The Mummy Returns

John Whitman

About the author
John Whitman is an American novelist who has written many books for films and television series. The Mummy Returns is originally a 2001 American movie. The screenplay was written by Stephen Sommers.

About the movie
The Mummy Returns, made in 2001 by Universal Pictures, is a sequel to the very successful 1999 movie The Mummy. Both movies were directed by Stephen Sommers, and starred Brendan Fraser as Rick O’Connell and Rachel Weisz as his wife Evelyn. The film also featured Patricia Velasquez as Anck-su-namun, Arnold Vosloo as her lover, Imhotep, Freddie Boath as Alex, and adds both suspense and comedy to the movie. The professional wrestler The Rock played the Scorpion King.

The movie uses lots of Indiana Jones-style adventures and Star Wars-style special effects. It is fast-paced, with lots of surprises, battles, and horror. There are also many funny moments that break the suspense, especially when Evelyn’s brother Jonathan is around. In this sequel, Anck-su-namun takes the central villain role. She killed her future husband, the Pharaoh, with her lover, Imhotep. The Pharaoh’s daughter, Nefertiri (later Evelyn) knew about it and hated them. The old enemies battle it out, but Evelyn does not kill Meela. In the end, Meela is eaten by scorpions.

Summary
The archeologist, Evelyn O’Connell, (who was Nefertiri in the past) is married to Rick O’Connell (an important man in the past with great powers). They met in Egypt in 1923. Rick saved Evelyn from the mummy of Imhotep who tried to kill her. Then Rick and Evelyn returned to England, they married and had a son, Alex.

Now it is 1933 and they are back in Egypt with Alex. They find the Bracelet of Anubis (god of the dead), which gives great power to anyone who wears it. It helped the Scorpion King 6,000 years ago. Now he will be waking up in the Year of the Scorpion. He wants to control the world and kill everyone unless someone can kill him first.

Meela (who was Anck-su-namun in the past) and Lock-Nah also want the bracelet. Their men follow Evelyn back to England and then kidnap her. However it is Alex who has the bracelet on his arm. There are great chases and Evelyn is nearly killed.

Imhotep wakes up and there are other mummies, too. Alex is forced to lead Meela and Lock-Nah to the resting place of the Scorpion King. Rick’s friends, Ardeth Bay and Izzy, help the O’Connells to find Alex. Alex gets the bracelet off. Meela meets Evelyn and they fight as Anck-su-namun and Nefertiri again. Rick and Imhotep are also fighting. In the end, Imhotep and the Scorpion King both die. Anck-su-namun also dies when thousands of scorpions eat her. The O’Connells leave in Izzy’s balloon and return home.

Chapter 1: The Scorpion King is fighting the Egyptian soldiers. He is going to die but the dog-faced soldiers of Anubis (the god of death), help him. He gives his life to Anubis and is going to sleep for 6,000 years. In the Year of the Scorpion, he and his soldiers will wake up and kill everybody.

Chapter 2: Evelyn and Rick are back in Egypt with their son, Alex. They find the Scorpion King’s box with the Bracelet of Anubis in it. The three men sent by Lock-Nah want to seize the box but fail.

Chapter 3: The O’Connells return to London. Alex opens the box and puts his hand through the bracelet but cannot take it off again. Lock-Nah and Meela follow them to London. They take the mummy of Imhotep in the British Museum and want to take the bracelet from Evelyn. They then kidnap Alex who is now wearing the bracelet.

Chapter 4: Alex is forced to lead Lock-Nah, Meela, and Imhotep to the pyramid at Ahm Shere. Rick’s friend, Izzy, take the O’Connells to find their son in a balloon. Alex gives directions to his parents to find him.

Chapter 5: Imhotep finds Ahm Shere and Lock-Nah wants to kill Alex. Ardeth Bay saves the boy. The bracelet
The Mummy Returns

falls off Alex’s arm before the sun shines on the pyramid. There are fights between Meela and Evelyn, Imhotep and Rick, and the soldiers of Anubis and the Med-Jai soldiers. Finally, the Scorpion King, Imhotep and Meela die. The O’Connells go back home in Izzy’s balloon.

Background and themes

Ancient Egypt: In The Mummy Returns, the mummy and most of his historical background are based loosely on the real-life Imhotep. Imhotep (2650–2600 BC) was an Egyptian polymath, who served under the Third Dynasty king. There have been many mummy movies over the years, but the classic horror movie of The Mummy with Boris Karloff as Imhotep was made in 1932. In the original movie, an English archeologist mistakenly wakes the mummy of Imhotep, which he has discovered in Egypt. (Imhotep was a scribe and architect in ancient Egypt and is credited with designing the world’s first step pyramid.) Imhotep begins searching for his one true love, Princess Anck-su-namun. The Mummy Returns combines the gruesome horror of the original with the flamboyant style made popular by the more recent Indiana Jones movies.

Good over evil: People were punished for their evil acts. In the story, Lock-Nah, Imhotep, Anck-su-namun, and the Scorpion King die for what they did. Good people like the O’Connells, Ardeth Bay, and Izzy survive and remain safe.

Man’s struggle for power: This is an important theme throughout the story. The Scorpion King seeks help from the god of the dead, Anubis, to fight the Egyptians. After he has slept for 6,000 years, he will wake up and start battles again to kill everybody and everything. Lock-Nah wants to get the bracelet to rule the world and Imhotep wants it, too, for its great power.

Love and hate: The love between Imhotep and Anck-su-namun made them kill the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh’s daughter, Nefertiri, hated them for their evil act. This leads to a fight later between these old enemies. Evelyn’s true love for Rick saves Rick’s life, but Anck-su-namun’s selfishness causes the end of Imhotep’s life.

Discussion activities

Before reading

1 Group work: Find out how many of your students have seen the movie The Mummy Returns. Divide the students into small groups, putting students who have seen the movie with ones who have not. The students who have seen the movie should tell the others about the characters and their relationships.

2 Pair work: Write these words on the board: battle, bracelet, desert, gold, king, mummy, pyramid, scorpion, soldier. Ask the students to find these words in their dictionaries and to write the words on one side of a sheet of paper, then turn the paper over and write the definitions and/or translation of the words. After they have done this, give them ten minutes to work in pairs learning these words. Then tell them to put their papers away and answer these questions. Ask them: Which word or words on the board are words for people? Which word or words do we read when we read about Egypt? Why?

Chapter 1

After reading

3 Write and role play: Ask the students to work in pairs. They should imagine it is now 1933. Ask them to write a conversation between an Egyptian father and his son. The son wants to know who the Scorpion King is and what is going to happen. The father tells him. After the students write their conversations, check them, then ask them to role play their conversations for the rest of the class.

4 Artwork: After reading Chapter 1 the students learnt about the Bracelet of Anubis that gave the Scorpion King power. Tell the students Chapter 2 is called “The Bracelet of Anubis” and the bracelet is going to be very important to the story development. Ask students to draw a picture of what they think the bracelet looks like.

Chapter 2

While reading

5 Discuss: Evelyn finds the Scorpion King’s box and wants to open it, but Rick says “Evy, is that a good idea? Wasn’t he a very bad man?” Evelyn replies, “He’s dead. It’s not dangerous now. It’s only a box!” (page 4) Ask students if they think Evelyn is right. In pairs, students discuss this and also if they think the box will bring any troubles to the O’Connells in the rest of the story.

After reading

6 Write and role play: Put the students into groups of three. What do they think Red, Lock-Nah, and Meela said to each other after the last line in Chapter 2? The students should write a continuation of the conversation, then role play it for the rest of the class.

7 Guess: Ask the students if they remember the tattoo on Rick’s hand. It shows a pyramid with the Eye of Horus (the god of the sun) in the center. Have the students guess its meaning and how it will help Rick or other people. Students write down their guesses on a piece of paper.
The Mummy Returns

Chapter 3
After reading
8 Role play: Put the students in pairs and ask them to prepare a role play of the conversation between Rick and Evelyn on page 8. But before they start, read it out to them (or play the recording if you have it) so they can hear the stress on important words and can hear the intonation being used. Then read/play it again, line by line, pausing so the students can repeat after you/the recording. The student who takes Rick's role must try to sound worried. "Evelyn" must sound excited and hopeful.

9 Discuss: Ask the students to discuss in small groups what they thought about Chapter 3. What did they find scary, funny, stupid, impossible, cool? Which character did they like the most in this chapter? Why? Who was the bravest? Which character would they like to play if they were in the movie?

10 Check: Ardeth Bay tells Rick the meaning of his tattoo in this chapter. Now ask the students to check if their guesses in activity 7 are correct.

11 Guess: Alex puts his hand through the bracelet and cannot take it off again. Ask students these questions: Do you think Alex can take the bracelet off later? Who/what will help him to take it off? If he can't take the bracelet off, what will happen to him?

Chapter 4
After reading
12 Group work: After students have read Chapter 4, ask them to work in pairs or small groups and to draw a time-line with the events from the chapter in the correct chronological order. When they have finished, they should compare their timelines with those of the other students. If there are any differences, they should decide who has the events in the correct order and who does not. In the end, all of the timelines should look the same.

13 Artwork: Rick asks his friend, Izzy, to get him an airplane to find his son. But Izzy said he has a beautiful new machine – a balloon that can take them to Ahm Shere. Have students draw a picture of what they think the balloon looks like.

Chapter 5
After reading
14 Check: After reading this chapter the students know that the Bracelet of Anubis falls off Alex's arm. Ask them to check their guesses in activity 11. Are they right or wrong?

15 Discuss: Get students to discuss in pairs. In what ways are these people important in the last chapter of the story?

- Izzy
- Ardeth Bay
- the Med-Jai soldiers

16 Guess: Write these names in big black letters on pieces of paper or cards: Imhotep, Anck-su-namun, Nefertiri, Jonathan, Ardeth Bay, Izzy, Rick, Lock-Nah. Explain to the class that you are going to put a chair in front of the class and ask one student to sit on the chair with his back to the others. Then you will stick a name on the back of the chair so the rest of the class can see it. The student in the chair has to ask Yes/No questions to try and find out his identity. The students in the class can only answer “yes” or “no” and the student in the chair must find out his identity within twenty questions. The student who finds out his identity by asking the fewest number of questions is the winner.

17 Write and role play: Put the students in groups of four. They each take the role of one of these four characters: Rick, Evelyn, Alex, or Izzy. They must imagine that they are in Izzy's balloon at the end of the story. What do they say to each other as they return home? Students should write the conversation and then role play it for the rest of the class. The students can then vote for the best role play.

Extra activities
18 Pair work: Have students work in pairs. Imagine that the O'Connells are now back in London. Evelyn asks Alex what happened when he was with Lock-Nah, Meela, and Imhotep on their way to the pyramid. Write down the questions that Evelyn may ask Alex. When they have finished, ask some pairs to tell the class the questions they wrote. Write some good questions on the board.

19 Discuss: Have students discuss the following questions. Would you like to go to Egypt and see the pyramids? Do you think that mummies can come back to life again as in the story? Why/why not?

20 Write: The O'Connells are interviewed by reporters from the newspapers. The students imagine that they are the reporters and ask the O'Connells questions about what happened to them in Egypt. Then they write the articles for their newspapers.

21 Research: Have students work in groups. They find out information about pyramids and mummies from the library or the Internet and then report to the class what they have found out. Think about the following questions when they are searching for information.

- What do you know about pyramids? When were they built? What are mummies? Who made them? In which countries can people see pyramids and mummies?

Vocabulary activities
For the Word List and vocabulary activities, go to www.penguinreaders.com.