the good news—CCF becomes very angry and fires the detective. Margaret cannot stop talking about Ralph's success. Ferrell leaves the family crestfallen.

Sunday, 12 November, 1922 (pp. 193-195)

The workers and Ralph toil to bring the door out of its frame. They succeed in loosening it enough for Ralph to lower a candle and take a look. He only sees stone flooring. Ralph tells Ahmed to get more workers for the next day.

Monday, 13 November, 1922 (pp. 195-198)

With help from the extra workers, Ralph and crew free the 2,000 pound door and lay it onto a padded transport. The opening leads to an empty room, which disappoints Ahmed greatly. Ralph thinks about this more deeply and discovers another door in the wall opposite the entrance. He speculates that the empty room was built specifically to ward off tomb robbers, as well as securing the location of the tomb through a series of



murders—the workers for the empty room may have killed all the other main tomb workers, and then a third set of assassins, unaware of the tomb location, could have killed the remaining workers.

Tuesday, 14 November, 1922 (pp. 198-199)

Ralph and crew chip away at the second door. The floor of the empty room slants slightly downward to the second door, which calls for extra equipment. Ralph leaves the workers to guard the tomb and goes into town. He receives a telegram from CCF that expresses excitement and a promise for the funds to be wired. He also picks up a letter from Margaret.

Oct. 21 (pp. 199-201)

Margaret writes to Ralph about Ferrell and a man she has met at JP's speakeasy, Cornelius Macy. She teases him about her flirtatious exploits and his sexual temptations while on expedition.

Wednesday, 15 November, 1922 (p. 202)

Ralph and crew continue to work on the second door. The task requires heavy equipment, which Ralph cannot afford at this time, nor can he transport it onsite without being noticed.

Thursday, 16 November, 1922 (pp. 202-203)

Ralph addresses Margaret's boredom and the situation with Ferrell. He then turns to the second door and the slow process of opening it. They manage to slide it outward enough so Ralph can take a look. He thinks he sees gold.

Letter/Journal 40 - 49 Analysis

Through either a stroke of good luck or a tremendously bad turn of fate, the workers discover a door in the cliff. Ralph's excitement tempers when they open the room and find it empty, but he thinks up an explanation that seems plausible enough. The Tomb Paradox involves the need to place treasure in the tomb and seal it in a way that keeps its location a secret. Dead men tell no tales, and this is the morbid solution that Ralph lands upon. Ralph's discovery of the second door draws him and Ahmed onward to possible riches, a promise with ominous undertones.

Margaret's casual mentioning of Cornelius Macy and her teasing about fidelity carries ominous undertones as well, something that Ralph does not detect. However, the person compiling the journals and letters is Margaret's nephew, and his name is Macy. Apparently Margaret keeps her options open.



Letter/Journal 50 - 59

Letter/Journal 50 - 59 Summary

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 16, 17, 18 November, written Saturday, 18 November, 1922 (pp. 203-209)

The second door falls out of control and smashes inside the second room, crushing Ralph's foot in the process. He explores the room despite the pain and finds another empty room. The injury of another worker causes Ralph to let them all go into town and find help for the man while Ralph examines the room. He finds a third door and begins to chip away at it. The workers return with bandages and water for his badly injured foot.

Ralph goes to town and discovers that CCF has wired money, but only a fraction of the agreed-upon amount. Ralph sends a complaining telegram to CCF.

Sunday, 19 November, 1922 (pp. 209-210)

Ralph's injured foot and exhaustion keep him away from the dig. His workers do nothing for an entire day.

Nov. 2 (pp. 210-212)

Margaret requests that Ralph return at once to Boston. She brings up Ferrell and how she uses him to avoid boredom, but she prefers Ralph's company.

Sunday, 19 November, 1922 continued (pp. 212-214)

Ralph curses the confusion of crossing letters. He recalls their visit to the Museum of Fine Arts.

Ferrell hangs around Boston hoping that Margaret will ask him to rescue her.

Monday, 20 November, 1922 (pp. 214-216)

Ralph returns to the tomb and finds the workers hitting the third door with sledge hammers. He angrily calls them off and cuts their pay. Rather than hastening the opening, the workers have delayed it. Ralph insists on plastering the door before again attempting to open it. He tries to recall the inscription on the door that was destroyed from the hammering.

Tuesday, 21 November, 1922 (pp. 216-217)

The plaster dries and Ralph guards the tomb himself, having lost trust in his men. He writes to Margaret, pleads against Ferrell's influence and remembers her beauty.

Wednesday, 22 November, 1922 (pp. 217-218)



Ralph and crew continue their work plastering the door well enough that it will stay together when they open it. He goes into town to see if the second monthly fund transfer has completed, but it has not.

Thursday, 23 November, 1922 (pp. 218-224)

After opening the third door and finding nothing, the men leave on Ralph's orders so he can ponder the meaning of a small room with yet another door. Ahmed coaxes Ralph to have supper with him and asks many questions. Meanwhile, the other men smash down the fourth, fifth, and sixth doors only to find a room full of twelve columns. They leave in disgust. Ralph ponders what the twelve columns might mean and finds a seventh door.

Friday, 24 November, 1922 (pp. 224-226)

Ralph decides to revise the drawing of the tomb that he has been updating with each new discovery. He eliminates the three smashed doors from the day before. Ahmed does not come back with new workers, as Ralph has ordered.

Saturday, 25 November, 1922 (pp. 226-227)

Ralph seals the tomb with boards, rock and plaster. Ahmed returns full of apologies, but Ralph withholds his forgiveness. He orders Ahmed to hire better workers, purchase a gate and padlock, and return to the tomb in three days. He also sends a telegram to CCF that describes his finds as majestic and asks for money.

Letter/Journal 50 - 59 Analysis

Luck decidedly turns to catastrophic fate. Ralph suffers a terrible injury when the third door falls and smashes his foot, and the next room proves empty too, but has another door. At this point, Ralph is not thinking clearly. His obsession with finding treasure and his rationalizations for finding nothing outweigh any good judgment. Rather than stopping the exploration and seeking medical help, he keeps working in the tomb, or whatever structure this is that he calls a tomb.

Ralph's judgment fails as well regarding his story to CCF about having already found great treasures. Money comes, but not the amount that Ralph expects, a sure sign that more money will likely never materialize. CCF expects to cash in on the non-existent treasures that Ralph has invented, and no amount of promises can change this fact. Ralph misses this critical point and should be using his remaining resources to treat his smashed foot, but he ignores the infecting wound. He would be wise to seal the find and seek more reliable funding elsewhere—or do anything constructive—certainly not opening further doors to empty rooms. The room containing nothing but unpainted columns should indicate to Ralph that what he has found is not a tomb, but more likely a set of storage rooms once used to hold the unfinished materials for building other tombs or temples.



More irony develops as Margaret pleads for Ralph to take her on the next expedition. Had she come to Egypt with him, she may have kept him from making the serious mistakes he has so far. Now it may be too late. Ralph's obsession and increasing irrationality cannot lead to anything good, unless the next room or the next room after that contains piles of treasure. So far the prospects look dismal.



Letter/Journal 60 - 69

Letter/Journal 60 - 69 Summary

Sunday, 26 November, 1922 (pp. 227-229)

Ahmed awakens Ralph and demands full payment for him and his men. He announces that he and his men are going to work for Carter, who has found the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen, although evidence of plunder from thousands of years ago has also been found. Ralph takes this as a sign of failure for Carter.

Monday, 27 November, 1922 (pp. 229-232)

A telegram from CCF promises to send money but also requests the details of Ralph's finds. Ralph visits Carter's site, which has yielded great treasures from King Tut, the news of the discoveries filling all the newspapers. He meets Lord Carnarvon and Lady Evelyn, then returns to his villa and worries over money. Carter comes by that night, gives Ralph compliments on his work, and mentions that Lady Evelyn may have romantic feelings toward him. She is a very rich woman.

Tuesday, 28 November, 1922 (pp. 232-244)

CCF sends a telegram to Ralph that reflects confusion between Ralph and Carter—CCF had thought Carter was a part of Ralph's team. CCF asks if Carter is accepting investments, a request that turns Ralph away from him. Ralph recalls the time when CCF showed off his private collection of antiquities.

Ralph visits Carter's site again. He talks with Lord Carnarvon and tries to ask for expedition funding, but Carter comes along and interrupts the request. Ralph sends a telegram to CCF in which he threatens to go with Lord Carnarvon's funding—not yet secured—rather than the unreliable CCF funding. Amr, a sixteen-year-old boy and cousin of Ralph's barber, shows up to work on Ralph's dig.

Ferrell describes to Macy how he influenced CCF to withhold Ralph's funding. CCF receives the telegram from Ralph and worries that CCF will not be able to pay off the other investors. Ferrell, expecting Ralph to now abandon Margaret, advises CCF to convince her to dump Ralph, and thus save her reputation. Ferrell also points out that CCF has invested very little money into Ralph, but this does not reduce CCF's anxiety.

Ralph receives a note from his landlord that the rent on the villa has increased tremendously due to the new demands on housing caused by Carter's find. The landlord wants six months rent in advance.

Wednesday, 29 November, 1922 (pp. 245-253)



Amr and Ralph work on Ralph's find. Ralph decides to attend the opening of Carter's find to the public. When he returns to the dig, Amr has left, but Ahmed is there demanding money. Ralph explains that no cash is available, so Ahmed insists he hammer down the next door. Ralph does this, but the newly opened room contains no treasure. Ahmed beats Ralph and steals his best gramophone. Ralph receives a telegram supposedly from Margaret that breaks off their relationship.

Nov. 15 (pp. 253-255)

Margaret writes to Ralph about how her father has fired Ferrell and that she now has no doubts about their relationship. CCF needs the money from Ralph's find very much, probably because he has been spending the other investors' money on his business.

Thursday, 30 November, 1922 (pp. 255-261)

Ralph writes to Margaret and reaffirms his love for her. He expresses sorrow about her father's financial problems and assures her that when he secures financial backing from Lord Carnarvon, all will be well. He then writes about how archaeologists impact ancient history with their own interpretations. Ralph decides to leave the villa, which he can no longer afford, and sleeps at his dig.

Ferrell writes to Macy and tells of how CCF goes to New York City and takes a ship to Egypt in order to straighten everything out. Ralph has been sending anonymous telegrams to O'Toole, the press, and even CCF's cardinal, exposing CCF's fraudulent ways and interest in pornography. Margaret rejects Ferrell's offer of love with hysterical anger and humiliating barbs. Ferrell leaves the Finnerans and wonders if Macy, who never responds, is receiving his mail.

Friday, 1 December, 1922 (pp. 261-268)

Ralph translates and analyzes hieroglyphs and paintings that have somehow appeared in the room full of columns, which he now terms the History Chamber. This is the first manifestation of his descent into insanity because when they were first discovered the columns were blank. He admires the skill of the scribe who made the hieroglyphs, but not so much the artist who created the paintings. In reality, Ralph is creating the writing, the artwork, and the story of Atum-hadu.

He determines that Atum-hadu's reign lasted twelve years, from about 1642-1630 BC. The mythology points to a self-made man, having been born to peasantry rather than royalty.

January 5, 1955 (pp. 268-272)

Ferrell receives a visit from two other investors in Ralph's dig, J. P. O'Toole and Heinz Kovacs. They hire Ferrell to follow CCF to Egypt and either get their money back or, if CCF has left to retrieve the treasures from Ralph, to make sure the treasures come back to them.



Saturday, 2 December, 1922 (pp. 272-276)

Continuing his translation and analysis, Ralph tells the story of how a low-born Egyptian becomes a famous military general. The reigning king, Djedneferre Dudimose, bestows the kingship just before his death to the general. The general becomes Atum-hadu. Thrilled that he has found the proof of Atum-hadu's existence, Ralph expects Lord Carnarvon to share his enthusiasm.

Sunday, 3 December, 1922 (pp. 276-278)

More translation reveals a king who has a vengeful heart against a priest who had caused the king great pain in his youth. Atum-hadu has the priest roasted alive while forced to witness the king raping all the women in his family. After the priest dies, the king feeds his corpse to the court animals and his heart to the dogs. This takes away any chance for the priest to gain immortality in the underworld afterlife of the ancient Egyptians. Ten years into his reign, Atum-hadu meets a very beautiful woman and makes her his only queen.

Letter/Journal 60 - 69 Analysis

Ralph deteriorates quickly, both physically and mentally. The infection in his foot has moved into his leg, and he misinterprets bloody footprints of his own making as ancient evidence for an injured workman. Whatever Ralph writes in his journal comes from a mind entering madness, a spirit crushed under failure. Imagination, perhaps grounded in his actual life experiences, creates the story of Atum-hadu, the king who probably never existed. Startling parallels with Paul Caldwell's youth work themselves in, such as the priest who Atum-hadu roasts alive. The overall theme of a boy born to poverty and rising to prominence also parallels Paul's life.

Desperate for funding and crazed from failure, Paul takes irrational actions and invents scenes that probably never happened. The visit from Carter may have been a feverish dream. His visits to Carter's successful dig may have been inventions Ralph created while observing from afar. Lord Carnarvon's backing of Ralph's dig, although somewhat effective with CCF, carries no more reality than the writing and paintings that Ralph scrawls on the walls and columns of his find.

Ferrell's influence on Ralph's degeneration helps push Ralph deeper into insanity. Insane people can also appear rational at times through analytical compositions. Ralph displays this paradox in the coherency of his Atum-hadu story and his observations about Egyptology. His mind does not dissolve as with a brain illness that eats away tissue. Rather, he sees reality in clear light as long as the reality is not his own, such as an abstraction like Egyptology or the story of Atum-hadu. Ralph's mind denies his failure, and rather than leaving an empty hole, he labors to fill it up with fantasy.

Ferrell maintains his own fantasies about writing a true-crime book, with him as the super-sleuth and Macy as his dimwitted sidekick. Ferrell's fantasy keeps him feeding Macy with his side of the story, the act of an old man entering another kind of insanity,



that of impending death. Publishing a book might give him a little immortality, something that Ralph seeks as well and works toward through his myth of Atum-hadu. All people have the urge to seek immortality, according to Ralph's way of thinking. Some do it through procreation, others through great works of art. The rich seek to put their names on buildings and financial trusts, or in the case of Barnabas Davies, his illegitimate children. Atum-hadu seeks immortality through his tomb and his story, as does Ralph—as does Ferrell in his own way.

If Ralph responds to basic human drives, can he properly be termed insane? That may be so if insanity is defined as losing control of one's basic human drives to the point of self-destruction. As such, the more fundamental drive of survival, universal in all living things, evaporates away in favor of fame, a uniquely human need. Ralph ignores his deadly leg infection in favor of creating the Atum-hadu myth that draws him toward what must be the only logical conclusion—Ralph must become Atum-hadu.



Letter/Journal 70 - 79

Letter/Journal 70 - 79 Summary

Monday, 4 December, 1922 (pp. 278-280)

Atum-hadu ignores the warnings of the god Seth about his new queen. She is the daughter of the Mater of Largesse, keeper of the king's wealth, and she conspires with her father to steal from the king. Atum-hadu tries to stab his queen, but fails to do so.

Ralph sends a brief telegram to Margaret, asking her to acknowledge her love for him, and in the cryptic abbreviation, PLSACKLVRMT because he lacks the funds for anything longer.

Dec. 4 (pp. 280-281)

In an unsent letter discovered after her death, Margaret tells Ralph about how Ferrell had turned her and CCF against him. She recounts her tongue lashing of Ferrell and begs for Ralph's forgiveness.

Tuesday, 5 December, 1922 (pp. 282-284)

Further translation brings Atum-hadu to his eleventh reigning year. Invaders threaten his kingdom. He tortures a captured prisoner and has a meeting with Ma'at (another ancient Egyptian god) who prepares him for the underworld afterlife.

Wednesday, 6 December, 1922 (pp. 284-285)

An illness that attacks his stomach keeps Atum-hadu from fighting for long with his forces against the invading Hyksos. The end comes near for his kingdom and his life.

Thursday, 7 December, 1922 (pp. 285-286)

Ralph comments on the warrior king. The translation consists of Atum-hadu telling his court that soon all will be gone, so have a good time until then. Ralph thinks about his family and their military service.

Friday, 8 December, 1922 (pp. 286-288)

Atum-hadu finds his tomb, possibly already built.

Ralph speculates on several possibilities, and he decides to bring Lord Carnarvon to his dig once all the translations and analyses are completed.

Saturday, 9 December, 1922 (pp. 288-289)



Ralph turns to the twelve columns with painted scenes and begins analyzing them. Each depicts highlights from a year of Atum-hadu's reign.

Sunday, 10 December, 1922 (pp. 289-292)

Ralph continues with his column analysis. The Director General of the Antiquities Service sends Ralph a letter that invites him to reapply for official permission to excavate.

Monday, 11 December, 1922 (pp. 292-293)

Ralph goes to Carter's site and discovers that he and Lord Carnarvon have left for Cairo, with Carnarvon and Lady Evelyn going on to England. Ralph cannot imagine a good alternative plan for finding more money for his dig.

Tuesday, 12 December, 1922 (pp. 293-295)

Ralph continues to analyze the columns and comes across more of Atum-hadu's poetry.

Letter/Journal 70 - 79 Analysis

Ralph moves along quickly into his madness. Parallels form in the Atum-hadu myth that correspond with his present condition, his insecurity about Margaret's love for him, and his past in Kent, England. The memories of Kent seem weaker and more idealized than the parallels with Paul's childhood, indicating that Paul may have taken on Ralph's identity, the identity theft possibly based upon conversations with Marlowe during the war.

Whether or not Carter and Lord Carnarvon actually leave for England seems unimportant at this point. Ralph's last hope for redemption is gone, and the inclusion of Margaret's letter and the notification that he should reapply for excavation permission simply add irony. Ralph works out everything through Atum-hadu, including his insecurity with Margaret, symbolized in Ralph's myth as the queen that Atum-hadu should stab but does not. Ralph should kill his love for Margaret but cannot bring himself to do it. His kingdom has come to an end.



Letter/Journal 80 - 89

Letter/Journal 80 - 89 Summary

Wednesday, 13 December, 1922 (pp. 295-296)

Finishing with the columns, Ralph speculates on how Atum-hadu might have furnished the tomb and commissioned an artist to write the hieroglyphs and paint the scenes. The bank bars Ralph from making any more queries about wired funds.

Thursday, 14 December, 1922 (p. 296)

Ralph mentions to Margaret that something terrible has happened to him. He does not come right out and say it, but this room turns out to be empty as well. At this point insanity fully settles into him.

Friday, 15 December, 1922 (p. 297)

Ralph wonders how Atum-hadu knew the end of his kingdom had come. This reflects Ralph's discovery that the tomb dead-ends and contains nothing of worth.

Saturday, 16 December, 1922 (p. 297)

Ralph is too sick to work.

Sunday, 17 December, 1922 (pp. 297-298)

A mummified cat shows up in the seventh room. Ralph describes the cat-god Bastet and thinks the mummified cat had belonged to Atum-hadu. The untold reality is that Ralph has killed a stray cat and wrapped it in a sheet from the Cairo hotel.

Monday, 18 December, 1922 (pp. 299-300)

Ralph tells more of Atum-hadu's last days and uses a sledgehammer to open the next door. This leads to another empty room, which he terms the Chamber of Mysteries. The room has another door.

Tuesday, 19 December, 1922 (pp. 300-301)

Carter comes by to deliver a letter to Ralph that had been mixed into Carter's mail. He wants to see what Ralph has found, but Ralph stops him. With a few comments about dry holes, Carter leaves. Ralph wonders how many other of his letters Carter has intercepted.

Nov. 29 (p. 301)



Margaret writes to Ralph and releases him from the engagement. She hates him, Ferrell, and her father.

Tuesday, 19 December, 1922 continued (pp. 302-303)

Ralph takes the letter in stride. He tries to open the ninth chamber in the tomb, and something makes him cry. Ralph wants to give up the expedition and return home to Margaret. He would like to put this all behind them and start new somewhere else.

Wednesday, 20 December, 1922 (pp. 303-310)

Overly enthusiastic, Ralph tells Margaret a story. CCF comes into the tomb and wakes Ralph from his sleep. The investor refers to the artwork in the tomb as done by a child, demands to see his gold, and mistakes Ralph for a native worker, due to his beard and robe. Ralph repeatedly affirms that CCF is alive and laughing about the misunderstandings as he composes the story, an ominous telltale sign, and his descriptions of the hieroglyphs and paintings try to cover the fact that they are fresh and done by him, also not very well. Ralph has done something terrible to CCF and composes the story to cover up his act, possibly of murder.

Letter/Journal 80 - 89 Analysis

A nervous breakdown likely grips Ralph when he discovers that the last room is also empty. His find is probably an old warehouse, mostly empty except for unfinished columns. He has sacrificed everything and discovered nothing. Ralph has no career, no wife, no money, and his infected injury may be far enough along to kill him.

The mummified cat is likely the orange female cat that Ralph had fed while living at his villa. He romanticizes the cat god Bastet, perhaps covering his guilt for having killed the cat, but he also mentions in future ravings about the cat choking on a fish bone.

Ralph moves beyond any hope for redemption in this world and into the land of the damned when he murders CCF. His guilt and denial cause him to pretend that CCF still lives in his letter to Margaret and his journal entries. He later describes the gruesome murder by sledgehammer in the Atum-hadu myth.



Letter/Journal 90 - 99

Letter/Journal 90 - 99 Summary

Thursday, 21 December, 1922 (pp. 310-311)

Ralph visits Carter's site. He continues to pretend that CCF is alive and helping him. Ralph writes that Carter orders him to fetch chemicals. In reality, Ralph steals the chemicals to use on the body of CCF and his own.

Friday, 22 December, 1922 (pp. 311-312)

Carter opens his find to the public. Ralph criticizes the find as being that of a minor king not worthy of attention.

Saturday, 23 December, 1922 (pp. 312-313)

Ralph wakes to find a police officer at his site. Carter had sent him to make sure all was well with Ralph, which they are not. His foot injury is infected and has spread to his leg. CCF is dead, and so is a stray cat. Ralph has gone insane, but he manages to keep the constable from discovering anything.

Ferrell arrives in Cairo and begins looking for Ralph right away.

Sunday, 24 December, 1922 (pp. 313-314)

Ralph writes about the Egyptian idea of immortality. He sees it as a universal desire, but not a literal physical immortality. Fame, where everyone speaks your name for a long time after death, constitutes a big part of the concept.

Monday, 25 December, 1922 (pp. 314-316)

Sonia Nordquist visits Ralph. Her husband has died and she offers to take Ralph back to Minnesota, where he can stay with her and help with the chores. Ralph refuses because he wants to finish with the tomb, plus he has murdered CCF.

Tuesday, 26 December, 1922 (p. 316)

Ralph continues to pretend the CCF is not dead and carries on with his madness in the tomb.

Wednesday, 27 December, 1922 (pp. 317-320)

Ralph comments negatively on Carter's find.

Ferrell takes a boat to Ralph's former villa and discovers two journalists living there. They do not know about Ralph but do direct Ferrell to Carter's site.



Ferrell meets Carter and likes the man's character. Carter tells him a little about Ralph, as much as he knows. Ferrell hires a guide the next day to visit Ralph's dig, but does not find it. He goes back to town and arranges for others to watch for Ralph and notify him right away if seen.

Thursday, 28 December, 1922 (p. 321)

Ralph spots Ferrell about 200 yards away from his dig and puts words into a dead man's mouth: "Do you know him, CCF? 'Oh, indeed, Ralph, my boy, oh yes. He is hungry to intrude, destroy, confound. He devours what other men build. He is a scavenger of lives and survives on loose ends'" (p. 321).

Friday, 29 December, 1922 (pp. 321-322)

Ralph decides that CCF, as the Master of Largesse in his insane imagination, should be carried to the tomb by Atum-hadu at the end of his reign. This does not bode well for the body of CCF.

Saturday, 30 December, 1922 (pp. 322-332)

Ralph goes to town with the purpose of arranging transportation for CCF and himself back to Boston. In whatever way his mind is working, the irrational action brings him to Ferrell, who finds Ralph drinking tea at an outside table.

Ralph looks terrible—beaten and bruised—wrapped in a filthy robe, his bad leg stinking of infection. Ferrell tries to work a confession out of him, but Ralph's mind works well enough to put Ferrell off. Upon being confronted with the British military record of Captain Marlowe, Marlowe's odd relationship with Corporal Caldwell, and their apparent deaths, Ralph argues that the evidence can be interpreted many different ways. He offers a few possibilities. Ferrell then lays out his own interpretation and feels that it hits spot on. He detects guilty behavior from Ralph, but he still needs the bodies of Marlowe and Caldwell to make a murder case.

Letter/Journal 90 - 99 Analysis

Everything seems to mock Ralph. Carter's discovery of King Tut's tomb attracts many people because Carter has indeed found great treasures and has achieved fame, and thereby immortality. The visiting police officer, sent by Carter, could have been a path to redemption, had Ralph not murdered CCF. An even better path opens to him from Sonia Nordquist—an idyllic life in Minnesota serving as her handyman, cook and gardener. All means nothing now. He can never marry Margaret after he has killed her father, and leaving Egypt for Minnesota would simply delay his murder trial. The arrival of Ferrell exacerbates the situation, especially the part about bringing the police with dogs to his site. Ralph seems to know that something is buried in the sand—Marlowe for certain, possibly Paul Caldwell—and then the crushed body of CCF in the tomb.



Ralph's irrational action of buying tickets for himself and a dead man may be a way to divert Ferrell away for a period of time. In this sense, the action is not irrational but is a fairly good scheme to throw the detective off track. Ralph's mind still works logically as he refutes Ferrell's accusations, even if he slips in his storytelling by admitting to knowledge that he should not possess. His reference to Beverly as being female may be another slip in a Paul-playing-Ralph act.

Two events foreshadow what Ralph has in mind. He invents the thought that Amut-hadu should carry the Master of Largesse into the tomb, and he steals preservative chemicals from Carter's site. Ralph's terrible condition, as Ferrell graphically describes, precludes him from actually asking for the chemicals.



Letter/Journal 100 - 109

Letter/Journal 100 - 109 Summary

Saturday, 30 December, 1922 continued (pp. 332-343)

Ralph gives his own account of the meeting with Ferrell to Margaret. The story about Paul Caldwell impresses Ralph, the way Paul worked his way out of poverty to become something. Ralph speculates on the last days of Atum-hadu's reign. His prose does not reveal his insanity, but rather a lucid grasp of history and reality, until he ends with, "CCF is asleep. I have much to finish, especially if mad Ferrell is coming to stamp about with police and dogs" (p. 343).

January 6, 1955 (pp. 343-344)

Ferrell explains how he knows that Ralph is lying about not knowing Caldwell or how Marlowe died. He admits that he works on a hunch and not solid evidence.

Sunday, 31 December, 1922 (pp. 344-345)

Ralph dreams about Margaret and complains about Carter.

Ferrell continues to investigate Ralph but finds nothing.

Sunday, 31 December, 1922 continued (pp. 346-361)

Ralph's continues working on his tomb. He imagines that Atum-hadu plasters a wooden door, the same that he had made earlier to hide the tomb, shut from the inside. He proceeds to decorate the first chamber and places dung and toy scarabs in the next. His cane goes in the first small room, his cigar humidor in the second, and his robe in the third, along with his painting equipment. The dead cat remains in the first room off the columns, then the mummy-wrapped body of CCF in the following room.

Ferrell discovers that Ralph and CCF never board the ship for which Ralph had bought tickets. Ferrell renews his efforts to crack the case, but instead finds an abandoned gramophone with Ralph's name inscribed on it and a bonfire where clothing had been burned. He then goes to Carter's site and asks if anyone has any knowledge. Ahmed admits that he had worked for Ralph. Ferrell finds out that Ahmed had been fired for fighting and goes with the police to search Ahmad's house. There Ferrell finds the gramophone that Ahmed had taken from Ralph, plus the cigars from CCF. Ahmed's stories switch around too much, and he is arrested for crimes he did not commit—the theft of all the gold from Ralph's find, gold that does not exist, and the murder of Ralph Trilipush.

January 25, 1923 (p. 362)



Margaret receives a letter from ter Breuggen and a package. The letter informs her of Ralph's termination at Harvard. The package contains a letter from Beverly Quint to Ralph and others from Marlowe to Quint.

29 September, 1922 (p. 363-366)

Beverly Quint writes to Ralph about the visit he received from Ferrell. A short exposition of his love for Hugo Marlowe precedes a cryptic explanation of a scheme to hide homosexuality at Oxford. Beverly hints that the story of Ralph being Marlow's lover while at war in Egypt is the truth, "Did you love him a little? . . . you who dare not speak your name" (p. 366).

Somehow, Ralph had been a project of Marlow's while at Oxford, perhaps an attempt to create a college intellectual from the son of a gentleman farmer.

Another hint comes at the end of the letter, "Only, as a favour to this acolyte, give a thought, from time to time, to what you let die in a faraway desert. I do hope you were not cruel about it" (p. 366).

16 January, 1918 (pp. 367-371)

Marlowe arranges for a young Egyptian that he interrogated earlier to meet him in the shadows of the pyramids that night for a homosexual encounter. Paul Caldwell comes upon the scene and later blackmails Marlowe to give him lessons on Egyptology.

23 April, 1918 (pp. 371-373)

Marlowe buys in a local market what Ralph later claims to be Fragment C of King Atum-hadu's Admonitions. Marlow suspects that the papyrus document is a fake. Paul begins his extorted lessons from Marlowe.

29 July, 1918 (pp. 374-376)

Paul expresses an intense interest in Oxford, a desire to attend there. Marlowe shoots this idea down, as Paul has not had much formal education, only self-education.

15 August, 1918 (pp. 376-378)

Marlowe tries to stop the lesson extortion from Paul. Paul counters that he wants to study the great Egyptian monuments in person with Marlowe as a guide. Marlowe mentions Ralph's reassignment to Turkey.

Letter/Journal 100 - 109 Analysis

Another set of hints toward Ralph Trilipush actually being Paul Cauldwell is presented—Ralph expresses deep admiration for Paul in a letter to Margaret, something that could be indirect self-promotion, and Ferrell's conviction that Ralph had known Paul, which



would be true if Ralph is actually Paul playing a role. Ferrell comes close to the truth but misses it and sends the wrong person, Ahmed, to face theft and possibly murder charges. He may have come to the an understanding of Ralph but could be missing the full truth.

Beverly Quint's letter to Ralph indicates that Ralph was very homosexual while at Oxford, a condition that could not change very easily, if at all. The insane Ralph preparing his tomb for a final act shows no signs of homosexuality. He does not chase boys or men who work for him, nor does he have the cadence displayed in Quint's and Marlowe's prose. Ralph seems more like a man who, like Paul, dramatically falls in love with women. This may be a fault—he may romanticize to annoyance, but this is not homosexual behavior. An additional piece of evidence is the character of his Atum-hadu, a very heterosexual hero figure.



Letter/Journal 110 - 111

Letter/Journal 110 - 111 Summary

11 November, 1918 (378-380)

Marlow tells Paul a fabricated story on how he and Ralph had found the Admonitions of Atum-hadu, a story that parallels what Ralph later claims after the war. Ralph seems to have died in Turkey: "I told him that dear old Trilipush (of course) and I had uncovered it on one of our many rambles back in early 1915 just before poor Ralph headed off to his tragic Turkish end" (p. 379). Paul becomes excited about exploring the possibly fictitious site further.

Marlow invites Paul to visit the Valley of the Kings on a four-day pass with the intention of killing him, and says, "For down there, far from here, in the magical light of desert dusk, hills and hills away from anything and anyone, complex affairs will work themselves out simply, as you predicted they would, and I shall return to normal life free of any unnecessary weight on my mind" (p. 380).

Sunday, 31 December, 1922 continued (pp. 380-383)

Ralph finishes his drawing of the tomb, which includes the mummy of his own body. He wraps himself and pours preservation chemicals on his body, and dies. His last insane moment equates his name with Atum-hadu's: "His mysteries and riddles remain unsolved for millennia stacked upon millennia until another should find him, embrace him, twist and fuse with him, vanish into him, and win, for discoverer and king alike, the eternal love due an immortal name, Atum-hadu and Trilipush, Trilipush and Atum-hadu, Trilipush, Trilipush, Trilipush" (p. 383).

Letter/Journal 110 - 111 Analysis

From Marlowe's letter to Quint, Marlowe seems to be plotting Paul's murder. The two of them go out into the desert and neither return. Ralph had been sent to Turkey and is missing, presumed dead. Still, Quint thinks that Ralph survived, possibly from hearing about an upcoming professor at Harvard and his translation of Atum-hadu's erotic poetry. Could Paul have killed Marlowe, as Ralph explains in one of his stories to Ferrell? Did Paul see Marlowe draw his gun in the reflection of the gas tank, then turn and shot Marlowe first? Did Paul then visit Trent to get an idea about Ralph, and possibly Oxford too? Did he then go to the US and begin his act as Ralph from Oxford, Egyptologist?

No omniscient narrator exists to answer these questions. No epilogue explains away the loose ends. The reader is left hanging in doubt, as is the compiler, Macy, regarding this collection of journal entries, letters, telegrams and notes. This technique gives realism to the whole novel, although a foreword or prologue could have helped the reader. As is,



the reader must keep track of early details too much and can become confused, perhaps frustrated to the point of dropping the book off at the library, uncompleted. Much can be said for helping readers through a complex plot, and expecting a second reading when the first attempt aborts is unrealistic.

A trend in modern literature is to write for the screen. This novel seems to be going for a mystery that calls back the viewers time and again to solve the riddles from the small clues given along the way. This may work somewhat for a screenplay, but not very well for a novel. Leaving the reader frustrated and dissatisfied breaks a cardinal rule. Reading a book is more difficult than watching a movie and munching popcorn. Readers expect rewards for their efforts.

The tragic ending flows logically and inevitably from the plot. It carries through a major theme of immortality. The high drama of Ralph wrapping himself in linen and administering preservative chemicals to himself leaves the reader with the proper sense of a life gone terribly wrong, and often from the mistakes of others.

Yet the ending leaves a question begging: How did Margaret ever obtain the final journal entry? Supposedly, Ralph had shipped everything to Margaret, and she kept it all until Macy finds the bundle of papers and journals after his aunt dies. Had Ralph made the whole thing up? Or was Ralph's body found in his pathetic little ancient warehouse turned crazy house tomb? Surely Macy would know what the status of Margaret's father's body is, found and buried or still missing, and that would indicate that Ralph's body had also been found or remains missing. But, no explanation is given. The reader must decide, if such a decision is important enough to spend time with, exactly what happened in Egypt.



Characters

Ralph Trilipush

Ralph Trilipush convinces a set of Boston businessmen to finance an expedition to Egypt. He tells them that he will find great treasures in the tomb of Atum-hadu and that he knows exactly where to find the tomb. All seems to go well until the promised funds transfer does not go through, leaving Ralph strapped for cash. He discovers what he thinks is a tomb and begins the excavation. All he finds are two empty rooms, and while opening the third, the heavy stone door falls on his foot and crushes it. Ralph goes steadily insane as he opens room after room, all empty except for one containing twelve unfinished columns, a worthless find.

One of the Boston investors, CCF and the father of Ralph's fiancée, Margaret Finneran, withholds the expedition funding because he has money troubles of his own. Ralph tries to leverage money out of CCF by threatening to accept expedition financing from Lord Carnarvan, an arrangement that exists only in Ralph's imagination. The ploy does not work. Meanwhile, CCF goes to Egypt to see the treasure that Ralph claims to have discovered. CCF finds an insane Ralph painting hieroglyphs and scenes in the empty tomb, which may be only an ancient storage area, but no treasure. CCF attacks and Ralph kills him with a sledgehammer.

Ralph mummifies CCF's body and places it in one of the rooms. Ralph then mummifies himself and dies in the last room. His work with the story of Atum-hadu leaves Ralph a failed Egyptologist, a tragic man who believed in an Egyptian king who probably never existed.

Mystery surrounds Ralph Trilipush. He may have committed murder shortly after World War I, a possibility that the Australian detective, Harold Ferrell, tracks down. One of the men that Ralph possibly murdered is Paul Caldwell, another Australian, but Paul may be posing as Ralph. Several clues in the story suggest this possibility. Perhaps the most convincing is that Ralph is supposedly homosexual, but the Ralph who kills himself at the end never acts like a homosexual man. He expresses his deep love for Margaret and never pursues a homosexual encounter with anyone. The nature of the story that Ralph invents for Atum-hadu also reflects Paul's life of moving from poverty to prominence, or a facsimile of prominence.

Harold Ferrell

Harold Ferrell is an Australian detective hired by Barnabas Davies to track down Paul Caldwell, one of Davies' illegitimate children. Ferrell finds Paul's mother in Sydney, along with Paul's connections to a circus and a librarian. His relationship with the librarian, Catherine Barry, leads Paul to develop a keen interest in ancient Egypt. When Catherine rejects Paul's overture of romance, he joins the army and serves during



World War I in Egypt. Ferrell discovers that Paul and Hugo Marlowe, an officer in the British army, go missing just after the war ends, and are presumed dead. He also learns that Ralph Trilipush had been stationed with Marlowe and had been transferred to Turkey. The connections among Ralph, Marlowe, and Paul make Ferrell suspicious that the Ralph Trilipush who lives in Boston and works for Harvard may have murdered Paul and Marlowe.

Ferrell travels to England, America, and Egypt while chasing down Ralph. In Boston Ferrell works against Ralph by convincing CCF, the father of Ralph's fiancée, Margaret, that he is a conman. Ferrell tells Margaret that Ralph only wants her father's money. Meanwhile, the discovery of King Tut's tomb causes Margaret and her father to reject Ferrell's theories about Ralph. Ferrell hangs around Boston in the hope that Margaret will dump Ralph and become his lover, but this does not happen, so Ferrell heads out to Egypt.

He finds Ralph, who is in bad shape. Ralph's infected leg stinks, his robe is filthy and bloodstained, but he still thinks well enough to answer Ferrell's accusations. Ferrell tries to maneuver Ralph into a confession and feels that Ralph makes mistakes in his stories. However, Ferrell cannot find Ralph after the first encounter. Instead, Ferrell determines that Ahmed, one of Ralph's former workers, stole Ralph's nonexistent treasure and killed him. The authorities arrest Ahmed, although he has committed no real crime.

Ferrell writes to Lawrence Macy III, Margaret's nephew, upon Macy's request for information about Margaret. In Ferrell's letters, he pushes for Macy to publish the story as part of a true crime book. Macy never replies to Ferrell's frequent letters, possibly because they contain too much information and Ferrell displays obnoxious attitudes, assumptions, and prejudices.

Paul Caldwell

Paul Caldwell is the illegitimate son of Barnabas Davies, a rich man who wants all his illegitimate children to change their names to Davies. Harold Ferrell, an Australian detective hired by Davies, tracks down Paul's mother in Sydney and learns his story from there. Paul grows up in poverty and learns to pick pockets. He joins a circus where he does a minor act and picks pockets, for which he is arrested. Paul works out a deal with the police to join the military rather than serve jail time in exchange for information about Sydney Communists, information that he had gained through the friendship of Catherine Barry, a librarian. Catherine provides books on ancient Egypt and Egyptology to Paul because he has developed interest in the subject.

As an Australian soldier stationed in Egypt, Paul witnesses a homosexual encounter between Hugo Marlowe and a native boy. Paul uses Marlowe's homosexuality to blackmail him, but not for money. Paul wants to learn everything he can about ancient Egypt from Marlowe, an Oxford scholar on the subject. Marlowe and Paul go into the desert to look for artifacts but never return. The military lists them as dead after a period of time.



Ferrell thinks Paul is a victim of murder and that Ralph Trilipush is the murderer. In a possible plot twist, Paul may have actually murdered Marlowe and taken on Ralph's identity. Either way, both Paul and Ralph are dead by December, 1922, one a few years earlier than the other.

Atum-hadu

Atum-hadu is the Egyptian king who captures Ralph Trilipush's obsessive interest. The king may not have ever existed, but Ralph believes that a papyrus scroll he calls Fragment C suggests that the king did exist. Ralph translates and interprets Atum-hadu's poetry, from which he invents a life story for the king. According to Ralph, Atum-hadu is born to poverty, becomes a great general, then attains the throne of Egypt. The king's sexual appetite knows no limits, and he has no sympathy for his enemies. He loses his kingdom to an invading army.

Margaret Finneran

Margaret Finneran is Ralph's fiancée and daughter of an investor in Ralph's expedition, CCF. Margaret's feelings for Ralph swing from fondness to hatred as the Australian detective, Harold Ferrell, tells her how Ralph only wants her father's money and that he is probably a murderer. Margaret's weakness for opium and alcohol keeps her in a sedated state much of the time, but while awake and active, she plays with Ferrell's attraction to her.

CCF (Chester Crawford Finneran)

CCF is a Boston businessman and the father of Margaret Finneran, Ralph Trilipush's fiancée. CCF invests in Ralph's expedition to discover the tomb of Atum-hadu with the expectation of great financial returns from the treasure such tombs often contain. A financially troubled man, CCF withholds most of the expedition funding and runs into deep trouble when Ralph fails to find the treasure. He travels to Egypt and confronts Ralph. Ralph kills CCF with a sledgehammer.

Laurence Macy III

Laurence Macy III requests information about his aunt who recently died, Margaret Macy, the former Margaret Finneran, from Harold Ferrell. Macy does not write anything directly but compiles and apparently arranges Ralph's journal entries, letters to and from Margaret, telegrams, notes and Ferrell's letters. This material appears to be unedited, a technique that makes the novel seem more authentic but does leave loose ends dangling.



Hugo Marlowe

Hugo Marlowe is an Oxford scholar with a concentration in Egyptology. He joins the British army along with Ralph Trilipush and serves in Egypt. Paul Caldwell witnesses a homosexual encounter between Marlowe and a native boy in the desert, after which Paul blackmails Marlowe. Marlowe plays along for a while, then decides to kill Paul, but both end up missing and presumed dead.

Beverly Quint

Beverly Quint is a friend and apparently former male lover of Marlowe's. Ferrell interviews Quint while on Paul's trail and draws the connection to Ralph. Quint sends a letter to Ralph along with letters from Marlowe with the intention of revealing Marlowe's relationship with Quint.

Ahmed

Ahmed works for Ralph on the expedition to find Atum-hadu's tomb. He attacks Ralph when no treasure is found and takes one of Ralph's gramophones. This, along with other circumstantial evidence, causes the authorities to arrest Ahmed for theft and murder. Clad in deep irony, Ferrell fingers the wrong person through inventing a false story.

Barnabas Davies

Barnabas Davies is an old rich man who hires detectives to find his illegitimate children scattered across the globe from his sailing days. He wants the children to change their names to Davies, thus assuring that his name carries on, an attempt at immortality. This brings Harold Ferrell, a detective, and Paul Caldwell, one of the illegitimate children, into the story.

Mrs. Emma Hoyt

Mrs. Hoyt runs a circus in which Paul Caldwell works. She tells Ferrell all about Paul—how he does an act and picks pockets. Mr. Hoyt suspects that Mrs. Hoyt and Paul are having an affair. He turns in Paul for pickpocketing, which leads to Paul's military service to avoid jail time.

Catherine Barry

Catherine Barry is a librarian who helps Paul to obtain books on Egypt. Paul becomes romantically interested in Catherine, but she puts him off. When the police arrest Paul



for pickpocketing, Paul turns in Catherine as a Communist—a bargaining chip to stay out of jail.

Howard Carter

Howard Carter is a famous Egyptologist who discovers King Tut's tomb. Ralph hangs around Carter and wants to be like him, but Carter is in an entirely different league. Ralph has delusions of grandeur, while Carter is truly a great man whose name goes down in history.

Sonia Nordquist

Sonia Nordquist is a tourist from Minneapolis traveling with her husband, Len. She and Len meet Ralph on a ship and invite him to a séance. They later visit Ralph at his villa. Len dies while in Egypt, and afterward Sonia invites Ralph to live near her and help with the chores in Minneapolis. Ralph cannot accept because he has murdered CCF.

Professor ter Breuggen

Professor ter Breuggen is Ralph's boss at Harvard, chair of the Egyptology department. He dislikes Ralph tremendously, especially after Ralph publishes his first book on Atumhadu. The Professor fires Ralph and sends a damning letter to Margaret.



Objects/Places

Sydney

Sydney is the city where Paul Caldwell is born and where Harold Ferrell picks up Paul's trail. Paul's career in the circus happens in Sydney, and this is where he becomes interested in Egyptology.

Boston

Boston is where Ralph Trilipush works for Harvard and obtains funding for his expedition to find Atum-hadu's tomb. Margaret Finneran and her father, CCF, live in Boston. Ferrell travels to Boston upon learning the connection between Ralph and Paul.

Oxford University

Oxford University is where Paul wants to study, but he is too low-born and uneducated in the formal way for this to be possible. Ralph claims to have graduated from Oxford; however, the school has no records to support the claim.

Egypt

Egypt is where Ralph searches for Atum-hadu's tomb. He finds a series of empty rooms that he thinks is the tomb and kills himself in the last room. Ironically, Howard Carter discovers King Tut's tomb while Ralph searches a dry hole.

Fragment C

Fragment C is a papyrus scroll that Marlowe buys in an Egyptian market. He suspects that the scroll is a forgery. Ralph translates the scroll and publishes a book of its contents, which turns out to be erotic poetry by Atum-hadu, likely a fictional character.

Tomb of Atum-hadu

The tomb of Atum-hadu is probably an ancient storage area. Ralph finds no treasure in the tomb. He does paint hieroglyphs and scenes on the walls and pillars before he takes his own life.



Carter's Site

Carter's dig site turns up an actual and significant tomb, that of King Tut. Ralph criticizes the site repeatedly out of jealousy.

Journal

Ralph's journal entries tell a great deal of the overall story. He tries to write something in it every day, along with pasting telegrams and notes into it. Ralph diagrams his find in the journal as well.

Letters

Letters to and from people tell another major part of the story. Ralph writes to Margaret, she writes to him; Ferrell writes to Macy, but Macy never replies.

Telegrams

Ralph sends telegrams to CCF and Margaret. CCF sends telegrams back, but Margaret tends to write letters.

Documents

Fragment C is the document that drives Ralph the strongest. Ralph needs a document for permission to dig and another as proof of his Oxford education. A document leads to his doom, yet Ralph disparages documents as proof of anything.

Trilipush's First Book

Few people like Ralph's first book. He habitually hands out copies with presumptuous inscriptions, something that a self-published author might do.

Hieroglyphs and Scenes

Ralph paints the empty tomb with hieroglyphs and scenes in an attempt to make something more of the find. He fools nobody but himself. The effort amounts to another work of fiction regarding Atum-hadu.



Cat Mummy

Ralph makes the cat mummy from a stray cat that he comes to know. He may have killed the cat, perhaps his first act of violence toward others.

Master Mummy

Ralph makes the Master mummy from CCF's body after killing him with a sledgehammer.

Last Mummy

The last mummy is Ralph. He wraps himself in linen and pours preserving chemicals over his body, which leads to his death.



Themes

Identity

Ralph has no firm identity. Even if he is the original Ralph Trilipush, Marlowe molded him into something else, according to Quint, probably a sex toy for homosexuals at Oxford. The Ralph who dies in the fake tomb might be Paul Caldwell, the boy from Sydney who dearly wants to be an Egyptologist.

Few people are who they seem. Harold Ferrell is a terrible detective who causes the arrest of Ahmed, who, although not a very nice character, is innocent of theft and murder. CCF looks rich and acts rich, but he is near bankruptcy. Margaret looks like a rich socialite, but she is actually a drug-addicted mess. Marlowe hides his sexuality from the world.

Some of the genuine characters are Carter, Ahmed and Sonia Nordquist. Carter actually finds riches in the Egyptian desert. Ahmed has only money on his mind, and he is such a poor actor that even Ralph can see through his attempts at being interested in anything else. Sonia has nothing to hide or anything to be but Sonia.

Insanity

Ralph goes insane while chasing after treasure that does not exist. He enters this state in stages, starting with too much belief in the existence of Atum-hadu. He only has unsupported documents that may be ancient fiction telling a mythical story about a heroic king. Ralph's quest for proof begins with a nearly sure chance of disappointment.

Money pressure sends him to the next stage, where he becomes homeless and filthy. He strikes out at CCF in the only way he can, through anonymous telegrams that attempt to discredit CCF. Carter's find impacts Ralph significantly, where denial becomes his usual mode of thinking.

The changes that Ralph makes to the journal drawings of his false find mirror his steps into insanity. He first paints the walls and columns, then brings in mummies, finally adding in objects before taking his life and becoming the last mummy in a horrible and bizarre replication of an ancient tomb. The progression consists of too much faith, too big of a disappointment, too many promises that are impossible to keep, denial, murder, and suicide.

Wrong Investigation

Harold Ferrell exemplifies how wrong investigations can be. He constantly allows his prejudices to color and warp his perceptions. Ralph points out that a single document proves nothing, an ironic twist since Ralph puts all his faith into a single document,



Fragment C. In a related way, Ferrell settles on Ahmed as his innocent victim after failing to find Ralph or to determine Paul's true fate, similar to how Ralph decorates his dry hole with paintings, bodies, and fake artifacts. If an investigation yields no solid facts, circumstantial evidence can, and often does, replace proof. Proof can also be manufactured.

In another investigation, Ter Breuggen wants to be rid of Ralph so badly that he does not consider the possibility that Oxford did indeed lose Ralph's folder. Those familiar with higher education and its bureaucracies will likely agree that this is more common than any school wants to admit. The desire for a result often overshadows the search for truth.

Great harm comes from sloppy investigations. Ahmed faces harsh punishments for the crimes of theft and murder. Ralph murders and then takes his own life. Ferrell turns Margaret and CCF away from Ralph, although a thorough investigation into Ralph and his proposed expedition should have been done before putting money into it or accepting his marriage proposal.

Immortality

A common motivation for people is the desire for immortality. Most, if not all, religions try to meet this desire. Ralph seeks immortality through fame by striving to become a great Egyptologist and thereby earn his place in history. Barnabas Davies wants his name carried on by as many of his illegitimate children as can be found. Ferrell wants his investigations published, which brings up the question of whether some people deserve immortality.

The desire for immortality is common but not universal. Ahmed cares only for money. Sonia seems to want peace over anything else. Carter receives the historic version of immortality but does not express any desire for it. His immortality could be a side benefit of a stronger purpose—advancing the understanding of ancient Egypt. Margaret seeks the numbing effects of opium, not life everlasting. She is sick of life, although she does marry a Macy and moves on after Ralph dies.

Immortality motivates Ralph's search for Atum-hadu's tomb and his urge to write out the king's story. Although fictional, the story will likely survive on the walls and columns for millennium to come. Even if the rooms are found, no motivation exists to remove the paint, as the find is worthless and of no interest. The scribbling of a madman could attract tourists fascinated with the macabre and unusual, which would also serve to preserve the story. In the end Ralph does create a kind of immortality for himself.



Style

Point of View

Point of view switches among the primary characters who write their letters, journal entries, telegrams, and notes. Ralph Trilipush and Harold Ferrell speak from their viewpoints most often, with Margaret's viewpoint interspersed with Ralph's.

Ferrell writes from his notes when quoting the people he interviews while on the trail of Paul Caldwell. He may or may not be quoting accurately, but the tone does change in a convincing enough manner. Mrs. Hoyt does not sound the same as Catherine Barry. When Ralph quotes, he obviously injects tone and may invent whole conversations. The world according to Ralph is often not the same world that others experience.

Margaret and Ferrell give different takes on the same situation, but enough detail corresponds that the reader knows what had happened. A similar thing occurs between Ralph and Ferrell, but the accounts from each are worlds apart. Since Ralph lives in what becomes increasingly his private reality, Ferrell's account probably contains more truth. However, personality always colors reality in first-person descriptions and quotes. Ralph flies above reality, Ferrell molds it, and Margaret escapes it.

Setting

Set in the Valley of the Kings, Egypt, Ralph's find becomes the primary surroundings in which he goes insane and commits murder. Ralph transforms a series of empty rooms with only one containing unfinished columns from a dry hole to a tomb fit for a madman. He paints hieroglyphs and scenes all through the rooms and on the columns. He furnishes the rooms with objects, a dead cat and a dead man, both wrapped like mummies. He finishes his demented work of art with his own body wrapped in linen and doused with deadly chemicals.

Ferrell chases after Paul Caldwell in Sydney, Oxford University, and Boston. The three secondary settings play less of a role than the information that Ferrell uncovers. That Sydney has its wretchedly poor area means less than the fact that Paul Caldwell grew up in terrible poverty. That Oxford University has its reputation for excellent scholarship means less than the fact that Hugo Marlowe and Ralph Trilipush went off to war together, probably as homosexual lovers. Boston may have its Harvard ivy, but of greater consequence is the fact that Margaret Finneran lives there, and that Ferrell falls for her.

Ralph's mind provides a non-physical setting. Unlike his dry-hole find, the rooms in Ralph's consciousness contain splendid Egyptian treasure, the heroic figure of Atum-hadu, lofty romance for Margaret, bitter jealousy for Howard Carter, and suppressed hatred for CCF that comes out when Ralph smashes his head repeatedly



with a sledgehammer. The room containing Ralph's true identity remains sealed for eternity.

Language and Meaning

The author succeeds in giving each character a strong and unique voice. Ralph likes to make things sound better than they are, and he has a knack for drama and detail. Ferrell blows his own horn loudly and steadily while insulting the intelligence of all around him. Margaret displays the Roaring Twenties fun-time little rich girl when the opium has not put her into a narcotic fog. Ralph comes across as a well-meaning and enthusiastic young scholar who has no idea how he irritates other scholars, other than they must be jealous of him. In reality, the other scholars see him as a fraud and embarrassment. Ferrell's condescension glares from the page, and his personality stomps through the prose, leaving prejudiced gumshoe marks.

Ralph's translation of Atum-hadu's poetry rhymes, which is a technical error according to the scholars. Moreover, the form switches about, sometimes couplets, sometimes ABAB or ABBA rhymes. Since nobody knows how ancient Egyptians pronounced their language, Ralph may be justified in his artistic license, although the art only reaches pornographic levels. His writing resembles that of a love-sick adolescent creating a comic book character. His expressions of love for Margaret have this characteristic too, a sign that Ralph has not matured as a writer or a man, and surely not as an Oxford graduate scholar.

The voice of Professor ter Breuggen adds a mocking and snooty tone in his letter to Margaret, which matches what Ferrell thinks of the man. Other minor characters, such as Ahmed, Sonia Nordquist, and Mrs. Hoyt, filter through Ralph's or Ferrell's tone, but do have personalities of their own. Ralph distorts Howard Carter's voice, possibly because Ralph modifies the conversation when he writes it down.

Structure

The missive structure of letters, journal entries, telegrams, and notes demands more imagination from the reader. Without an omniscient narrator to tell the truth, the reader must look for clues and construct what could be the truth. Some readers enjoy the detective work. Others find the style distracting. One of the biggest dangers is to leave loose ends dangling for the reader. For example, does Ralph actually kill himself at the end, or is this another part of his insanity, a piece of fiction that he sends to Margaret? How else could she have received his last journal entry?

Working dialogue into the form becomes a problem too, as people tend not to write that way in correspondence. The author leaps right over the problem and includes dialogue as if this were the most natural thing in the world. Ferrell's letters to Macy include dialog because he has his detective notes. The reader must simply accept that writing dialog constitutes one of Ralph's idiosyncrasies.

A tired old chant from creative writing classes is to show rather than tell. Nevertheless, a story needs to be told, perhaps subtly, but not so subtly as to not be told. The missive structure benefits immensely with an occasional narrative—perhaps some explanation from Macy could have been used. This can also be done in a prologue and epilogue that ties the loose ends together, thus creating a tighter story.



Quotes

"Mr. Macy, sir, it is not every day a detective begins to look for a lost heir and instead solves two double murder cases, one a full four years old. But that is precisely what I accomplished. If I savour the details of this triumph from a long and difficult career, I trust you'll understand". p. 13

"No, better still, to begin this adventure at its proper beginning, let us open the book with a tantalising glimpse of the discovery to come, and offer as epigraph a thrilling episode not too far off in the future, an excerpt of events described in the book itself. We shall extract a triumphant moment and place it at the front, a shocking jewel in the crown, a zesty appetizer to tickle the reader's tongue for the vast feast to come and to prepare his digestion, lining his stomach for riches for which his dull daily fare has not prepared him. We shall tentatively use the events of—to make a conservative guess and present myself on that date with a nice birthday gift—24 November, six and a half weeks from now, neither too optimistic nor too stodgy, something like: 'page ii: 24 November, 1922. At the Deir el Babari site. I cleared away the loose rocks and descended to my knees, and began slowly—painstakingly slowly, despite my pounding heart—to widen the hole in the millennia-old heaped rubble. The light shook in the hands of the irrationally frightened Abdullah. 'It's all right, man. Just give me the torch,' I whispered, and held my eye to the narrow aperture. 'Yes, yes . . .' 'Please, what does His Lordship see?' 'Immortality, Abdullah, I see immortality'". pp. 26-27

"Mysteries upon mysteries, Macy. The Davies Case begins to sprawl all over the globe, and we must ask the crucial question, common at such moments, when the wise detective attempts to frame and limit his field of vision: are we being led astray into unrelated territory? Or are we wise to keep our minds open, perhaps all of this will lead us to a clearer picture of the late Paul Caldwell? And we must find answers, also, for our newest and potentially most lucrative, if dreadfully embarrassed, clients—the mourning parents of Hugo Marlowe, who wish to understand what has become of their dear boy. We've much to do, Macy, so rouse yourself from your pleasure-hunting antics in London, put down the cocktail, say good-bye to the lovelies, and come assist me; the game is afoot! (How old shall you be in this chronicle, given that you weren't actually born yet? I rather like the idea of you being a young pup, a twenty-year-old with no particular expertise but an admiration for my deductions and a weakness for low glamour and Negro jazz)". p. 70

"I remember the anticipation I would feel, as a boy in Trilipush Hall, when I knew Father was due to return from an expedition soon. He would have been gone for weeks or even months, and I longed for nothing more than to be taken up in his strong arms and popped on his knee in front of the great fire to hear of his adventures. Would today be the day he arrived? How I would pace the vast, echoing chambers of the Hall". p. 100

"I presented the D-G's secretary with a signed first edition of *Desire and Deceit* in Ancient Egypt. He was duly impressed, grateful, muttered some French. I requested an



urgent audience with the D-G himself, to share my latest thinking about the tomb of Atum-hadu.

"You are wanting to make change of your application?" asks dubious DuBois.

"No, I am wanting to enhance my application, ducks". p. 133

"I hate the Australians,' he replied calmly, in English. 'They were the worst men here during the War. Worse than any of the others, even the Turks. They made whores of everyone. You English, yes, you are trouble, and the French, pah.' Ahmed spat. 'The Americans, I do not know them. But the Australians. These were a disgrace, these men.' All of this he said with a strangely toneless voice, his hand rubbing the short fringe of hair around his temples. It is an odd thing, to hear the grievances and passions of a native people, the misunderstandings or petty concerns that animate them but that are inexplicable to Westerners. I can understand Ahmed's ancient ancestors better than I can understand Ahmed himself, but then his ancestors were their own masters, not Protected by foreign Powers. To cheer him up, I described something of Atum-hadu and his times. He nodded, seemed to understand the significance of what I was telling him, seemed to grasp towards a sort of pride that these were his people, his history". pp. 169-170

"This second chamber is as superficially empty as the Empty Chamber. And so one must conclude that Atum-hadu and his anonymous tomb architect decided that any robber who breached the Empty Chamber, discovered the ominous curse written on Door B, and yet was strong enough to forge on could be dissuaded only by total frustration, as neither fear nor obstacles had so far stopped him, and so the king and his builder likely decided not to bother with further curses or obstruction but merely attempted to convince a potential burglar that he was absolutely wasting his time. Thus, another bare room. Of course, no observer ever made it so far, so while I admire Atum-hadu's craftiness, it was, in retrospect, quite superfluous". p. 205

"Ahmed boasted of his patience. Ahmed raged. Ahmed threatened. But there was no cash, so threats did not avail. So then Ahmed offered another solution: he handed me a sledgehammer. I would have done anything to escape this, would have paid him anything, but I had no choice. At his forceful insistence, I opened Door C, and every stinging blow vibrated mercilessly down my leg and up to my head by way of my breaking heart. Ahmed ran in ahead of me—I cannot believe I am even writing down this sorry fact. He emerged shaking his head. I will never forget: 'My disappointment is keen, Englishman.' Unsatisfied, he expressed his rage in the primitive's usual fashion. Most of his assault consisted of kicks to my wounded leg, but also blows to the face, and kicks to my back when I was prone. But he did not proceed any farther in his destruction, thank God, than the one door. Greed blinds, you see, so he could not be bothered to open the Great Portal, which still awaits my care and love, and which will reward my sacrifices". pp. 250-251

"The Pillar Chamber . . . contains twelve identical floor-to-ceiling stone pillars, round, brilliantly with and unmarked . . ." .p. 222



"The ornamentation covering from floor to ceiling the walls and pillars of the History Chamber is preserved in astounding conditions. Every imaginable surface is covered with text and illustration. The text is the highest quality hieroglyphs, all written—to my trained eye—by the same hand. If I may speculate further, I would say that this hand belonged to a scribe of impeccable intelligence, but perhaps not one who came through the recognised academic training of the day". p. 262

"He had no choice. This greatest of all kings lifted his war hammer, and the Master of Largesse bumped against a pillar, and the flame of his torch faltered; the king brought down his weapon only upon his enemy's head, and not with much force, and the Master of Largesse, taller and broader than the king, stood surprised as hot, red blood began to stream from his fat, bald temple. The king offered peace even now, but the villain swung at his king, and so Atum-hadu brought down his war hammer again and the Master of Largesse dropped the torch and Atum-hadu collected it and rained down blows upon the villain, alternating his hammer and the torch, and the heat of the torch blistered the villain's skin and then the hammer came down and the hot blood bubbled in the heat, and the blows fell again and again on the softening head of the traitor, blow after blow upon the deflated head and the spread limbs and the sopping clothes. Atum-hadu sat on the fallen man's stomach, one leg to each side like a woman who sits upon her lover as a hen. Atum-hadu rained down blows for many minutes until his arms failed and his eyes stuck shot from the blood. And when Atum-hadu saw that he was very alone and his stomach boiled with a pain he had not yet known". p. 309

"Margaret. Just a few days ago, I would have gone, just a few days earlier. And I could have cabled for you to join us there. You and I taking care of her in her rambling house, summers on the lake, gardening. The newlywed caretakers down in the other house, going to the market, cooking. Fixing this and that. Plenty of time for reading, playing tennis, taking you out on her sailboat. Would have answered everything". p. 316

"My God, how he stank, Macy. He stank of rot, of tombs, of his own filth, I don't know. Probably of his ghastly, bootless leg. At the end of our talk, when he stood and hobbled away, he was practically a one-legged man. Yet, for all this horror, most maddening of all, most certain to eliminate any trace of pity I might possibly have felt for him, he still spoke as if he were completely unaware of his appearance, with all the dismissive bite and insane, unjustifiable snobbery of the English upper classes, all that distaste for real people, the generations of congealed hatred he'd been born with in his blood, that made him feel superior to the rest of us. You could hear what this stinking criminal thought of us Aussies: that pom bastard voice that makes colonials act like servants and servants act like blacks and blacks pick up rifles and revolt. And of course there was absolutely that something extra in his manner: the peculiar singsong of the invert, although it was greatly subdued, no doubt from the habit of hiding his nature". p. 324

"The truth, Trilipush, in my experience is very simple and often hidden in plain view, marked by the usual signposts of motivation: lust, greed, hatred, envy. So I suggest you calm down now and listen to what I know. To what I know, Professor, not to what I can imagine. In early November 1918, perhaps earlier, Captain Marlowe's invert lover and treasure-hunting partner, the impoverished gentleman Captain Trilipush, returns to



Egypt from a battle in Turkey, in which he was presumed killed. He doesn't report himself to his superiors but merely lurks about, letting the British command think he's dead. In his lurking, he discovers that, during his Turkish absence, his fancy man has taken a young Australian corporal to be his archaeological research assistant, and how did you guess that, Professor?". pp. 329-330

"But of course. Of course Marlowe would have discussed Atum-hadu with Caldwell. Marlowe had Fragment C in his tent, waiting for my return. He would have told Caldwell all about Atum-hadu, and everything in that story would have made beautiful sense to the poor boy: a civilisation where a man of genius could make and remake himself every day until he was king. Perhaps Harriman had already been part of Paul's childhood reading, and Atum-hadu's fire, pale as it was in that version, had already singed him. And now Marlowe introduced them". p. 340

"He crafted you out of bits of cloth and horsehair stuffing, just to make me laugh, you know. Whatever you were to him, whatever he neglected to tell me, it is as nothing compared to what we were Do you bait the gynophiles and call them ducks? Of course you do, ducks". p. 366

"For down here, far from here, in the magical light of desert dusk, hills and hills away from anything and anyone, complex affairs will work themselves out simply, as you predicted they would, and I shall return to normal life free of any unnecessary weight on my mind". p. 380



Topics for Discussion

What motivates Ralph Trilipush?

List the prejudices that Harold Ferrell carries into his investigations.

Speculate why Macy never responds to Harold Ferrell's letters.

What does CCF have to hide from Ralph?

Compare and contrast the characters of Howard Carter and Ralph Trilipush.

Why does Ralph not seek medical attention for his crushed foot?

Briefly tell the story of Atum-hadu, according to Ralph.

Assign actors, living or dead, to the roles of Ralph Trilipush, Paul Caldwell, Harold Ferrell, Margaret Finneran, and Chester Crawford Finneran.

Why must homosexual students at Oxford hide their sexual orientation in the early 20th century?

Howard Carter actually lived and discovered King Tut's tomb. Research his life and describe the parallels with the fictional lives of Paul Caldwell and Ralph Trilipush.

What makes the overall story tragic, funny, and mysterious?

Why might the author have decided to not include a prologue, epilogue or omniscient narrator?

Write a 500-word essay on your emotional and/or intellectual reactions to the story.

Describe your imagination's image of Ralph's tomb at the end of the story.

Why does Margaret Finneran take opium regularly?