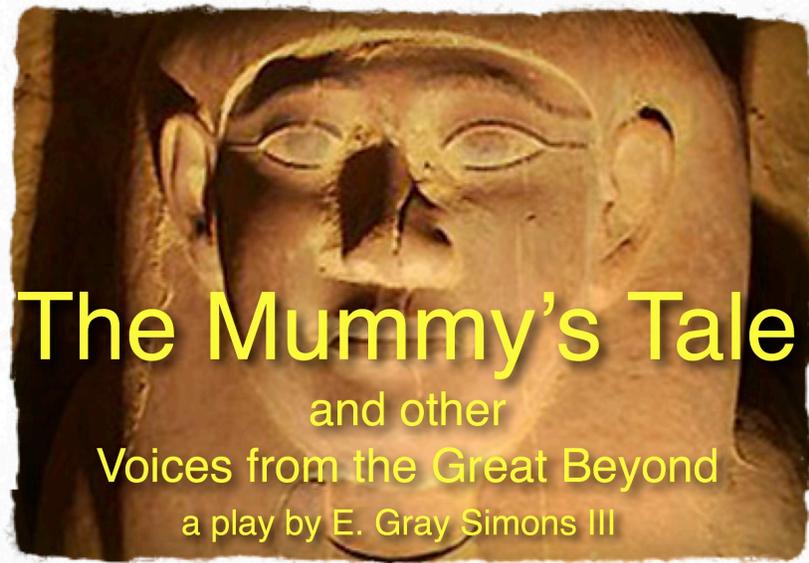


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Part of the



Series



Newport, Maine

© 2010 by E. Gray Simons
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION:
Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that

The Mummy's Tale and Other Stories from the Great Beyond

being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States Of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion Of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. Anyone presenting the play without the express written permission of the Copyright owners and/or their authorized agent will be liable to the penalties provided by law.

Script and music copies must be purchased from the Publisher and Royalty must be paid to the publisher for each and every performance before an audience whether or not admission is charged. A performance license must first be obtained from the publisher prior to any performance(s).

Federal Copyright Law -- 17 U.S.C. section 504 -- allows for a recovery of a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$50,000 for each infringement, plus attorney fees.

The professional and amateur rights to the performance of this play along with the lecturing, recitation, and public reading rights, are administered exclusively through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be made. For all other rights inquiries may be made to the authors through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS Any adaptation or arrangement of this work without the author's written permission is an infringement of copyright. **Unauthorized duplication by any means is also an infringement.**

FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE RIGHTS YOU MUST APPLY TO THE PUBLISHER OR YOU ARE BREAKING THE LAW!

The possession of this PERUSAL SCRIPT whether bought or rented, does not constitute permission to perform the work herein contained, in public or in private, for gain or charity. Proper prior application must be made and license granted before a performance may be given. Copies of this PERUSAL SCRIPT and all other rehearsal materials may be bought and/or rented from:

LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS
P.O. Box 536 Newport, ME 04953-0536
www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com
Printed in the United States Of America

THIS NOTICE MUST APPEAR IN ALL PROGRAMS, ON ALL POSTERS AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS AND INTERNET ADVERTISING/WEBPAGES FOR THE PLAY:

"The Mummy's Tale and Other Stories from the Great Beyond' is presented through special arrangement with Leicester Bay Theatricals. All authorized materials are also supplied by LBT, www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com"

NOTE: Your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals limits you to making copies of this document for persons directly connected with your production. Do not distribute outside of your cast and crew. Following your performance run you must destroy all photocopies, preferably by shredding them. If we sent you the document in printed format, you must return that document to us. If we provided you with an electronic PDF file, simply trash that on your computer so that it cannot be recovered. The electronic document may only be on ONE computer -- it may NOT be duplicated. This is also a part of your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals.

THE MUMMY'S TALE AND OTHER STORIES FROM THE GREAT BEYOND

Character list (can be played by as few as 7 performers)

Mummy – Keeper of the secret of the Great Beyond

Scarabaeus – Youthful guide; assistant

Professor Fellows – Explorer; narrates the Book of Amduat

Professor Pundit – Explorer; narrates Orpheus and Eurydice

Professor Sage – Explorer; narrates Quetzalcoatl's Journey to Mictlan

The Book of Amduat

Ra – Egyptian Sun God; writer of the Amduat

Isis – Goddess of magic and protector of the dead; Ra's sister; takes the form of a hawk (can be a puppet)

Apep – Evil Serpent God of chaos and darkness; resides in Duat-Tuat

Nak – Apep's demon helper

Sek – Apep's demon helper

Anubis – Jackal; god of mummification; weighs the of hearts of the dead

Maat – Goddess of order and truth; keeper of the ostrich feather against which hearts are weighed

Orpheus and Eurydice

Groupie 1 – Fan of Orpheus

Groupie 2 – Fan of Orpheus

Orpheus – Famed minstrel; psychedelic-pop/rock star

Eurydice – Beautiful nymph; wife of Orpheus

Hermes – Guide of the newly dead into the underworld

Charon – Ferryman to the underworld

Cerberus – Three headed dog; guardian to the gates of the Underworld

Aeacus – Judge of the Dead; Keeper of the keys

Rhadamanthys – Judge of the Dead; Assessor of the deeds

Minos – Judge of the Dead; Appointer of the ways

Hades – God of the Underworld

Persephone – Wife of Hades; Orpheus's biggest fan

Quetzalcoatl's Journey to Mictlan

Xochiquetzal – Goddess of Flowers and Love; fashion designer

Birds – Followers of Xochiquetzal (puppets)

Butterflies – Followers of Xochiquetzal (puppets)

Quetzalcoatl – God of the Winds; creator god; son of Xochiquetzal

Xolotl – Quetzacoatl's canine companion; guide into the Underworld

Spiders – Denizens of Mictlan (puppets)

King of Mictlan – Ruler of the Netherworld

Queen of Mictlan – Demon Queen of Spiders in the Netherworld

THE MUMMY'S TALE and Other Voices from the Great Beyond A play from the History Mystery Theatre Series by E. Gray Simons III. Suitable for Large cast or can be doubled to as few as 5 actors. (*Suitable for professional, educational & amateur groups for young and family audiences.*) The Mummy's Tale. . . is a family-friendly journey exploring the ultimate mystery: the afterlife as viewed across centuries and cultures! Visit ancient Egypt, where Ra the Sun God makes his first journey across the sky and a subsequent trip into the afterlife; from Greek mythology, the famed minstrel Orpheus will travel to the Underworld to save his lost love, Eurydice; experience the unique paradise of the Aztec's Gods and find out how they created human beings. Most importantly, The Mummy's Tale takes a lighthearted, child-appropriate look at The Great Beyond. Premiered at The Berkshire Theatre Festival's BTF Plays in 2010. **Order # 3172**

Playwright **E. Gray Simons III** has worked for fourteen years as an Artist-in-Residence at the Berkshire Theatre Festival. In 2000, he became Artistic Director of BTF PLAYS! and has since written and directed more than a dozen original plays, among them *Aesop's Network*, *Nursery Rhyme Café*, *Mystery Sideshow 2: Strange Waves*, and *Mystery Sideshow 3: Way Out West*.

Simons made his BTF directorial debut in 2000 with *The Wind in the Willows* and in 2001 he became director of the *Summer Performance Stories*, *The Odyssey*, *The Magic Flute*, *Arabian Nights*, and *Monkey*. Other directorial credits include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Oliver!* and *Peter Pan*(2009) on BTF's Main Stage, *Where Has Tommy Flowers Gone?* and *Holiday Memories* in the Unicorn Theatre, *Robin Hood* at the Berkshire Museum, *The Who's Tommy* at Brandeis University with co-director Eric Hill, and *Big Love* at Brandeis University. His BTF acting credits include *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Peter Pan*, *Moby Dick-Rehearsed*, and *Wilder, Wilder*.

Berkshire Theatre Festival's year-round education program, BTF PLAYS! serves area students from kindergarten through high school. At the heart of BTF PLAYS! is a passionate commitment to bring live theatre and all its inherent excitement and creativity to children in our region. Each year, more than 10,000 students in underserved rural and inner city schools throughout Berkshire Country are reached through in-school residency programs, vacation camps, and our touring production. Over the course of the summer, BTF PLAYS! hosts vacation camps for students from grades K-6, providing opportunities to learn about acting, improvisation, storytelling, and working behind the scenes in the theatre.

MUSIC:

A song AT THE SIDESHOW has been written for use with this and other Mystery Sideshow Theatre Series titles. The music is at the end of this playscript. There is no additional charge for the use of this music.

Transition music is used during scene changes. This can be anything, including improvised, or music composed by someone with your group. If pre-recorded music is used be sure to obtain the necessary permissions and give the proper credit to authors and companies.

PROLOGUE -- An optional song **AT THE SIDESHOW** is available to sing as an introduction to this installment of the *Mystery Sideshow Theatre* series. The air should be filled with the magic and excitement of a Sideshow/Carnival. The setting should be easily transformable with possibly the magic of props and drops. After the song the **TOMB** setting is ready, having been magically set up during the song. If the song is not used, the **TOMB** should be preset.

SETTING: THE MUMMY'S TOMB, PRESENT.

(A sarcophagus sits at the center of a dimly lit stone room. There are various images and hieroglyphs on the surrounding stone walls. There are several stone blocks arranged around the sarcophagus. After several moment of stillness, a boy enters carrying a small lamp. After examining the room and the coffin for a moment, he calls off stage.)

SCARABAEUS: Professors!

(There is muffled talk from the professors heard off stage.)

FELLOWS: Where are you?

SCARABAEUS: In here!

PUNDIT: Perfect! Now if we could only locate "here"!

SCARABAEUS: I've found the Mummy!

SAGE: Oh, glory!

(Professors Fellows, Pundit and Sage enter, carrying their own lamps and talking excitedly.)

FELLOWS: Scarabaeus, there you are.

PUNDIT: We thought we'd lost you.

SAGE: I thought we'd lost ourselves.

(Doctors all chortle and mumble in agreement. They then begin to survey the room.)

SCARABAEUS: Many people who enter these chambers may be in danger of getting lost.

FELLOWS: I'm sure we'd be desperate and aimless without you, my young friend.

PUNDIT: But luckily, we have you as our guide. It requires a youthful, adventurous soul to navigate such realms.

SAGE: And it appears you have led us to that which we have long sought.

(By this time they have all gathered around the sarcophagus.)

PROFESSORS: *(In reverent tones)* The Mummy!

FELLOWS: I can't believe it.

PUNDIT: It really exists.

SAGE: I was sure it was only a story.

SCARABAEUS: Only a story?

SAGE: Something to spark the imagination.

PUNDIT: A bit of entertainment.

FELLOWS: An adventurous turn.

SAGE: We've travelled for many years, searching far and wide...

PUNDIT: Studying the minds of the wise and learned...

FELLOWS: But we have not found the answers to life's biggest questions.

(Scarabaeus has drifted down to a small obelisk that stands in front of the Mummy.)

SCARABAEUS: The Mummy may have such a tale.

FELLOWS: Yes, I'm sure the Mummy is full of secrets.

PUNDIT: Known only to the walls of this tomb.

SAGE: Murmurs lost forever in the muted stone.

SCARABAEUS: One may know these tales if one knows how to ask.

(He points to an inscription on a stone in front of the sarcophagus.)

See... read what it says here.

FELLOWS: An inscription!

PUNDIT: In hieroglyphs!

SAGE: Shall we translate?

PROFESSORS: Yes, let's.

(They read.)

FELLOWS: Here rests the voice that echoes the past

PUNDIT: And unanswered questions that all of us ask

SAGE: If the path you desire is one that's enlightened

PROFESSORS: Open your minds, though you may be frightened.

(The professors look around nervously.)

FELLOWS: I'm not afraid. Are you?

PUNDIT: No, no! Not at all!

SAGE: I've never been scared.

(They continue reading.)

FELLOWS: Now that you feel, you are sure of your goal

PUNDIT: There's no payment needed, no levy, no toll.

SAGE: If here at the end, it is I that you seek

PROFESSORS: Just lift your heads up and say the word...

(They lift their heads.)

Speak!

(Music is heard. As the sarcophagus slowly opens, the professors shriek and hide. The Mummy steps out.)

MUMMY: Who is it that has summoned the eternal voice of the Great Beyond?

PROFESSORS: We have.

SCARABAEUS: We are here so that we might quench our thirst for that which is most mysterious.

MUMMY: Please, come forward. Anyone with true purpose is welcome to immerse their cup and drink from the river of the unknowable.

FELLOWS: I am Professor Fellows.

PUNDIT: I am Professor Pundit.

SAGE: I am Professor Sage.

SCARABAEUS: I am called Scarabaeus.

MUMMY: And what is it you wish to hear from me?

FELLOWS: When work is all done

PUNDIT: The races all won.

SAGE: And gardens are tended

PROFESSORS and **SCARABAEUS:** When life is ended.

FELLOWS: Beyond the dark and the light

PUNDIT: Beyond content, beyond fright

SAGE: Beyond sadness and laughter...

PROFESSORS and **SCARABAEUS:** What comes after?

MUMMY: A worthy question upon which we all must reflect,

But the answer is something you might not expect.

Think back on your travels that brought you to me

Over mountains, through valleys and across the wide sea.

The smell of a flower, a cry from a bird

The people you've met, the stories you've heard...

PROFESSORS: The stories we've heard?

SAGE: To spark the imagination.

PUNDIT: A bit of entertainment.

FELLOWS: An adventurous turn.

MUMMY: Tell me your stories, before I tell mine

And then the great mystery, you all may divine.

PROFESSORS: (*Improvise*) Splendid, wonderful, capital idea, etc...

FELLOWS: Would anyone mind if I get things started?

SAGE and **PUNDIT:** (*Improvise*) Please do, go right ahead, by all means, etc...

(*They briefly rearrange themselves, including the Mummy, to assume polite listening positions.*)

FELLOWS: I recall a wonderful story about the very first journey of Ra, the Egyptian Sun God, across the sky and his subsequent excursion into the afterlife.

PUNDIT: Didn't Ra traverse the sky in a boat of some sort?

SCARABAEUS: A boat?

SAGE: Yes, it was called the "Barque of Ages".

FELLOWS: Precisely, Sage! "Barque" being an extravagant name for a sacred sailboat large enough to carry Ra across the azure heavens in splendid comfort...

(*Music is heard and the set is changed.*)

SCENE 1 -- SETTING: THE SKY OVER EGYPT, THE FIRST DAY EVER -- The "Barque of Ages" enters with Ra onboard.

FELLOWS: This was the maiden voyage of the "Barque of Ages" and Ra was its sole occupant. As the craft cruised steadily across the sky, Ra took out a bit of papyrus and his writing staff so that he could record some of the details of the momentous excursion.

(*Ra takes out a blank papyrus journal and a read stylus and begins to write.*)

RA : Day one... I have been traveling west across the sky for several hours now and so far the trip has been a pure delight. I can see for miles... the desert is stretched out below, dotted with a lush oasis here and there. It is a bit hot, but it's okay... it's a dry heat.

FELLOWS: Ra was certainly enjoying himself. But after several more hours he realized that he was approaching the western horizon.

RA : Day one, later... I am now near the western edge of the sky and closing in on a cloud-capped mountain that according to my "triptych" is called...

(He pulls out a three paneled map.)

Mount Bakhu, which I believe means, "mountain of the olive tree". Hmm... that makes me kind of hungry.

(Two clouds enter.)

FELLOWS: As Ra drew nearer to the cloudy peak, he began to feel a sense of dread and sought for a place to bring his ship about. Then without warning a fearsome snake-like creature appeared from out of the clouds and addressed him in a harsh and insolent tone.

(Music is heard and Apep enters.)

RA : Who are you?

APEP: I am Apep, the deification of chaos and darkness! Encircler of the world! Serpent god of Evil!

RA : Okay... I am Ra, the sun god and I was just about to turn my ship around and head back –

APEP: There is no turning around!

RA: I'm sure I can turn, if I can just find the steering wheel...

(Looks around)

I guess this boat doesn't have one. Can you believe that? I've just been drifting west.

APEP: Sun god Ra, do you realize you are approaching the Duat-Tuat?

RA: Do what, to what? I didn't do anything to anybody.

APEP: The Duat-Tuat is my realm! It is the "Afterlife".

RA: What are you saying? That I'm...

APEP: About to die.

RA : Wow, everything seemed to be going so well.

APEP: Once you have entered the Duat-Tuat, there is no escape. You will be trapped in a world of fear and loathing, where you will be plagued by my relentless demon slaves.

RA: Are you sure we can't talk about this?

APEP: Following your torturous reception, your dire misery will continue. I shall devour you! Deep within the boiling pit of my stomach you will writhe in ceaseless agony and the world of light will forever reside in the dark of the night.

RA: That can't be good.

APEP: I'll be waiting for you... in the afterlife.

(Apep exits with a sinister laugh.)

FELLOWS: Ra, was deeply dismayed by his dilemma, but he realized he was helpless to alter his fate and prepared to die and enter the afterlife. The moment his boat passed the edge of the horizon he was plunged into utter darkness.

(Ra's boat is shifted to the "Afterlife".)

SCENE 2 -- SETTING: THE DUAT-TUAT, THE VERY FIRST NIGHT -- Ra writes in his journal.

RA : Night one... Following a pleasant and relatively peaceful journey across the sky... I have died. This in itself is discouraging enough, but to make matters worse I was met on the edge of the afterlife (or Duat-Tuat) by a most disagreeable Serpent God of Evil called Apep. He informed me in no uncertain terms that my time in the Duat-Tuat would be less than enjoyable. Even now I perceive the approach of his demon hordes. I'm not sure what they have in store for me, but I am very frightened.

(Two Demons enter and do a brief, yet energetic dance of torment.)

DEMONS: Welcome to the afterlife, hopeless fool.

NAK: I am Nak!

SEK: I am Sek!

DEMONS: We are the pitiless demons of the Duat-Tuat!

NAK: We delight in your anguish!

SEK: Our bliss is in your suffering!

DEMONS: We shall disgorge a fiery torrent of maledictions down upon your soul for eternity!

(The demons shout random taunts and insults at Ra.)

FELLOWS: Ra cowered as the fierce demons swirled about his boat. He had lost nearly all hope of redemption when Isis, the goddess of magic, suddenly appeared by this side in the form of a great bird of prey.

(An actor enters operating a hawk puppet. The hawk glides over Ra's shoulder.)

ISIS: Ra, I am here to help you.

RA: Isis, I'm afraid! I can see no way out of the darkness and despair.

ISIS: You have nothing to fear. Remember, you are the god of the sun. If you shine out in this shadowy place, I will be able to see the demons and chase them away.

RA: Okay.

FELLOWS: Ra controlled his fear and concentrated all of his willpower on shining brightly. Miraculously the Duat-Tuat was filled with dazzling light and the spiteful demons shrank back and fled as Isis swooped down upon them.

DEMONS: We are no match for the Goddess of Magic!

(The demons shriek and exit.)

RA : Thank you, Isis. You have given me faith.

ISIS: Your confident light will serve as a beacon to guide you to other side of the afterlife. Remain light of heart and you may emerge from the Duat-Tuat to be reborn and rise for a second day. Farewell!

(Isis exits.)

FELLOWS: Ra sailed on with a new sense of ease and purpose. The mere possibility of sailing across the sky for another day filled him with hope. Although, the river through the afterlife twisted and turned like the coils of a gigantic serpent, he held true to his course, continued to shine out brightly, and faithfully recorded every detail of his journey.

(Ra writes in his journal.)

RA: Night one, later... I have sailed for hours along a turbulent, murky river, but my ship has proved buoyant

and my spirits continue to rise. I have hope of seeing the other side of the Duat-Tuat, however, I am sure that I will not reach the end of my journey without once again meeting Apep, the God of darkness and chaos.

FELLOWS: No sooner had Ra invoked the name of the serpent god of evil than he appeared out of the misty river like a curl of poisonous vapor.

(Apep enters.)

APEP: You may have eluded the torment of my demons and somehow navigated the churning currents in my river of gloom, but your dreams of escape will end in a horrific nightmare... There is still one final calamity you must face before the end. And when you fail, I will be there to consume what's left of your wretched soul.

(Apep exits.)

FELLOWS: Ra grew fearful of this last unknown peril and as the river bore him forward, he became more and more filled with doubt. His light gradually dimmed until it was no more than a sickly green glow. Then out in the distance he perceived a pyramid-like temple, on the steps of which stood a beautiful woman.

(Music is heard, as Ma'at enters. She is glamorously dressed.)

MA'AT: Hey, all you crazy souls out there! Welcome to the Temple on the far side of the Duat-Tuat, where we get to answer the one question that everyone's dying to know...

(Voices from off stage yell, "Is your heart as light as a Feather!")

That's right, "Is your heart as light as a feather!" But before we can get to that, let me introduce the escort of the dead... From coast to coast, he's the Jackal who guides every Egyptian ghost, your host... Anubis!

(Anubis enters as if he is hosting a live game show in Las Vegas. Loud cheering and applause is heard from backstage.)

ANUBIS: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen! That's right, I am Anubis, the escort of the dead and the god of Mummification.

(Voices from off stage yell, "Hey, Anubis how's your mummy!")

Oh, dang! You people get me with that every time. To tell you the truth my mummy is... well, she's finally "resting in peace".

(Voices from off stage... "Ah, too bad, we're sorry, etc...")

Yes, she has just recently "dearly, departed"... on a retirement cruise down the Nile!

(More laughing and clapping from off stage.)

Oh, I kill myself! But enough of that... I know you folks didn't come for the jokes. You're here to find out the answer to the question that everyone's dying to know...

(Voices from off stage yell, "Is your heart as light as a Feather!")

That's right! And here's my heavenly associate, Ma'at, goddess of truth and order, to tell us how it all works!

MA'AT: Thanks, Anubis! Well, everyone has to pass through the afterlife and we want to make sure that the journey is as honorable as possible, so here at the Temple, we will weigh your heart against my one of a kind ostrich feather ...

(She holds up a large and colorful feather. Cheers are heard from off stage.)

...to see if you're in balance and ready to "move on".

ANUBIS: And who's our participant today, Ma'at?

MA'AT: It's none other than the sun god himself, Ra!

(There are cheers and chants of "Ra, Ra, Ra!" as Ra steps forward and smiles nervously.)

ANUBIS: Well, Ra, as this is your first trip to the afterlife and you are an immortal, there are some special rules for you.

RA: Really?

ANUBIS: Yes. If your heart is as light as a feather, you will not "move on" as most humans do, but you will return to the living world and rise in the sky for a second day!

RA: Wow, that sounds great!

ANUBIS: But, if your heart is heavier than Ma'at's feather... there's a very good chance you will be devoured by the serpent god of evil, Apep!

(Apep enters and there is "booing" heard from off stage.)

RA: Yikes.

ANUBIS: So, let the weighing of the heart begin!

(Ma'at becomes a large scale. She holds a chain mounted balance pan from each hand. Anubis places the feather to one side and Ra's heart into the other. Fellows enters.)

FELLOWS: Ra, was more afraid than ever and he felt his heart sink as he watched the feather start to rise on the other side of the scale.

(The scale begins to tip toward Ra.)

ANUBIS: Uh, oh! It looks as if he may be out of balance, folks...

APEP: That's right! Come to papa, sunny boy! Apep wants to eat!

FELLOWS: Just as Ra was about to accept his dreadful fate, he heard the voice of Isis, in his head...

(Isis enters and flies past Ra.)

ISIS: Your confident light will serve as a beacon to guide you to other side of the afterlife. Remain light of heart and you may emerge from the Duat-Tuat to be reborn and rise for a second day.

(Isis exits.)

FELLOWS: At the words of Isis, Ra instantly remembered the delight he felt crossing the blue sky on the first day and the joy of that experience was all he needed to lift his heart and the scale was balanced.

ANUBIS: It looks like... Yes, we have a winner!

(Loud cheering and applause is heard from off stage. Ma'at exits with the scale.)

APEP: This can't be!

ANUBIS: Congratulations, Ra! Enjoy your grand prize of another peaceful trip across the sky!

(Anubis exits.)

RA: Thank you!

APEP: This is not the end, Ra. After your second trip across the sky you will once more drop below the horizon, where you will die and once again pass through the Duat-Tuat. And I'll be here... waiting for you.

(As Apep speaks he slowly backs off and finally exits.)

FELLOWS: Ra, no longer felt very afraid. However, as he was reborn and rose into the sky for the second time he made sure to record the rest of his adventure through the afterlife, so the next time he faced darkness and chaos he wouldn't forget to keep a light heart.

(Music is heard as he begins to write in his journal.)

RA: Day two... It's a lovely day... and I think it would be even better if I brought along a few friends.

(Ra is joined by Isis, Ma'at and Anubis. They dance briefly and sail off stage.)

SCENE 3 -- SETTING: THE MUMMY'S TOMB, PRESENT -- *The Mummy's tomb is reset and Fellows is joined by his companions, Scarabaeus, and the Mummy.*

SCARABAEUS: Professor Fellows, has the Serpent God, Apep, ever come to the world of the living?

FELLOWS: Oh, he tries all the time, Scarabaeus. Some say that when there is an earthquake or a tornado or lightning bolt, that is Apep struggling to gain a foothold in the world of the living, but Ra and his companions usually keep him from doing too much harm.

SCARABAEUS: But Ra still has to go into the Afterlife at the end of every day?

FELLOWS: Yes, as the sun god drops below the horizon he will again die and enter the afterlife.

SCARABAEUS: And did he make a record of all of his adventures?

FELLOWS: There is much recorded of Ra's voyages through the Duat-Tuat. It is written in a book called the "Amduat", which means "that which is in the afterlife". The Weighing of the Heart ceremony is actually part of another manuscript concerning the spells of coming and going, which is called "The Egyptian Book of the Dead". Both books have been guides for many souls.

PUNDIT: Well, it would be good to have a guide, there's no telling what kind of trouble you may find in the afterlife. Take Orpheus, for example... He went into the Underworld at great personal risk and it wasn't even his time.

SAGE: He was searching for his lost love, was he not?

FELLOWS: Oh, yes, she was a nymph called Eurydice and she was a vision of loveliness.

SCARABAEUS: And after she died, Orpheus went into the afterlife to find her?

PUNDIT: Yes, my boy. Love can be the most powerful and mysterious guide of all. The story begins on a golden spring day in ancient Greece. Eurydice, the beautiful nymph, was wandering alone in her favorite meadow, where she spent much of her time gathering wild flowers and there, by strange and happy fortune, she met Orpheus.

(Music is heard and the set is changed.)

SCENE 4 -- SETTING: A BEAUTIFUL MEADOW, ANCIENT GREECE -- *Eurydice enters with a small bouquet of wildflowers that she has picked.*

PUNDIT: Everyone adored Orpheus.

(Orpheus enters quickly and stops. He is out of breath as if he is being chased. He does not notice Eurydice.)

He was the most famous minstrel of the ancient world. His voice, it was said, could tame the wild beasts, captivate the birds in the trees and soften the hardest hearts of men and women. Even the gods were enamored of his remarkable musical talents. His mesmerizing songs of love were known to all and the

attention he received because of his music resembled what many would regard as obsession.

(Orpheus hides as two "groupies" enter.)

GROUPIE 1: Where is he?

GROUPIE 2: I don't know... I thought he came this way.

GROUPIE 1: Oh my goodness, if I don't meet him, I don't know what I'll do.

GROUPIE 2: Me neither, I think I might die.

GROUPIE 1: Oh my goodness, can you imagine if we actually get to meet him?

GROUPIE 2: I know, I think I might die.

GROUPIE 1: *(Notices Eurydice.)* Excuse me, did you see Orpheus pass by here?

EURYDICE: Umm... who?

GROUPIE 2: Uh, Orpheus... the famed minstrel.

EURYDICE: Oh... no.

GROUPIE 1: I can't believe he got away.

GROUPIE 2: This is awful, I think I might die.

(Groupies exit. Eurydice checks to make sure they're gone.)

EURYDICE: They're gone. You can come out now.

(Orpheus slowly emerges from his hiding place.)

ORPHEUS: Thank you. That was very nice of you. I can't tell you how grateful I am.

EURYDICE: It's okay. It seemed like you didn't really want to be found.

ORPHEUS: Not really... Oh, I'm sorry. My name is Orpheus.

EURYDICE: I know. My name is Eurydice.

ORPHEUS: Very nice to meet you.

EURYDICE: Likewise.

(Awkward pause)

Well, see ya.

(She turns to go.)

ORPHEUS: So, Eurydice... do you mind if I ask what you are doing here.

EURYDICE: Oh, I don't mind. I just love to walk through meadows. I'm a nymph.

ORPHEUS: Cool. I like meadows, too. They're so fresh and... beautiful.

EURYDICE: Well, do you wanna walk with me?

ORPHEUS: Sure. That'd be groovy.

(Music plays as they walk up stage and loop around as Pundit crosses.)

PUNDIT: So Orpheus and Eurydice walked and talked and laughed and lost track of time and looked into each other's eyes and saw the reflection of that which is most beguiling and they fell deeply and truly in love.

(Orpheus and Eurydice continue looping and move downstage to center where they kiss and separate and gaze at each other.)

For Orpheus this was especially profound. Although he was adored by many, he had never felt that his own heart could be pierced in such a way and he soon realized that he wanted to spend all of eternity with Eurydice.

ORPHEUS: Eurydice, I want to spend all of eternity with you.

PUNDIT: Not long after they were married in the field where they met. The ceremony was a small, yet joyous

gathering. After all had departed, they were left alone under the stars in a tender embrace.

ORPHEUS: I am afraid to look away from you.

EURYDICE: Why?

ORPHEUS: Like the foundation of a dream, I do not know if you are real or if I have supplied an ethereal vision... a sublime and treasured fantasy that apart from my intent gaze will dissolve and be lost.

EURYDICE: Don't worry, my dear. I'm here.

ORPHEUS: And you're real?

EURYDICE: I'm real.

ORPHEUS: Real charming.

(They laugh and kiss.)

PUNDIT: Then, at the height, of their matrimonial rapture, an unforeseen danger crept upon them.

(An actor enters, manipulating a snake puppet.)

A snake that had its home in the meadow was disturbed by the nighttime presence of the happy couple and struck without warning.

(The snake strikes and bites Eurydice on the ankle.)

EURYDICE: Ouch!

ORPHEUS: What is it?

EURYDICE: I was bitten... look, Orpheus! A snake...

(As Orpheus moves to look at the departing snake, Eurydice collapses. Pundit exits.)

ORPHEUS: It's gone...

(He turns to see Eurydice on the ground.)

Eurydice!

(He runs to her and kneels at her side.)

EURYDICE: Orpheus, I feel faint...

ORPHEUS: Don't worry, my dear.

EURYDICE: And the night seems to grow darker...

ORPHEUS: I'm here.

EURYDICE: Am I dying?

ORPHEUS: No, you can't be...

(Hermes enters and Eurydice sees him.)

EURYDICE: But I must be... look.

(Orpheus looks in same the direction, but does not see Hermes.)

ORPHEUS: What is it? What do you see?

EURYDICE: Hermes, guide of departing spirits to the Underworld... he has come for me...

ORPHEUS: I will not accept it!

EURYDICE: Orpheus, my love... farewell!

(Music is heard as Eurydice dies. Hermes slowly approaches her and unwinds her from Orpheus arms, guides her to her feet and off stage. Orpheus does not watch her go, but comes to his feet and gazes out. Pundit enters.)

PUNDIT: Orpheus was beyond heartbreak. He felt that he had lost that which had given any meaning to his life and wondered vaguely how he might possibly be able to continue to exist in the world of the living. He

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- The Mummy's Tale and Other Stories from the Great Beyond by E. Gray Simons III

refused to attend Eurydice's funeral, but instead wandered through the meadow where they had met reflecting on the moments they had spent together. In his concurrent shock and numbness, he resolved that he could not go on without his beloved and that he had no choice but to descend into the Underworld and beg for Eurydice's life.

(Orpheus exits.)

Orpheus travelled to the Oracle at Aornum, where he had heard of a passage that might lead him into the Underworld. The entrance he sought was a cave called the "Charonium" and when he found its yawning, reeking mouth, he entered and was greeted by Charon, the ferryman of the dead.

(Music is heard and the set is changed.)

SCENES 5-9 make up another 10 pages