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The Curse of King Tut's Tomb?

Although curses were not commonly written on the tombs of ancient Egyptians, some were included. The curse formula usually contain two main elements: 1.) a description of an act displeasing to the tomb's owner, and 2.) the consequence to the one performing the displeasing act (often in both this lifetime and the afterlife) through some agency (king, god, animal, etc.). Below is an example of a curse that was found in a tomb in Giza:



Listen all of you! The priest of Hathor will beat twice any of you who enters this tomb or does harm to it. The gods will confront him because I am honored by his Lord. The gods will not allow anything to happen to me. Anyone who does anything bad to my tomb, then the crocodile, hippopotamus, and lion will eat him.

On November 26, 1922, the archaeologist, Howard Carter, found the tomb of King Tutankhamen. This discovery resulted in a mass media frenzy, with daily news stories reported in papers across the world. One of the most widely read news story was that of King Tut's curse. As the story goes, Howard Carter found a clay tablet in the Antechamber of the tomb, and a few days later, Alan Gardiner, another archaeologist working with Carter, deciphered the hieroglyphics. The tablet read:

Death will slay with his wings whoever disturbs the peace of the pharaoh.
While Carter and Gardiner both regarded the curse as nonsense, they did not want to scare away the local workmen, so all mention of the tablet was wiped away from the record. The tablet itself disappeared, of course, never having been photographed or sketched.

Your task is to decide whether or not the curse of King Tut is real or fake. Using the following facts, briefly write a short paragraph that explains whether or not the curse was real. Be sure to back up your opinion with the facts provided, and use complete sentences, proper grammar, and correct punctuation.

The Facts

- 1.) Lord Carnarvon, the man who funded the search for King Tut's tomb, and Howard Carter enter the burial chamber on February 17, 1923. On or around March 6, 1923, Lord Carnarvon is bitten by a mosquito on his cheek and becomes ill. The mosquito bite becomes infected, he contracted pneumonia, and on April 5, 1923, Lord Carnarvon dies.
- 2.) At the moment that Lord Carnarvon died in a Cairo Hospital, the lights across Cairo went out for five minutes.
- 3.) On March 6, 1923, the day that Howard Carter opened the tomb, his pet canary was eaten by a cobra (the cobra was a traditional symbol of the ancient pharaohs).
- 4.) Lord Carnarvon's dog, Susie, who was back in England, howls and drops dead at exactly two o'clock in the morning, the time that Carnarvon died.
- 5.) Most people present at the opening of the tomb met untimely deaths.

Now that you have examined the facts, develop a short paragraph that explains whether or not you believe King Tut's curse is real or fake.