

# PNOFREHI, THE EGYPTIAN EVIL

Rajesh Bose



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CHAPTER ONE

*Ngugi*

*October 9, Bahariya Desert, Egypt*

‘Hey, you kid, —don’t go that way.’

Ngugi turned back, somewhat startled. It was indeed surprising to have heard English in this land of endless sand. Moreover, the sun was exactly overhead. The background seemed to be wavering in the scorching heat. She couldn’t locate anything. She had come quite far, running after Lulu; who knows where she had disappeared to.

‘My dear one, are you a foreigner?’ The voice asked her again, now more close.

Ngugi could see the man now, a Father in a white robe, walking towards her, holding a bicycle in his right hand. Perhaps there was a leak in its tyres. The man was a black, just like Ngugi. His milk-white beard covering his entire face made a beautiful contrast. Evidently, he was a native of this country, a Coptic one. Ngugi had learned this new word recently. Egyptians Christians were called so.

‘Yes, I am from Zimbabwe,’ Ngugi answered back, not

forgetting to add an extra bass in her voice to make it like an adult one. She was little disappointed to be called a kid, after all she had turned eleven now!

‘Zimbabwe!’ The man seemed to be surprised, his eyes widened. He fumbled his tanned brown fingers into his profuse beard, ‘what’s your name my little darling?’

‘Ngugi, NgugiMahachi.’

‘Bah, that’s a nice name — on an excursion?’

Ngugi nodded an assent, looked around in vain for Lulu.

‘Very good, very good,’ said the man, ‘but don’t go about the sands, poisonous vipers are there, always lurking for prey.’

‘Thank you!’ Ngugi nodded again, hiding the fear at his words.

‘Stay well, have a nice day.’ The man started moving forward. Ngugi thought of asking him where he was headed to this no man’s land, could not, he had already advanced quite a distance.

Ngugi came back to their car. The heat was unbearable. Both uncle Bango and her father were drenched in sweat and so was their driver Taufique. The poor man was standing with his head stuck inside the bonnet. Who had ever thought that their Land Rover would betray them in such a manner?

Ngugi looked at the car, still out of order. Taufique kept trying his best skills to start the engine. But, his drooping face and soiled blue shirt revealed no progress had been made so far.

‘Get inside the car Ngugi, don’t loiter in the sun.’ said her father.

Ngugi could not decide what to do now. She looked at uncle Bango's face. He was in no mood to listen to Ngugi, extremely annoyed with his car, cursing the maker constantly.

Actually, Ngugi knew, Bango uncle had had to shell out a good portion of his business profits to acquire this car. He had passions for big cars. Naturally, he was extremely annoyed, grumbling about making a wrong decision.

Uncle Bango had been living in Egypt for about ten years. He was a successful businessman here. He had a medium sized flat just overlooking the river Nile. The apartment might not be a big one, but it was well furnished and decorated. The main attraction was, of course, the river Nile that could be seen from almost all the rooms of the flat.

In fact, Ngugi had already decided that after the Maths Olympiad, she would stay a good number of days in Bango uncle's apartment.

Actually, Ngugi and her father were up to the city of Athens, where the International Mathematics Olympiad was going to be held. It was a great feat on the part of Ngugi to have qualified for this big event. Since her uncle lived in this mystical land of the Pyramids, her father had decided to make a stopover here.

It was the ninth day of October, and only six days were remaining before the inauguration of the Olympiad. Naturally, they did not have much time for sightseeing. Despite the fact, there was an underlying tension for the Olympiad as well. Ngugi had to keep herself abreast with all sorts of mathematical tricks and that so to speak that

was taking a toll on her touring pleasure as well.

In fact, that was the reason uncle Bango planned this trip to lessen some of her mental load. Yesterday, they went to the southwestern suburbs of Cairo City to see the great pyramid of Giza. Today's trip was for the Baharian oasis. It was around two hundred miles away from Cairo.

The place recently shot into fame not only for its picturesque oasis, but also for its recent archeological importance. Quite a number of mummies had been excavated from its surroundings. Some of them were as old as the Greco-Roman periods.

Uncle Bango was a busy person. He seldom took any interest in those archeological findings. To be true, the idea of visiting Bahariya was of Sangha Mitra, Ngugi's Indian friend, also a participant of the Maths Olympiad. Sangha had tremendous knowledge in various fields and was extremely talented as well. In addition, she had some extra-ordinary powers. But, so far Ngugi only read about them, never witnessed though, in the emails sent by Theo.

In fact, they were three in all, Ngugi herself, Theo Hyberg and Sangha Mitra, the other two, — they had made a team in this Olympiad. Each of them was from different continents — Ngugi from Africa, Theo from Europe, and Sangha from Asia. They were all within the age of twelve years. Ngugi the youngest, just turned eleven, while Theo was elder to her by only twenty six days and Sangha the senior most, forty days short of twelve. It was the virtual world of the internet that initiated their friendship.

They would be meeting for the first time in Athens. Olympiad committee deserved special thanks for this. Because, they had introduced a new category for the under twelve. They were to take part in teams of three, and may select a group as they wish. There was one condition though, the team members could not be of the same country. To satisfy this, the committee had increased the number of participants from each country. Any one of the guardians of the contestants might accompany him or her, the committee would bear that expenses. As Ngugi's father had come with her.

'There must be some trouble in the ignition socket.' Taufique delivered. 'We had better call the emergency services.'

Uncle Bango knocked a solid punch in the air. Ngugi's father tried to pacify him, took out his cell phone and asked for the emergency number from Taufique.

'I told you to sit in the car,' retorted Ngugi's father her, 'It will take time to fix the trouble.'

The car had a climate controller. It was definitely comfortable to remain inside the car. Ngugi obeyed finally, but as she was about to enter, 'Meow' called Lulu from the back seat.

Ngugi relieved and smiled to herself. When did she get in the car? She reached out to pat the cat, but she slipped out and went straight to the road. Ngugi ran after her.

'Leave her alone. She is still not accustomed to your face, once she gets to know you will come on her own.' Her father shouted from behind.

Ngugi hardly heard it. She kept following the cat.

Lulu was uncle Bango's cat. He took her everywhere with him. Lulu was fluffy, cuddly, adorable cat. She was very friendly with Bango uncle, but would not let anyone else touch her. Despite repeated attempts, Ngugi was unable to get on friendly terms with her.

And she couldn't this time, as well. Lulu made her run at least forty to fifty yards after her, crossing a human sized, triangular rock and then headed back to the car. Ngugi too turned back quickly, but she tripped and fell. It seemed she tripped on something looking like an iron ring. She pulled it with all her might.

A strange incident followed. With a rumbling sound, the rock rotated almost ninety degrees, revealing the entrance of a tunnel underneath it. Ngugi's heart was pounding fast. Did she find the entrance of an unknown pyramid? In fact, that was how the secret entrances to the several pyramids had been discovered by the archeologists. She had read their stories in books and on the internet.

She removed the sands with her hands. The entrance was clearly visible now. It was not exactly a tunnel, instead large uneven steps made of stone that went underground. It was so dark only up to four-five steps were visible.

Ngugi took a deep breath. Should she climb down the stairs? It seemed difficult for her to slow down the pace of her heart unless she took a cursory look inside. She tried to get a look at their car. It was quite far away. Her father and uncle Bango were standing on the main road. A huge truck passed by. They tried to stop it in vain. It got past them. So, it was clear they were not worried about Ngugi.

She made her mind up. She would climb down, but