**Summary**

**Chapter 1:** In Ancient Egypt, 3,000 years ago, Imhotep, the High Priest of the Dead, loves Anck-su-namun. Unfortunately, Anck-su-namun is also the Pharaoh’s lover and when the Pharaoh catches Anck-su-namun and Imhotep together in his lover’s bedroom, Anck-su-namun kills him to allow Imhotep to escape. Although he is reluctant to leave Anck-su-namun to face death, Imhotep knows that he has the power to bring her back to life, using the Book of the Dead. He travels to Hamunaptra, the City of the Dead, to perform the ceremony. But the Med-Jai, the Pharaoh’s soldiers, have followed him and they stop Imhotep before he can bring Anck-su-namun back from the underworld. They cut out his eyes and mummify him—half alive, half dead. To complete the job, they put on his face scarabs, the sacred beetles of the Ancient Egyptians. Then they pledge to stay and guard the mummy forever, so that Imhotep cannot escape and turn the world into mummies. Thus the scene is set for a love story with a horrific backdrop.

**Chapter 2:** Three thousand years later, in 1925, Evelyn, a young British woman, and an expert on ancient Egypt, is working in Cairo Museum, when her brother Jonathan brings her a small box containing a map and key. They decide to pursue the search for the lost city of Hamunaptra. Meanwhile, the face of Imhotep appears to Rick O’Connell and Beni at Imhotep’s tomb at Hamunaptra. Evelyn reads from the Book of the Dead, that Imhotep starts to come back to life. Imhotep continues his age-old quest to bring his lover back from the dead and starts to kill people to get the body parts he needs. Then he takes Evelyn because he wants her heart for Anck-su-namum.

**Chapter 5:** Rick and Johnathan go back to Hamunaptra to try to find the Book of Amun Ra. Johnathan gets some power over Imhotep by reading from the book. However Imhotep calls mummies to help him. Anck-su-namum tries to kill Evelyn for her heart. Then Evelyn reads from the book and the god Anubis comes and changes Imhotep back into an ordinary man. Rick then kills Imhotep. Before he dies Imhotep says “this is not the end.” During this time, Beni has been taking gold from the tomb. Evelyn said he would die for helping Imhotep and the room collapses down on him. Ardeth Bay thanks them all for stopping Imhotep and Johnathan finds he has lots of gold in the bags on his horse. Evelyn and Rick seem to be in love, so, after all the horror, there is hope for the future. One love story has ended unhappily, but perhaps Evelyn has found her Imhotep in the American O’Connell.

**About the film**

The book is based on the 1999 film directed and written by Stephen Sommers and starring Brendan Fraser and Rachel Weisz. It was not the first film to follow the theme of the Mummy; two previous films, in 1932 and 1959, had already been made. The idea of a long-dead Egyptian being brought back to life in modern times is one that has provided a constant storyline for film and TV scriptwriters. This was an adventure film in the style of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, whereas the previous two films were horror movies.

**Background and themes**

**Egyptian mummies:** Archaeologists believe that the ancient Egyptians invented embalming, the process in which a dead body is artificially preserved to slow down decomposition. They believed that the living body contained a vital life-force, which they called *ka*.
The Mummy

This force left the body after death to take its place in the afterlife. However, the Egyptians believed that the *ka* could not survive if the body that had housed it decayed. Therefore, the dead body was immersed in natural preservatives and then wrapped in cloths to create a mummy. The mummies were then put in tombs, furnished with a copy of the Book of the Dead, a guide to the afterlife. There was certainly a real person called Imhotep but he lived around 2650 B.C. Like the “hero” of the story, he was a priest but he is more famous as the architect of the earliest of all Egyptian pyramids at Sakkara.

Horror and adventure: The legend of the evil mummy, coming back from the dead to terrorize the world, may have originated with the discovery of the mummy of Tutankhamun by Lord Carnavon and George Carter on February 17th, 1923 and the apparently mysterious death of Lord Carnavon just two months later.

Love: There is a theme of love throughout the book that is mixed with horror. Imhotep and Anck-su-namum love each other, but their love is unable to overcome death. Rick and Evelyn find love in strange circumstances and their love does overcome Imhotep’s attempt to cut out Evelyn’s heart.

Discussion activities

**Chapter 1**

**Before reading**

1. **Discuss:** Put students into groups to discuss these questions: *Do you like horror stories? Why/why not? This horror story is called* The Mummy. *What is a mummy?* Ask students to look through the pictures in the book and try to find a mummy. *What can you guess about the story from looking at the pictures?*

2. **Research:** Have students start a project on Ancient Egypt. Ask them to find out as much as they can about ancient Egypt and, in particular, mummies, by looking in books and on the Internet. Collect together pictures of mummies and start a display.

**After reading**

3. **Discuss:** Put students into small groups and ask them to discuss what the High Priest means when he says “My love for you is more important than life.” *Do you believe in love? Can one person love another more than they love themselves? Is love stronger than death?*

4. **Artwork:** Have students look at the picture of Imhotep on page 5. Ask them what colors and materials were used by the Egyptians. Ask students to design an Egyptian-style set of clothes. This could be ancient or modern and use the colors and fabrics of the Egyptians. Students can do a collage of their design.

5. **Discuss:** Put students into small groups and ask them to discuss Anck-su-namun’s words; “They will kill me, but you can bring me back to life. Only you, the High Priest, can do it.” *Do you believe this is possible? Do you believe someone can be brought back to life after they are dead? Christianity also believes this. What do you think?*

**Chapter 2**

**While reading**

6. **Predict:** Ask students to read to the end of page 6 and, then ask them the following questions. *Where is Beni? What do you think will happen to him?* Then have students read what happens on page 8. *What do you think happens next?*

7. **Discuss:** Have the students read to the end of page 11. Put students into small groups and ask them to discuss the following questions. *Why does the curator act so strangely? Why does he try to burn the map of Humanaptra? Does he want the gold from the City of the Dead for himself? Is he afraid of something?*

**After reading**

8. **Discuss:** Put students into small groups. Ask them to think of new titles for the first two chapters. Then ask the whole class to decide which title is the best for each chapter.

9. **Discuss:** Write the name of each character from the first two chapters on a piece of paper. Give each student a piece of paper which they must not show to the others. Then, the other students have to guess who the character is, by asking questions. The student with the piece of paper can only answer “yes” or “no.”

10. **Discuss:** Put students into small groups and ask them to discuss the following questions: *Why do you think Ardeth Bay wants to “stop Evelyn or kill her?” What is secret about Hamunaptra? What will Evelyn find there? Will she find the Book of the Dead? If she finds this, what do you think will be in it?*

**Chapter 3**

**While reading**

11. **Predict:** Ask students to look at the picture on page 19. *What do you think the men will find in the box?* Ask the students to write down their ideas. Then ask them to read the first paragraph on page 20. *Were your predictions correct? Whose prediction is the nearest to what actually happened?*

12. **Artwork:** Have students design a strange, scary object, like the box in this chapter. When this object is opened, touched or moved, something dangerous happens. Have the students think up the strangest and most dangerous object they can. The students describe their object to the rest of the class who then vote on whose design is the best. This activity could be used to teach comparisons and superlatives.
The Mummy

After reading

13 Write: Ask the students to write down how they think the story will continue. Some very strange things have happened in this chapter. Imhotep is coming back to life, Anck-su-namun’s heart has been taken and Evelyn is reading the Book of the Dead. What do you think will happen next? Will it end happily or unhappily? Will Imhotep or Anck-su-namun come back to life?

14 Artwork: Have the students draw a picture representing what they have read about in the first three chapters. They could include some of the following pictures or symbols: a white cat, a priest, the Book of the Dead, the god Anubis, symbols of love or death, mummies, scarabs, gold and fire.

15 Role play: Have the students do the following role play. Student A: You are the curator. You are angry that Evelyn has knocked over lots of books in the library. Ask her what she is doing. You tell her she may lose her job if she does more silly things. You also think she is too interested in dangerous things, like the City of the Dead. You explain this to her. You start the conversation. Student B: You are Evelyn. You are angry with the curator. He did not help when you fell and is often rude to you. He never helps you. You do not understand why he doesn’t like you. Tell him how you feel.

Chapter 4

After reading

16 Role play: Put students into pairs to role play a conversation between O’Connell and Beni. Student A: You are Beni. You ask O’Connell how he escaped from Hamunaptra last time. Student B: You are O’Connell and you explain. Have the students use the information from Chapter 2 to help them prepare for this conversation.

17 Write: Ask each student to imagine that they are an expert on Ancient Egypt. Tell them they are going to make a speech about the Book of the Dead and the Book of Amun Ra. Ask them to write one paragraph which explains what the books do and how you use them, using the information in the story so far.

18 Role play: Put students into pairs and have them role play a conversation between Beni and Evelyn. Student A: You are Beni and you want to find some gold. You will do anything to get it and think you are doing the right thing. You explain your reasons for wanting this. Student B: You are Evelyn. You want to stop Beni from looking for the gold. You think it is very dangerous and will end in death. You know that no good will come from taking gold from Hamunaptra. Explain this to him.

19 Write: Ask the students to choose a character from this chapter and write a page in their diary. The events can be from this chapter or from a previous one. They must include how the character feels about the things that happen. They can also include their character’s hopes and fears for the future.

20 Pair work: Ask the students to work in pairs and to imagine they are Imhotep. Imhotep is pleading for his life and has to give as many reasons as possible why he can come back from the dead. The students write down the reasons. Then the students imagine they are Rick O’Connell and have to think of reasons why Imhotep must die. The students also write these down. When the students have finished, choose one student to collect together all the arguments for Imhotep and present these to the class. Likewise for Rick O’Connell. This exercise can form the basis for a discussion.

Chapter 5

After reading

21 Role play: Explain to the whole class that they are going to act out the final chapter – as in the film version of this story. Make sure that there is one person for each of the main characters and groups of people for the mummified priests and the mummified soldiers. There should also be several people as narrators. Ask each narrator to read a section of Chapter 5 and tell the rest of the students to act out the scene. You could even be the film director, stopping the action if it goes wrong and giving further directions.

22 Discuss: Put students into small groups to discuss these questions. Which parts of the book would be good for a film? Which parts would need lots of special effects?

23 Write: Ask students to write a letter from Imhotep to Anck-su-namun. Remember that he hasn’t seen her for over 3,000 years and misses her and loves her very much. Imhotep wants to tell Anck-su-namun what he is doing to try to bring her back to life.

24 Role play: Ask students to do a role play between Beni and Evelyn. Student A: You are Evelyn and you don’t understand why Beni helped Imhotep and why he wanted to kill her. Student B: You are Beni and you tell Evelyn why you helped Imhotep and why you wanted to kill Evelyn.

25 Write: Before Imhotep dies, he says that he will be back. Imhotep comes back to your country and your time, perhaps to your school or town! Write another chapter about what he does and what happens. Why has he come back? Does he die this time or does he win?

26 Write: As a class, decide on a play they would like to write together. Base the play in an ancient civilization and decide on the basic story together, then put students into small groups and have them each write a scene for the play. Perform it as a class.

27 Discuss: Put students into small groups and ask them to discuss the following: Do you like this ending? Is it a happy / sad ending? Which people are happy in the end, and which are sad?

Vocabulary activities

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