

# TRAPPED IN A PYRAMID

A VOCABULARY-BOOSTING SHORT  
STORY



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*BIG WORDS MADE SIMPLE.*

## **Trapped in a Pyramid: A Vocabulary-Boosting Short Story**

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I’m going to do the very best I can to help you, but ultimately, the only person who can improve your vocabulary (and SAT/ACT score) is you. Please don’t sue me.

“*Bat shi\*t*,” repeated Salima Ikram, the queen of Egyptology, in her posh British accent to her **hyperventilating** students.

We were stuck in the close, dark quarters of a burial chamber, breathing in heavy, oxygen-**deprived** air and panting from **perilous** descent into the **bowels** of Khufu’s pyramid, but I’d never been more excited in my life. The air reeked of bat **guano** and sweat, but to me, exploring the pyramids was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream.

“Erm – how are we going to get out?” one of my classmates interrupted.

The electricity had failed, taking with it every ounce of light, but Professor Ikram remained calm. She pulled a miniature flashlight out of her bag and continued her lecture, **unperturbed**.

“Someone will come for us,” she replied. “In the meantime, I want you all to think about how this would have appeared in ancient times. The workers didn’t have electricity, you know. Even during the day, much of the light in here came from torches. All the more incredible, that they were able to create such **reliefs**...”

I stopped listening. Was I *actually* trapped in a burial chamber? The **closet** romantic in me **repressed** the urge to smile at the adventure of it all. But my wiser half told me to quickly and quietly make my way to the back of the group – away from where I’d been standing when the lights went out.

All these accidents don’t just *happen*, I told myself. Certainly, some could be blamed on **extraneous** factors, like faulty wiring. But after finding an antique dagger in your wardrobe, it’s sensible to assume that there’s is a target specifically on *your* back.

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**Hyperventilating** - Breathing abnormally quickly, usually to the point of lightheadedness

**Deprived** - Denied (the possession of something)

**Perilous** - Dangerous

**Bowels** - Internal organs; the inner parts of something

**Guano** - The excrement of bats or birds

**Unperturbed** - Undisturbed

**Reliefs** - Carvings

**Closet** - Secret; covert

**Repressed** - Suppressed; held back

**Extraneous** - Unrelated to the subject at hand

Was it possible that the entrance to the pyramid was blocked and the lighting shot in an effort to grab me while the rest of the group was focused on their own survival?

Impossible – then there'd be no way out, and why engineer such theater? Lord knew there were easier ways to kidnap me.

Or was it just an attempt to spook me, or spook my family into forcing me to return to the States? Because aside from the ornamental knife, the rest of the “accidents” could be written off as just that.

A hand on my **posterior** jolted me back to awareness. I gritted my teeth, **internal** dialogue transforming into a **diatribe** of **denunciations** against the male population of Cairo.

But just then the lights came back on with a suddenness that nearly blinded me, and saved my arm from a serious scrape.

I'd been about to administer an elbow into the gut of the pervert standing behind me, but — as I **peered** at my classmates, some **sheepishly** wiping away tears and blowing their noses — I found that there was no one behind me. Just an ancient wall.

On instinct, my hand went to my back pocket.

“*Stay away from tomb 20-A!*” a crumpled message read.

Now I was really **intrigued**.

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**Posterior** - A person's bum/backside

**Internal** - Existing on the inside

**Diatribe** - A forceful attack against someone/something

**Denunciations** - Condemnations of someone or something

**Peered** - Looked at, usually with some difficulty

**Sheepishly** - With embarrassment

**Intrigued** - A forceful attack against someone/something

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