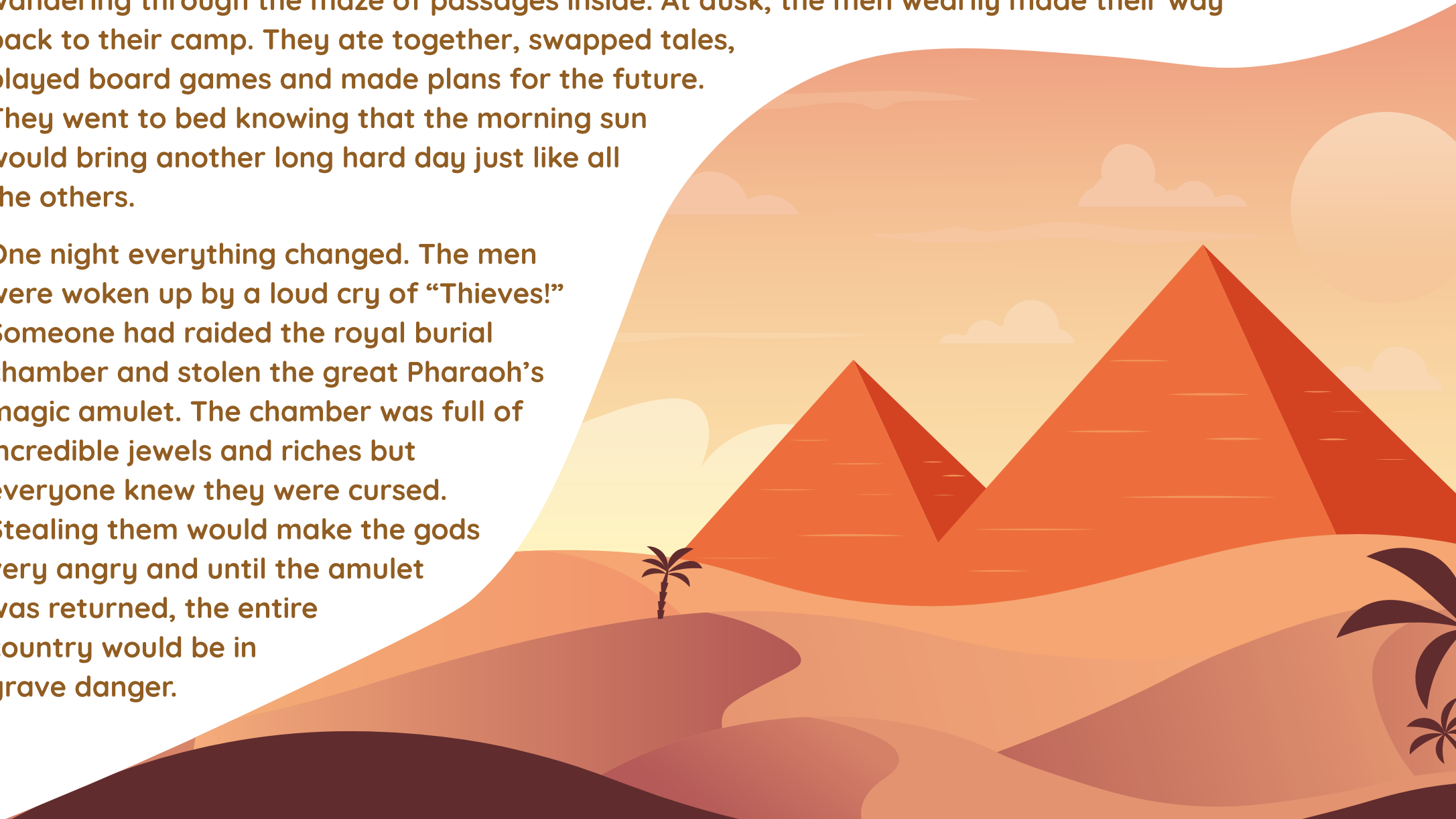


# The Unlikely King



Building the pyramids of Giza was a never ending task. Day after day, workers hacked at the dry earth. The sun beat down on the army of young men as they heaved and lifted the limestone slabs into place. Ramose was fascinated by the pyramids though and soon left his village to work on them. Nothing like this had ever been built before and each one hid a mystery. Inside the Great Pyramid lay the mummified body of King Khufu and the wonderful things he had owned. Ramose dreamt of wandering through the maze of passages inside. At dusk, the men wearily made their way back to their camp. They ate together, swapped tales, played board games and made plans for the future. They went to bed knowing that the morning sun would bring another long hard day just like all the others.

One night everything changed. The men were woken up by a loud cry of “Thieves!” Someone had raided the royal burial chamber and stolen the great Pharaoh’s magic amulet. The chamber was full of incredible jewels and riches but everyone knew they were cursed. Stealing them would make the gods very angry and until the amulet was returned, the entire country would be in grave danger.



“We have to find the amulet and return it before we are cursed,” cried the vizier. Everyone was worried. How had this happened? What would happen to the thieves? What did the curse mean for Egypt? One thing they knew for sure. With the gods angry, they were all at risk. The next day the men went back to work. Everyone was feeling nervous. They hammered and sawed, lifted and dropped. Ramose was behind the others and suddenly saw a white flash in the darkness.

He turned to look and could not believe his eyes. Sitting in the narrow passage was a cat as white as the moon. As he watched, the cat began to walk away. It seemed to want him to follow. With a quick look back at his friends, he took his lantern and did so. The cat took him to a small door at the back of the Great Pyramid. He pushed it open and began to make his way through the maze-like passageways. The deeper he went, the quieter it became. Hieroglyphic paintings appeared on the walls. He wondered what they meant. Were they a greeting? Or a warning to those who dared come this far?



He turned away from the paintings but the cat was no longer there. Where it had stood, the glint of a jewel caught the light. It was the amulet. How had it got there? Who would believe that Ramose was not the thief? Fear gripped his body. He picked up the amulet and put it carefully in his pocket. He had to get this jewel back where it belonged before he was missed and before the curse could strike.





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