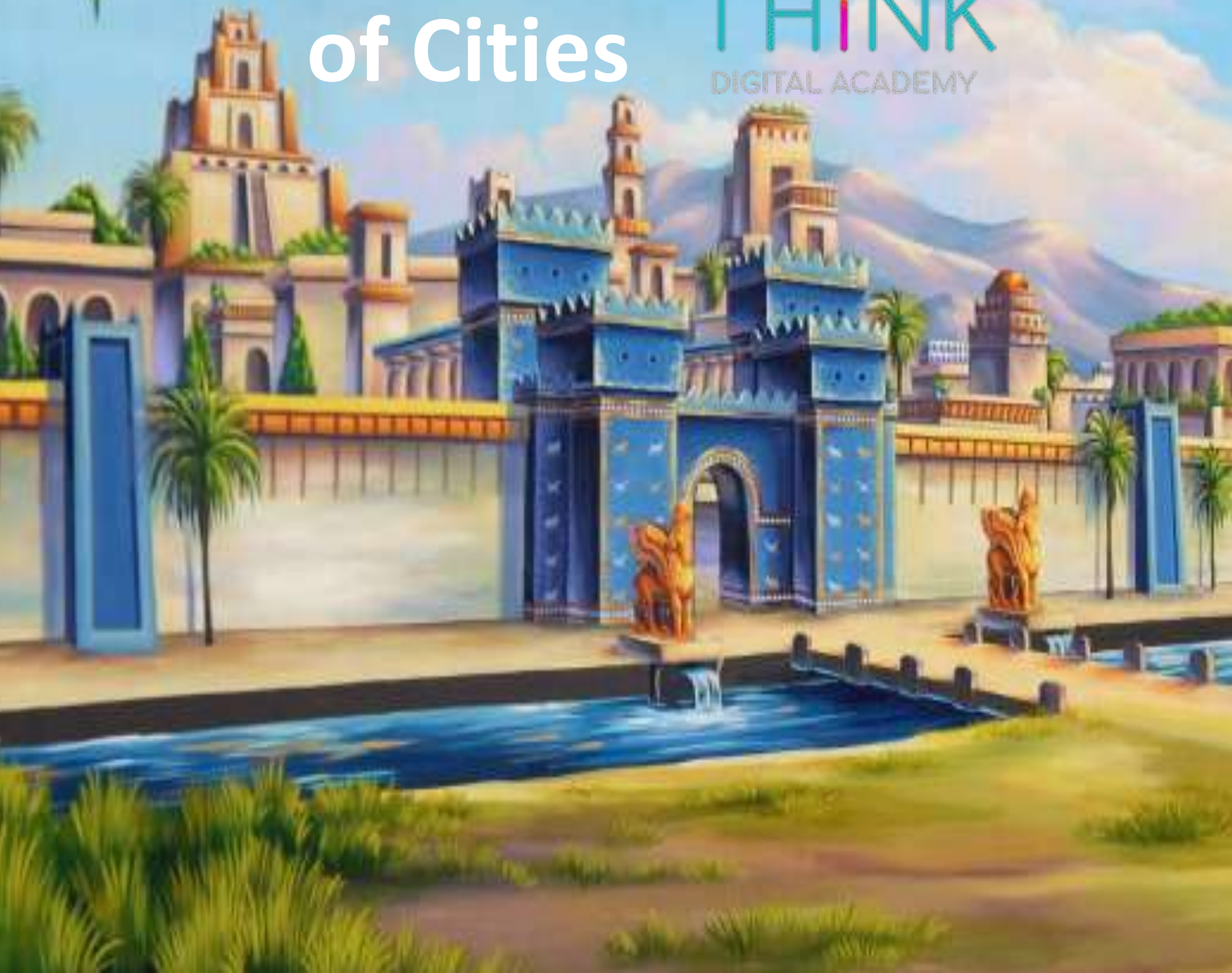


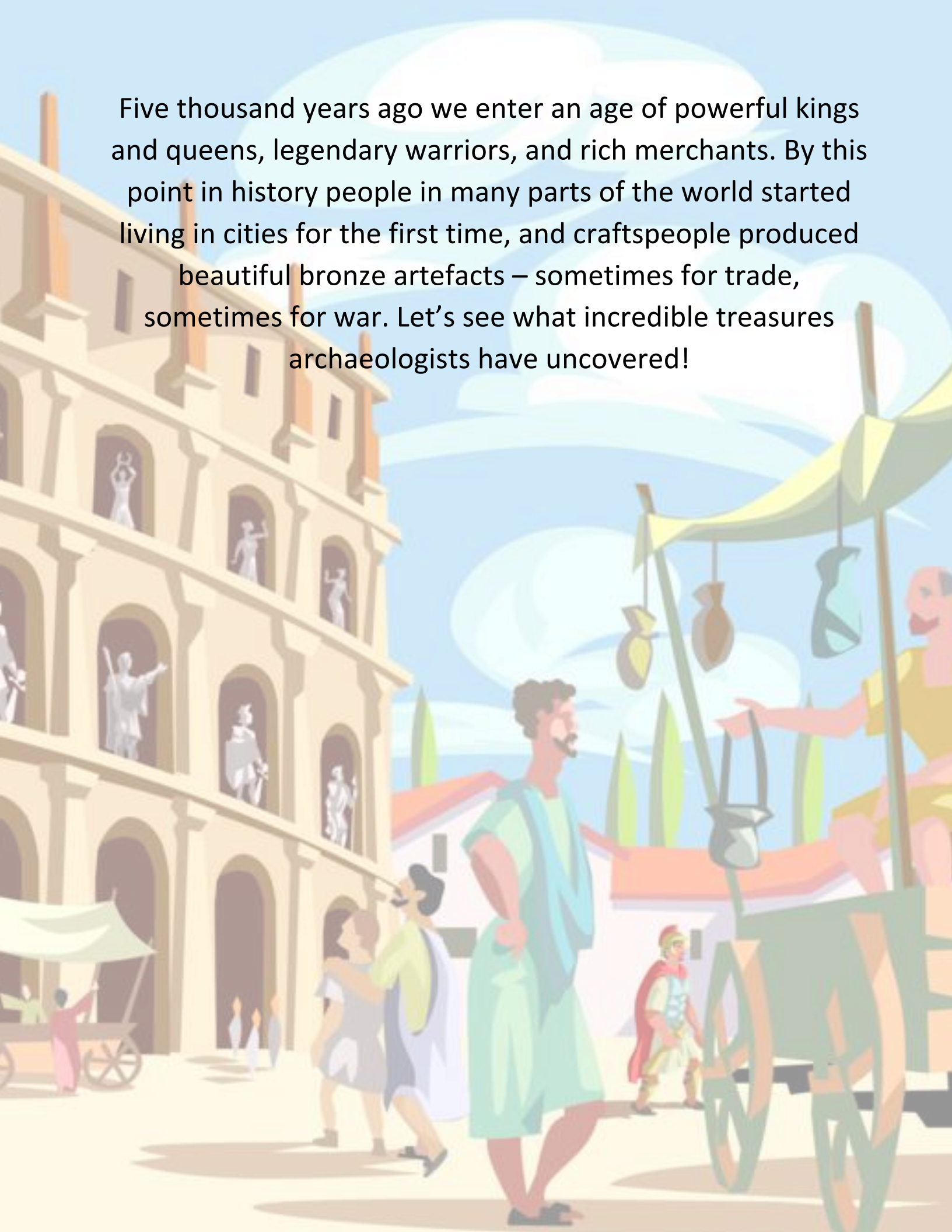


Tales of Ancient Worlds

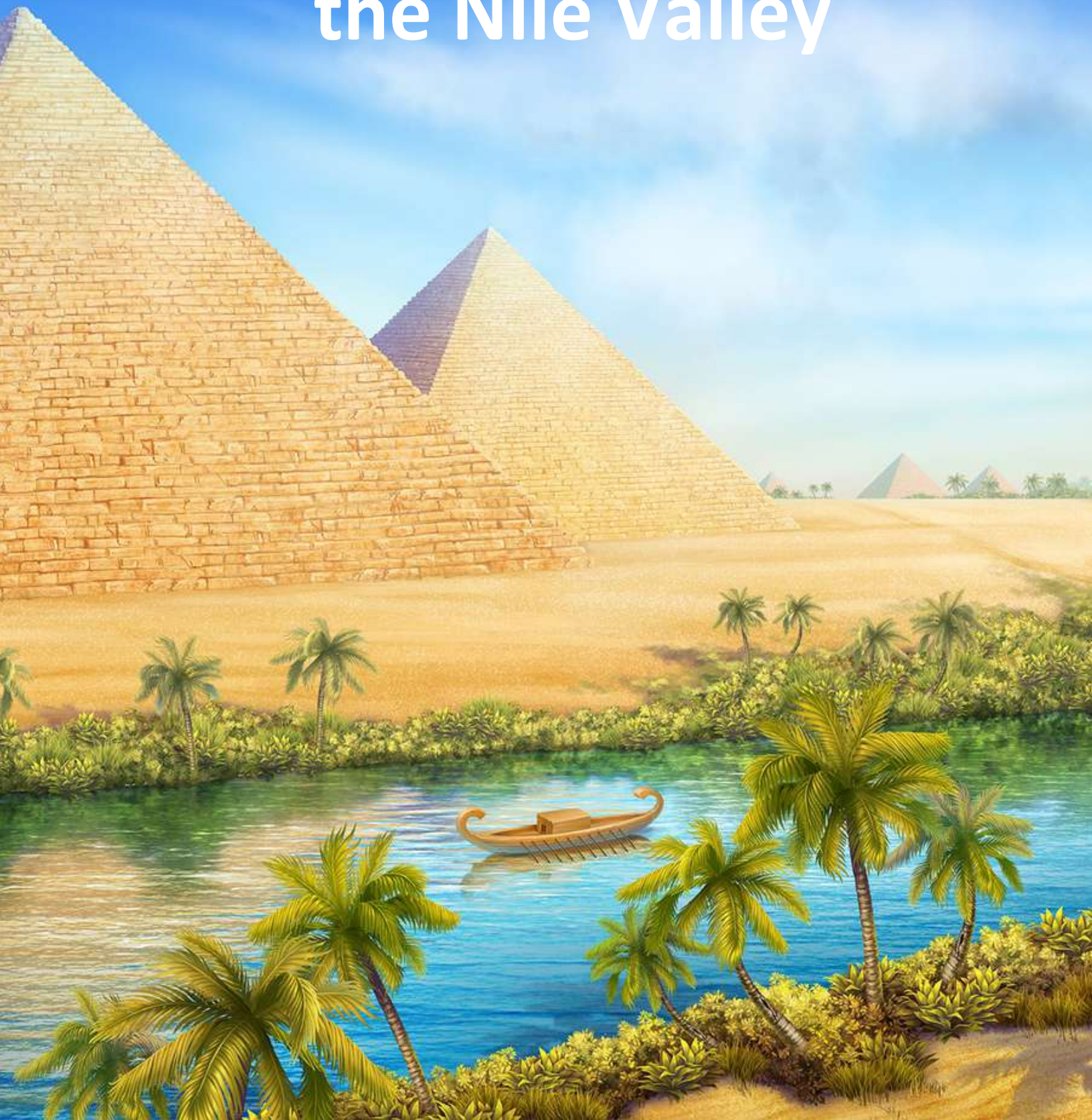
The Age of Cities



Five thousand years ago we enter an age of powerful kings and queens, legendary warriors, and rich merchants. By this point in history people in many parts of the world started living in cities for the first time, and craftspeople produced beautiful bronze artefacts – sometimes for trade, sometimes for war. Let's see what incredible treasures archaeologists have uncovered!



Take a Trip Down the Nile Valley



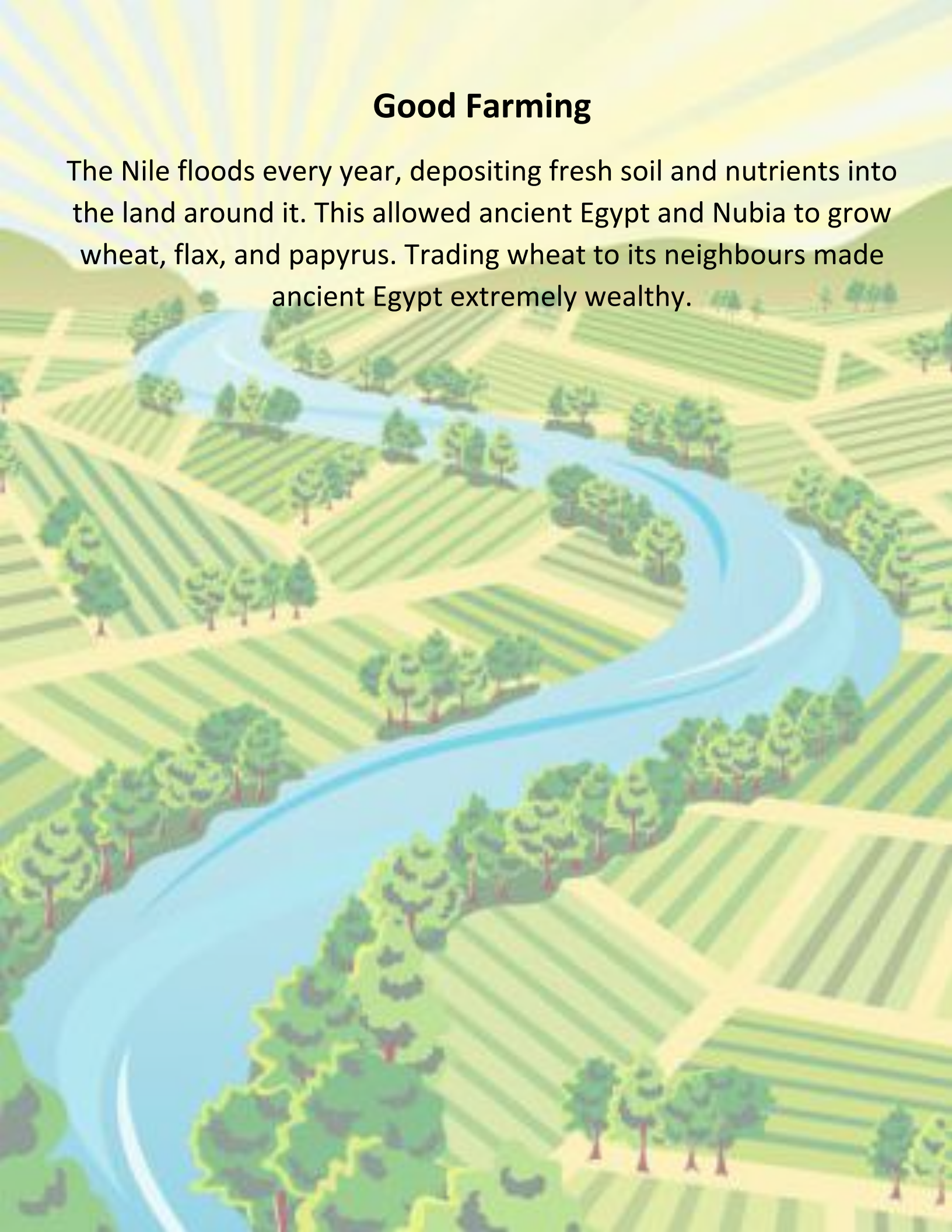
Let's make a cruise along the river Nile. Starting in the great lakes of West Africa you'll wind your way down towards the Mediterranean Sea.

On the way you'll pass hungry hippos, angry crocodiles and herds of elephants. You'll also journey through two of the most ancient kingdoms in the world; Egypt and Nubia.



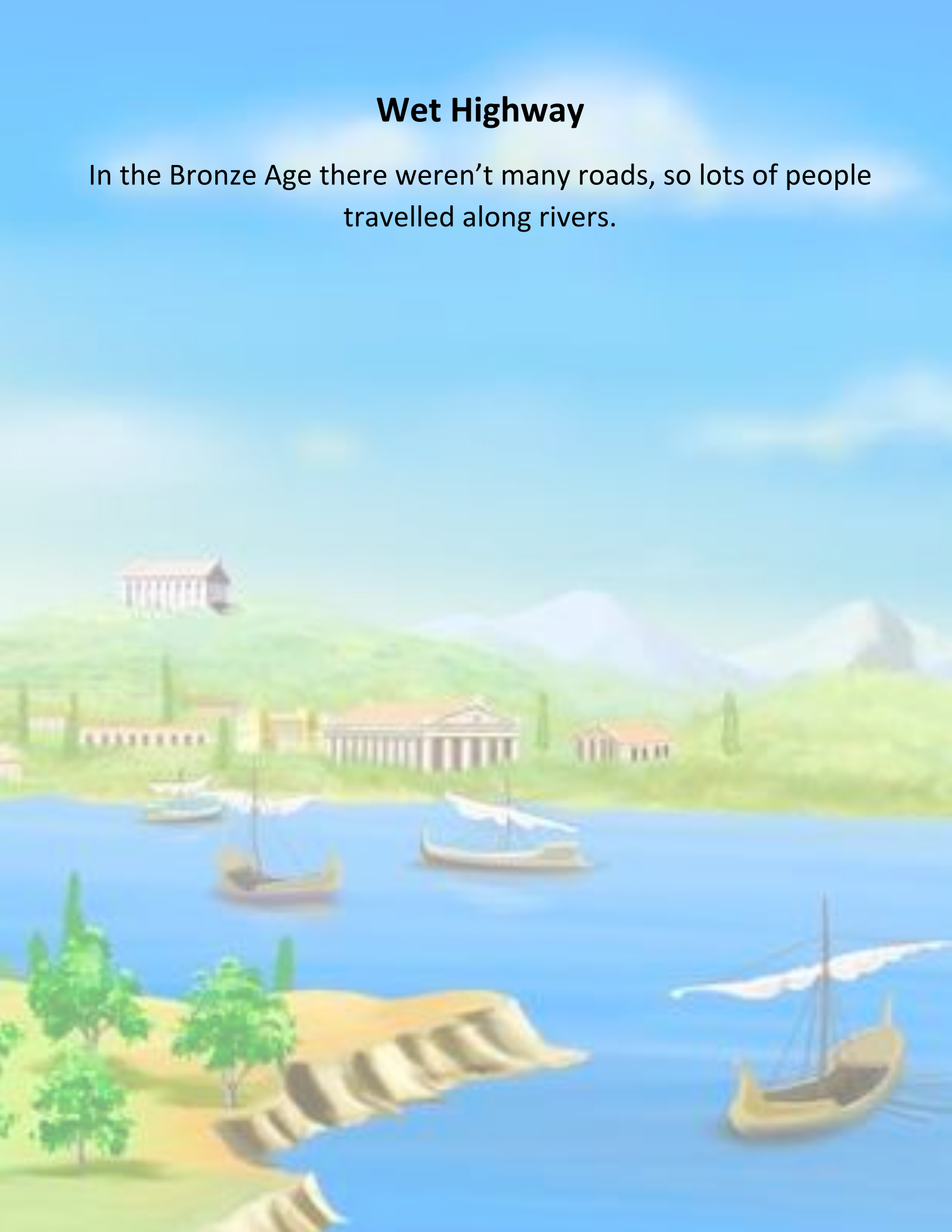
Good Farming

The Nile floods every year, depositing fresh soil and nutrients into the land around it. This allowed ancient Egypt and Nubia to grow wheat, flax, and papyrus. Trading wheat to its neighbours made ancient Egypt extremely wealthy.



Wet Highway

In the Bronze Age there weren't many roads, so lots of people travelled along rivers.



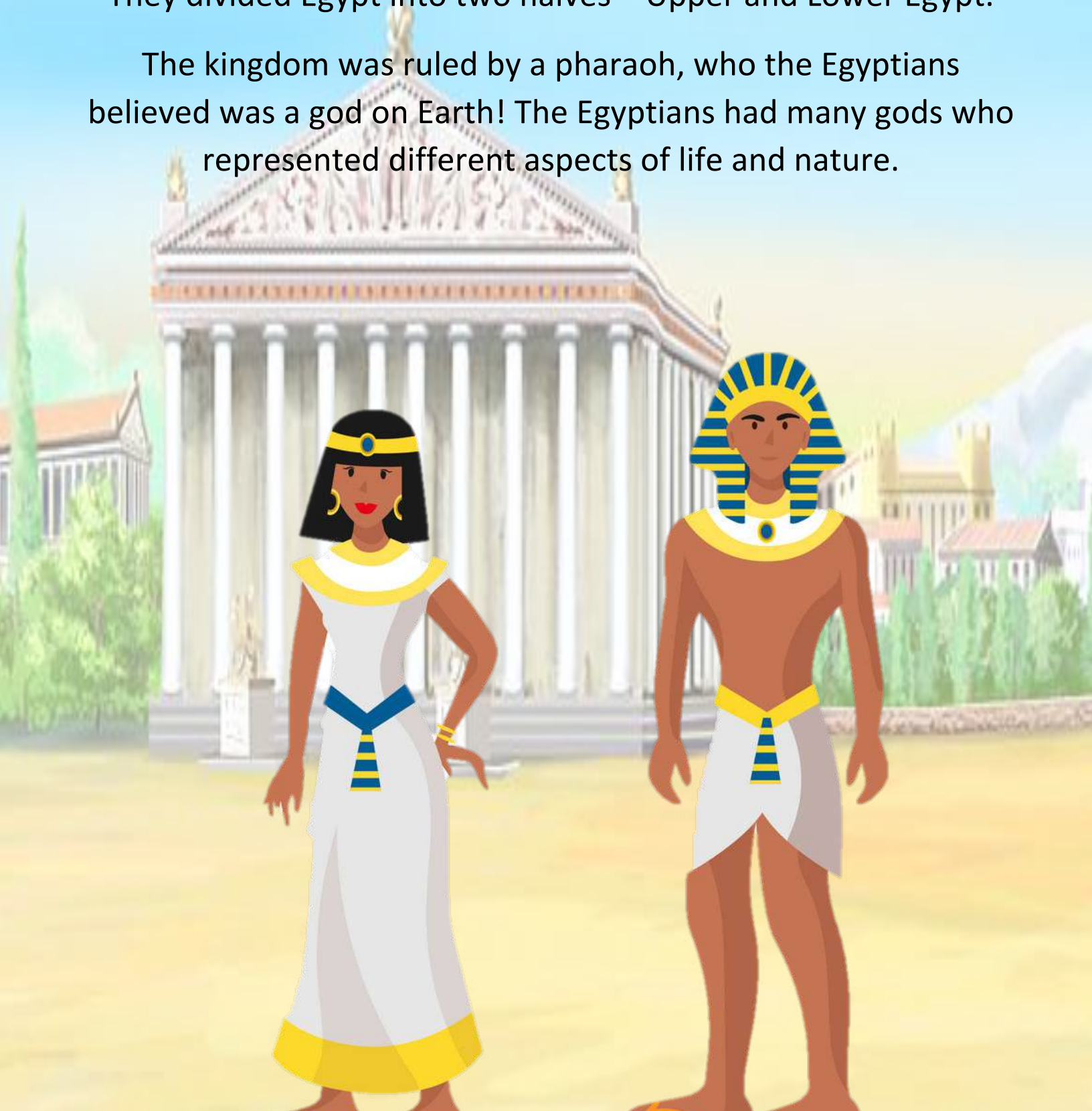
Merchants transported food and animals, pharaohs built luxurious boats capable of carrying lots of servants and craftspeople moved huge stones to build Egypt's great monuments.



The Ancient Egyptians

The ancient Egyptians were one of the world's oldest civilisations, becoming a unified country in around 3100 BCE. They divided Egypt into two halves – Upper and Lower Egypt.

The kingdom was ruled by a pharaoh, who the Egyptians believed was a god on Earth! The Egyptians had many gods who represented different aspects of life and nature.



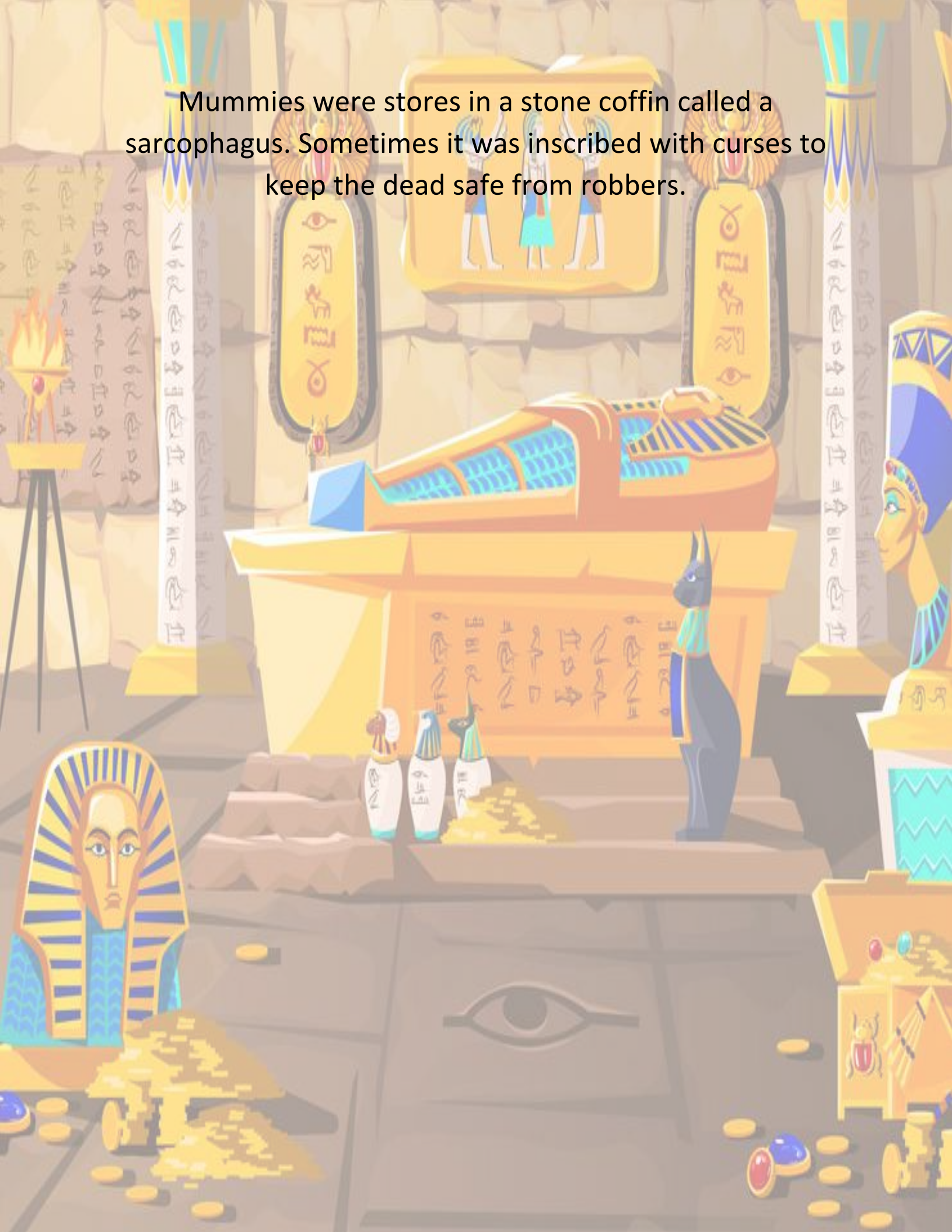
The Egyptians had one of the earliest writing systems in the world, called hieroglyphs. Instead of letters they drew small pictures.



Ramses II was one of the most famous Egyptian pharaohs. He was king for 66 years, built many huge monuments and fought a lot of battles!



Mummies were stored in a stone coffin called a sarcophagus. Sometimes it was inscribed with curses to keep the dead safe from robbers.



When Egyptians died, they performed a ritual called mummification. They removed the organs and wrapped up the body so it would last forever!



Early in Egyptian history the pharaohs built pyramids to protect their bodies for the afterlife. The biggest is the Great Pyramid of Giza.



Take Treasure of the Boy Pharaoh

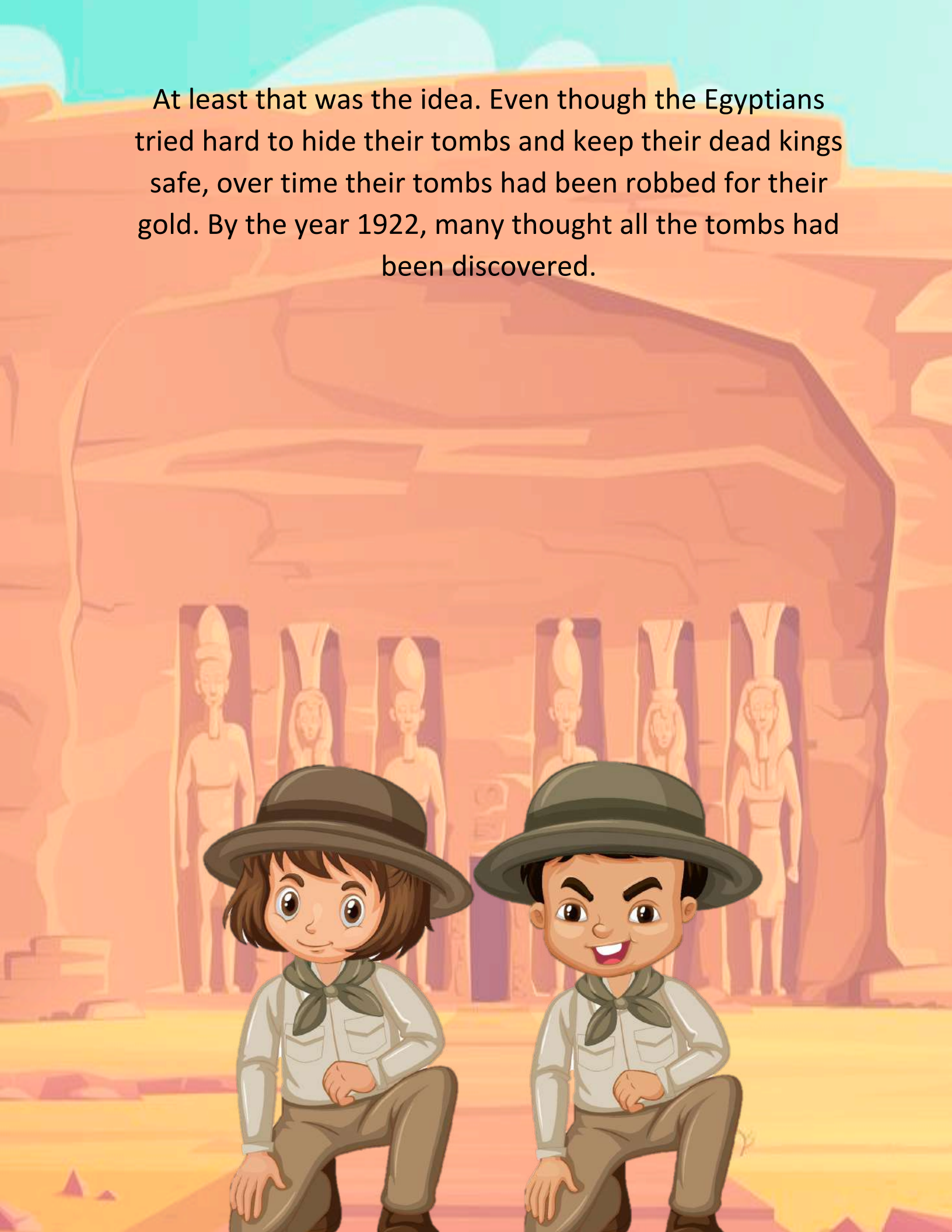


Three and a half thousand years ago the Valley of the Kings was the resting place of the Egyptian pharaohs. For 500 years the kings, queens, princes and princesses of ancient Egypt were buried here in elaborate tombs.

The walls of their graves were decorated with Egyptian gods and magical spells to guide them to the afterlife. Here, surrounded by the golden treasures, the royals lay for eternity.



At least that was the idea. Even though the Egyptians tried hard to hide their tombs and keep their dead kings safe, over time their tombs had been robbed for their gold. By the year 1922, many thought all the tombs had been discovered.



Underneath the hot desert sun Englishman Howard Carter had been digging in the valley for six years, hoping to find a tomb that hadn't been robbed. He had found nothing and time was running out. He only had the money to dig this one last year.



One day, a young Egyptian boy was bringing water to the diggers when he tripped and fell over a stone. He probably thought he was in trouble for spilling everyone's drink, but he was about to change history ...

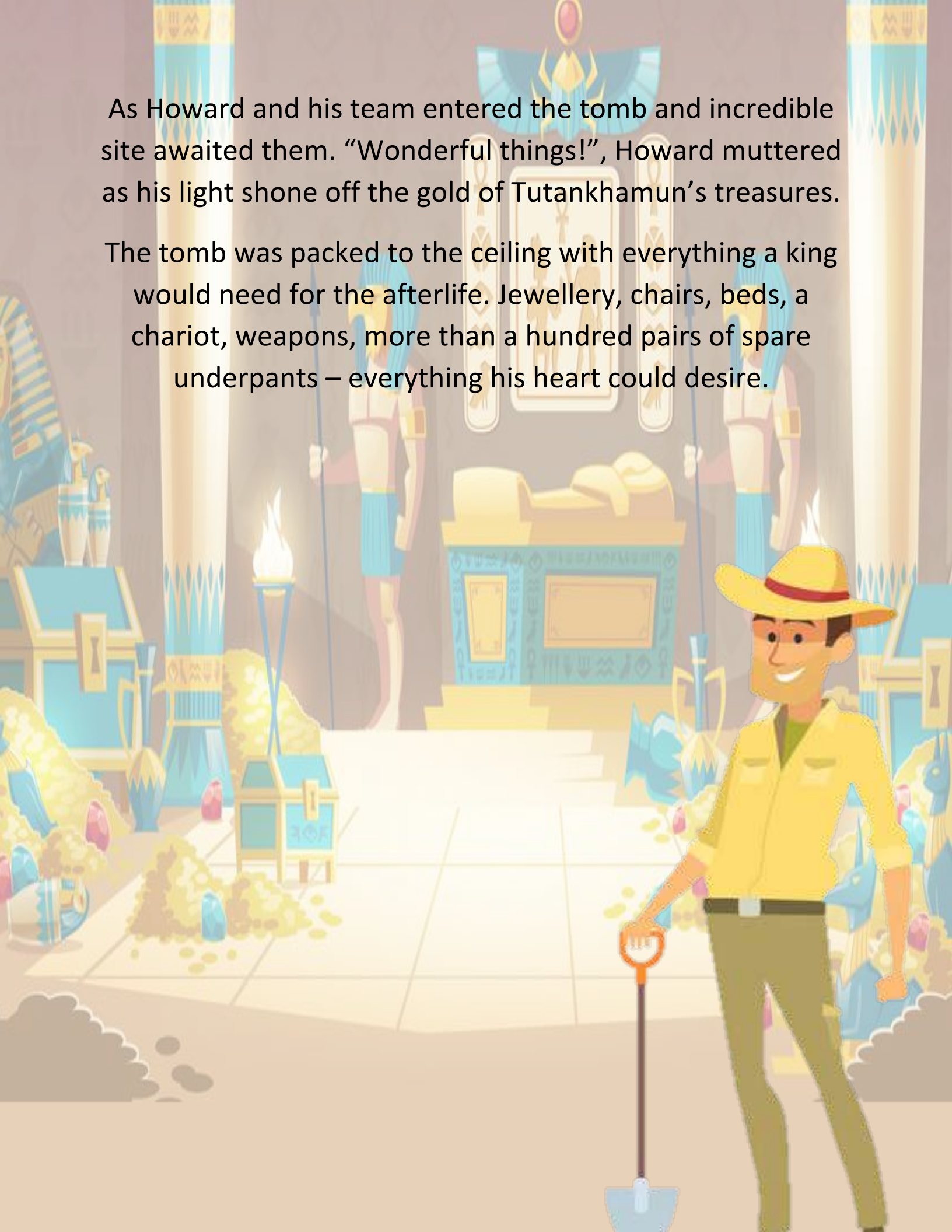


As they cleared the rubble around the rock, they discovered a staircase heading down into the ground. At the bottom of the stairs, Howard was to make the discovery of his lifetime. The tomb of Tutankhamun!

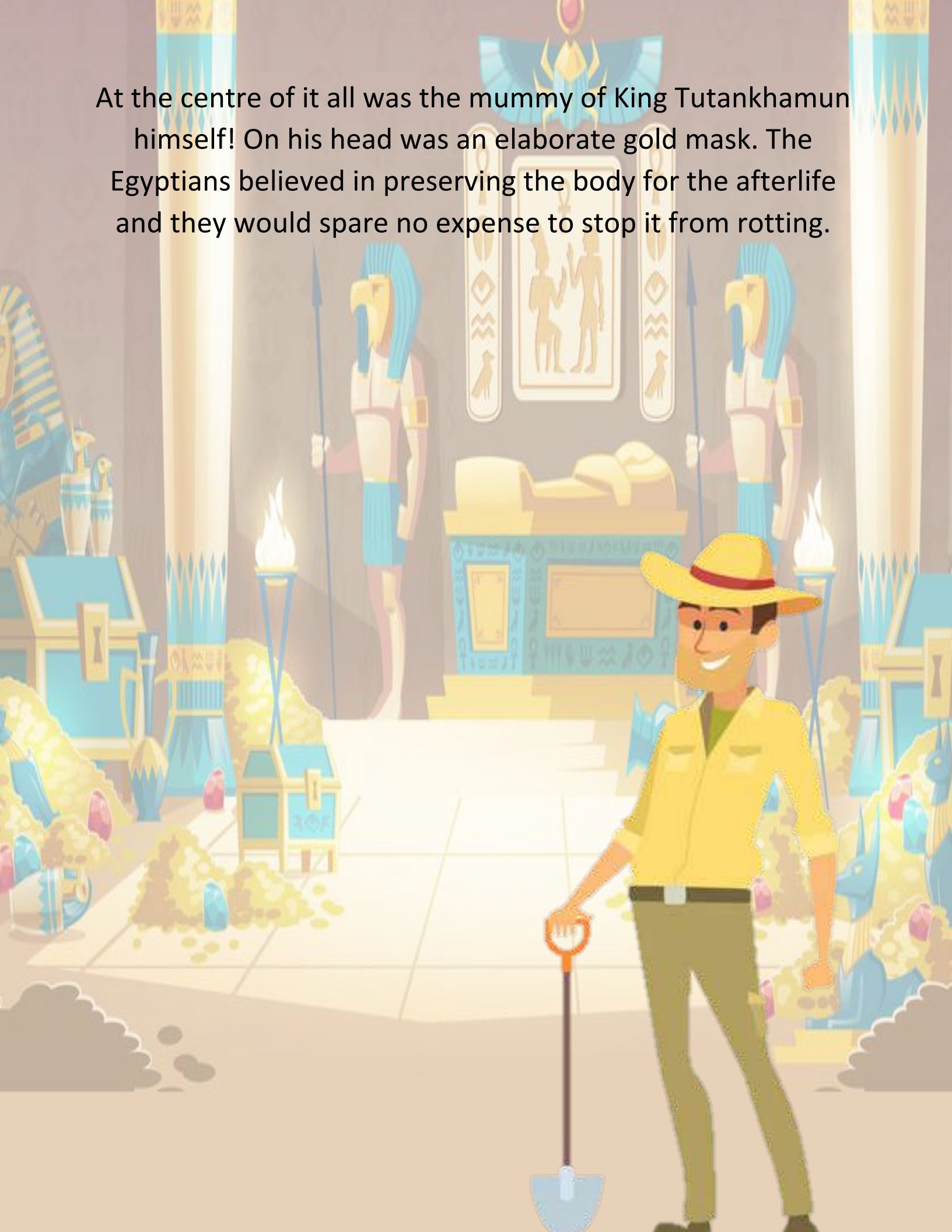


As Howard and his team entered the tomb and incredible site awaited them. “Wonderful things!”, Howard muttered as his light shone off the gold of Tutankhamun’s treasures.

The tomb was packed to the ceiling with everything a king would need for the afterlife. Jewellery, chairs, beds, a chariot, weapons, more than a hundred pairs of spare underpants – everything his heart could desire.



At the centre of it all was the mummy of King Tutankhamun himself! On his head was an elaborate gold mask. The Egyptians believed in preserving the body for the afterlife and they would spare no expense to stop it from rotting.



The process took 70 days. First, they would remove all your organs. They would scoop your brain out of your nose using a little hook!



All of these organs would be placed in little jars. Only your heart would be left in place – as ancient Egyptians believed this was the essential part of your being and must remain.



As Howard examined the body of the pharaoh he realised the king was very young. Tutankhamun was only nine years old when he became king but died when he was 18. How the boy king died has puzzled archaeologists for a hundred years.

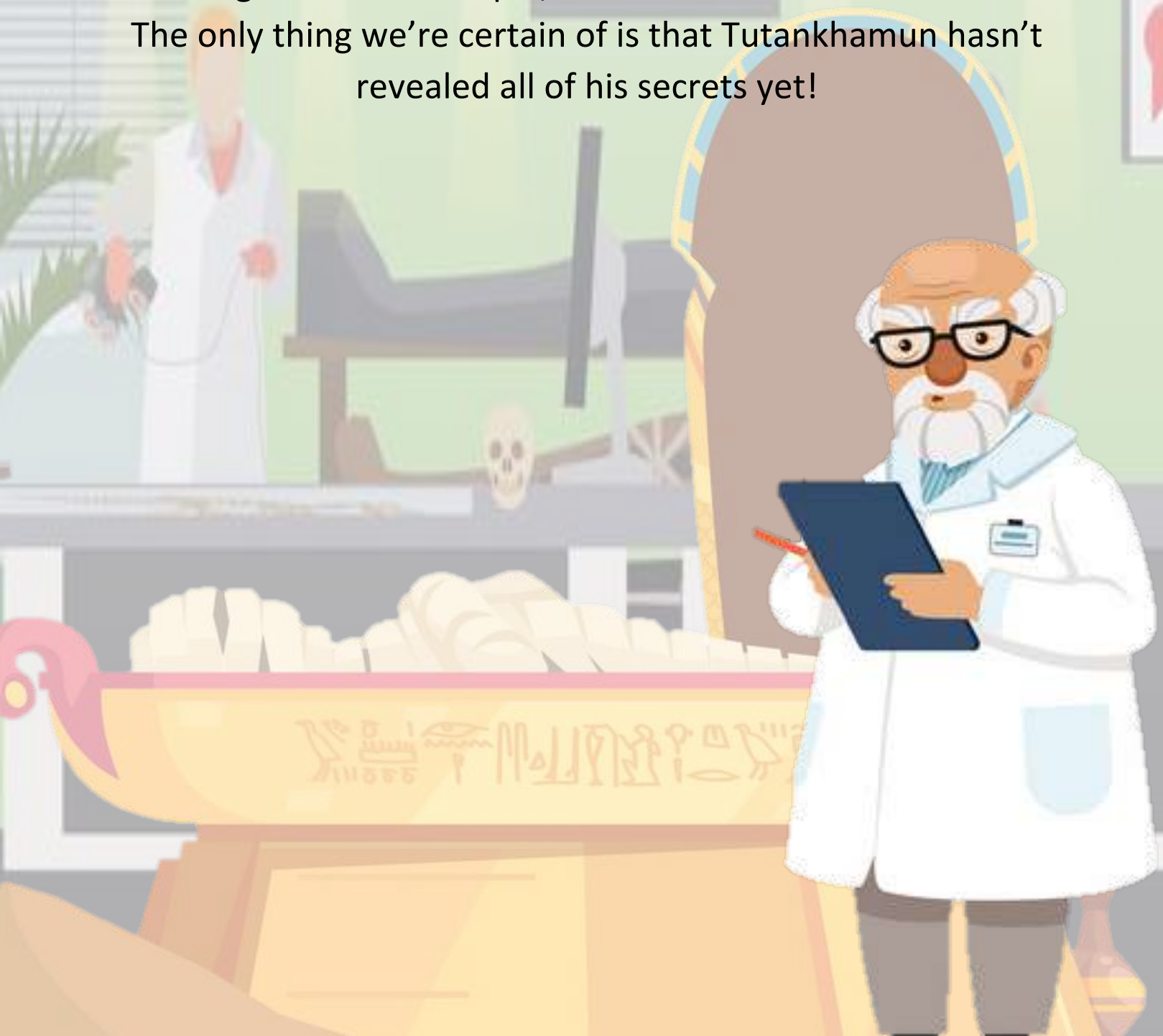


Some wondered if he fell off a chariot. Egyptian kings often rode chariots when they were hunting or fighting a battle. They were extremely fast and dangerous. X-rays revealed that King Tut had an injury to the back of the head. A new theory emerged – maybe he was murdered! As it turned out, this particular injury was probably the result of someone clumsy unwrapping his mummy.

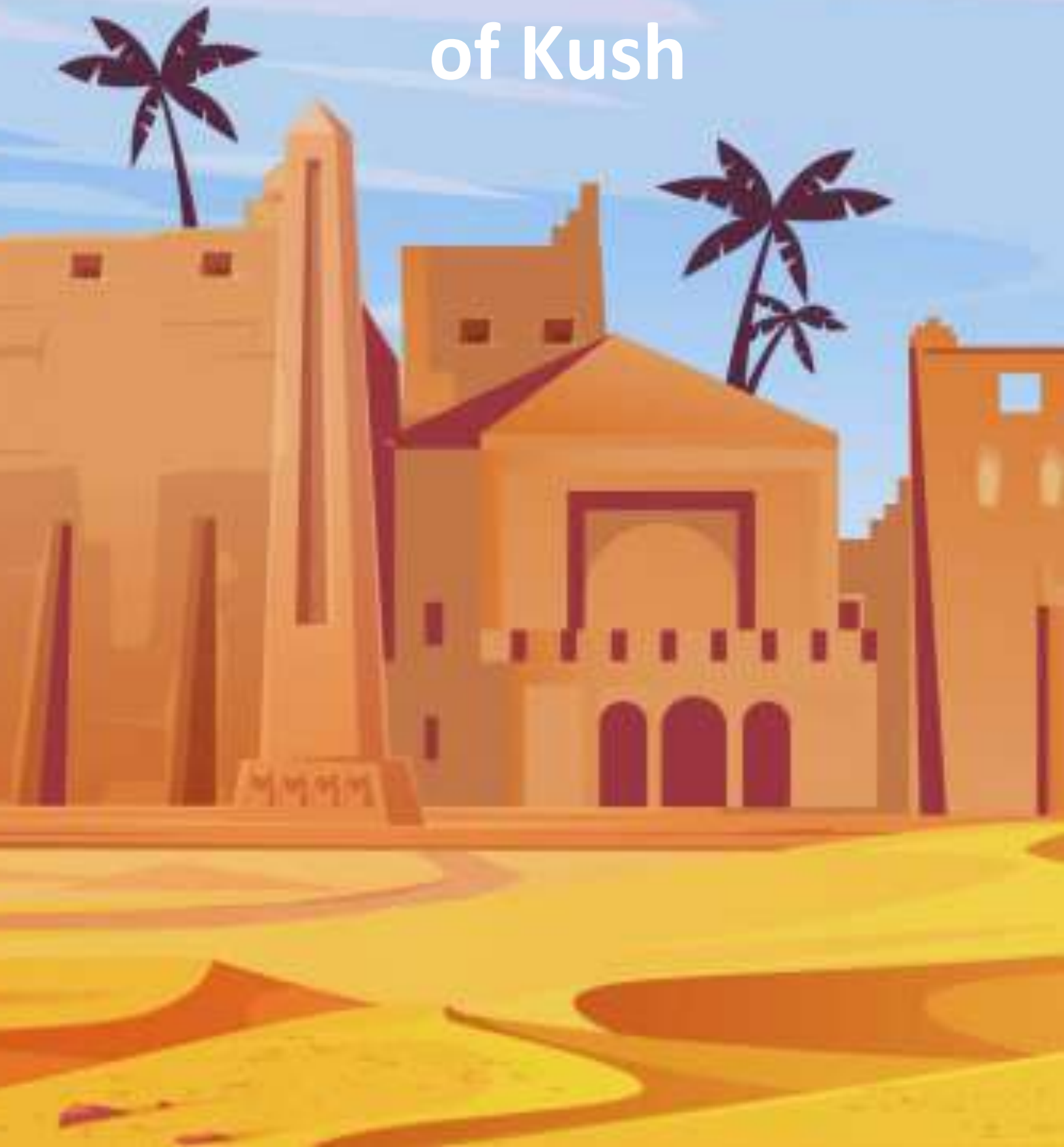


To try to settle the debate Egyptian archaeologists Zahi Hawass put Tutankhamun's body through a CT scanner. This huge round machine uses magnets to see right through your body. It revealed Tut had an injured leg.

Perhaps he did fall off his chariot after all? Walking sticks found in his tomb also suggest he struggled to walk. And according to a blood sample, he could have died from malaria. The only thing we're certain of is that Tutankhamun hasn't revealed all of his secrets yet!



The Kingdom of Kush



As you head south on the great river Nile, past the Egyptian pyramids, past the Valley of the Kings and over five sets of wild rapids, you'll eventually reach the ancient Kingdom of Kush, a place with an unparalleled collection of famous buildings.



The capital of Kush was the city of Meroe. From here great Kings, called Qore, ruled the kingdom. They traded goods with Egypt, the Mediterranean and the heart of Africa.



As they were Egypt's neighbour for thousands of years, many of their beliefs were the same. They worshipped some of the same gods, such as Isis, the goddess of life and the Moon. Kush and Egypt were so close that they were sometimes ruled by the same pharaoh, like Taharqa, the statue on the right, who was Qore of Kush and pharaoh of Egypt from 690 BCE.



The Kings of Kush loved pyramids so much that they built more than the Egyptians, in fact more than anyone else in the world. There are over 200 pyramids in Meroe alone!



Unlike in Egypt, the king was not buried inside the pyramid, but underneath it in a tomb. So, the pyramids in Meroe are kind of like the world's biggest grave stones.



In the 19th century, disaster struck the once-great kingdom. Just like with the Valley of the Kings, people tried to rob the ancient pyramids of Kush to steal the Qores' riches.



In 1834, the Italian treasure hunter, Giuseppe Ferlini found gold underneath the pyramids. He was worried that other people would discover the treasure too, so in an attempt to hide the treasure from others, he blew up the pyramids with dynamite! If you visit Meroe now, you'll see that many pyramids have been blasted in half.



Giuseppe's actions were despicable, but he's not the only person to have robbed tombs. It's an important question archaeologists need to ask themselves ... it is ever ok to remove items from a tomb?



The Sleeping Army



The year was 1974, and it was a hot and dry summer in China – the country was experiencing a terrible drought. Archaeologist Zhao Kangmin was sitting in his office when the phone rang. Farmers had been digging a deep well to try and get some desperately needed water when they unearthed some terracotta heads. Zhao was intrigued.

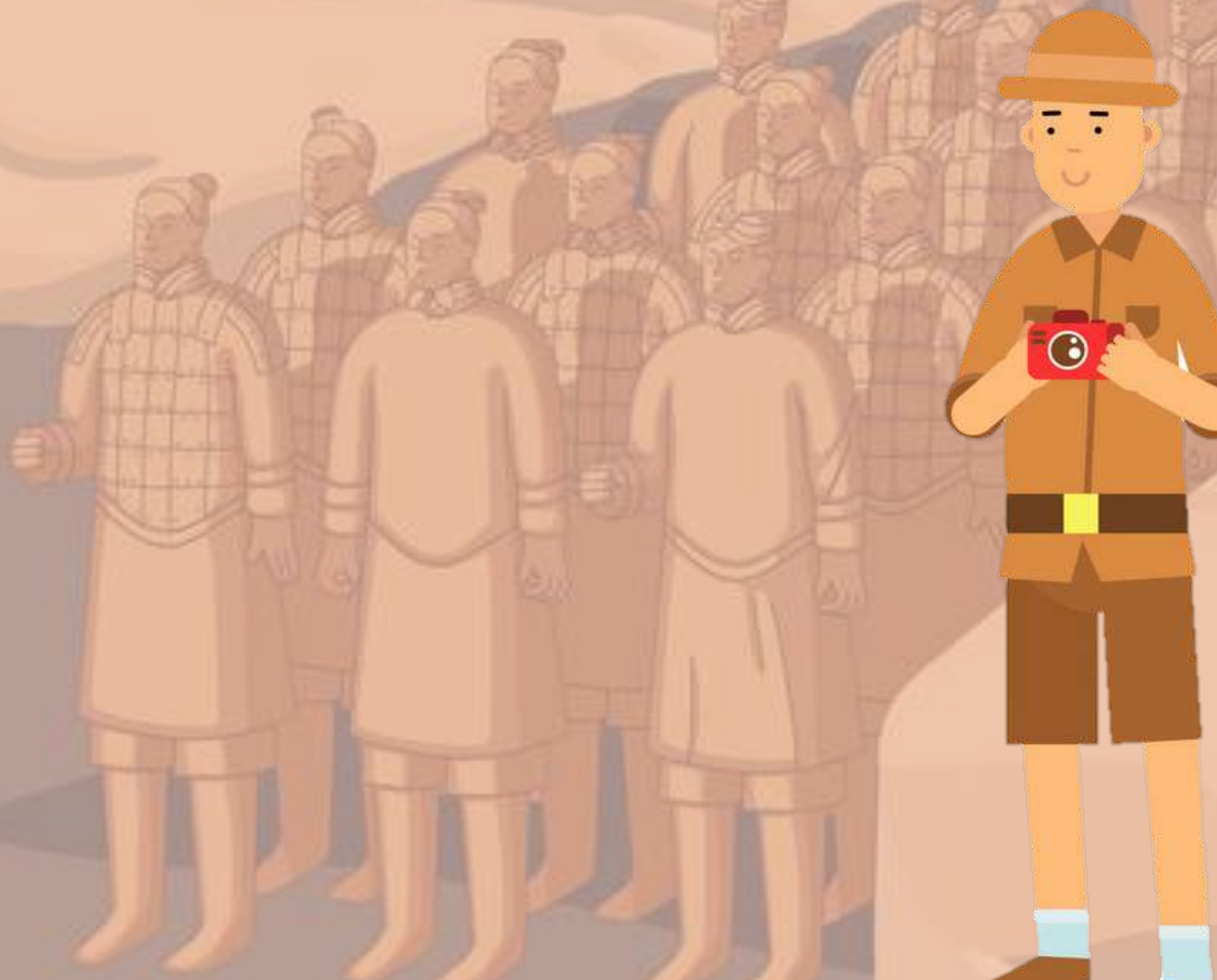


These farmers lived in Xi'an, in the shadow of one of China's most important ancient monuments, the tomb of the first emperor, Qin. Zhao Kangmin had dug in the region before and found two statues of kneeling crossbowmen.



He headed out to see what the farmers had discovered, but even with his knowledge of the area he would be astounded at what they had uncovered – the Terracotta Army!

Archaeologists examined the heads and decided to expand the excavation. As their shovels cleared the dry earth they found more. Not just one or two soldiers but hundreds! As it stands today, archaeologists have unearthed over 1,900 terracotta soldiers and they're still going. There may be as many as 7000 terracotta soldiers buried in X'an.



Archaeologists digging around the soldiers have found terracotta representations of all aspects of life during Emperor Qin's reign. Government songs and dancing acrobats to entertain the emperor when he was bored. Clearly Emperor Qin was determined that his life on Earth was carried forward into the afterlife.



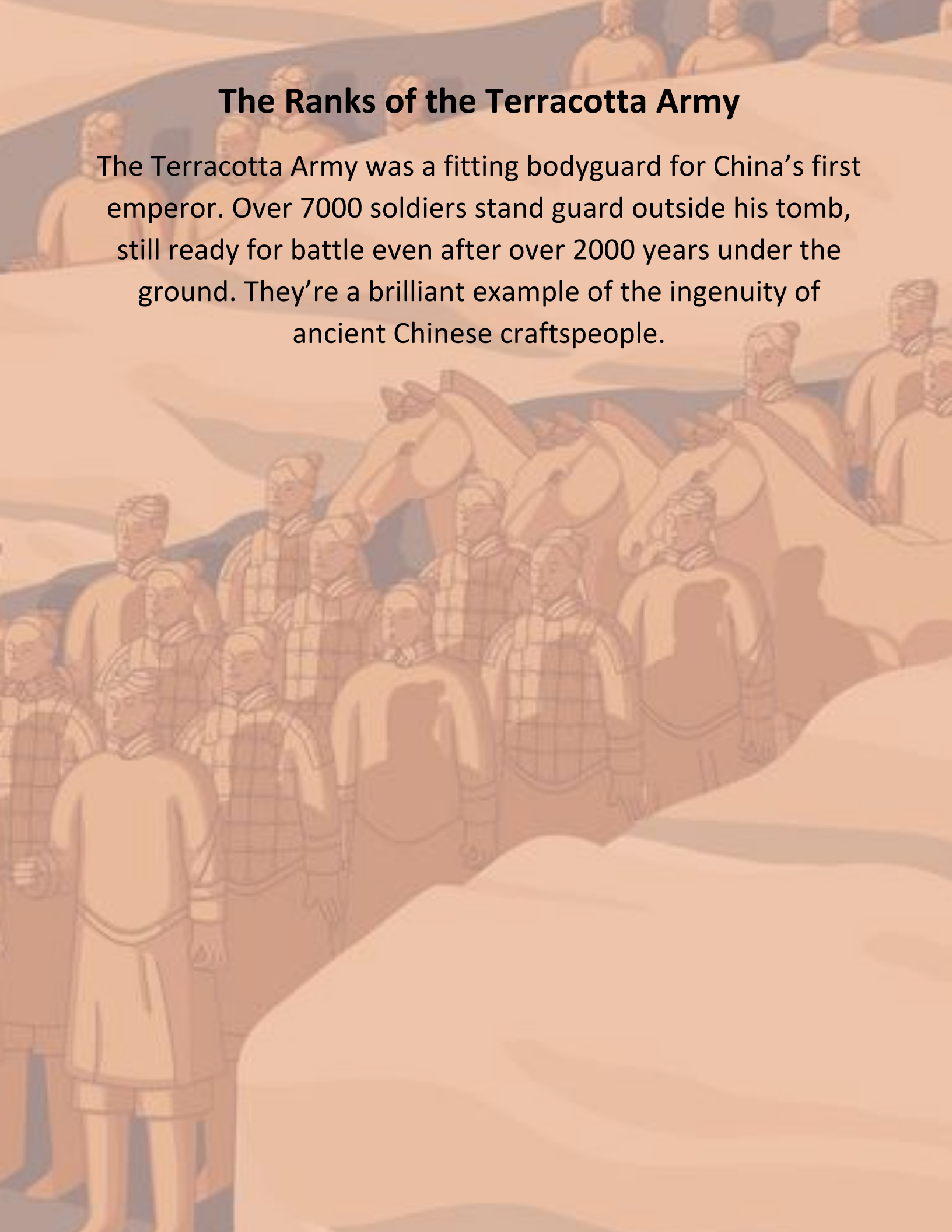
According to legend, he was so concerned about death that he sent thousands of youngsters on a mission to find herbs of immortality that lay on three islands to the east of China.

Unfortunately for the emperor there are no herbs of immortality, and in the year 210 BCE he was laid to rest with his terracotta world.



The Ranks of the Terracotta Army

The Terracotta Army was a fitting bodyguard for China's first emperor. Over 7000 soldiers stand guard outside his tomb, still ready for battle even after over 2000 years under the ground. They're a brilliant example of the ingenuity of ancient Chinese craftspeople.



Although all the soldiers appear unique, they were actually mass-produced. By making the soldiers in different pieces, the craftsmen could mix and match parts, giving the impression that each soldier was crafted individually. Each part was stamped with the name of the person who made it, to help track any mistakes.



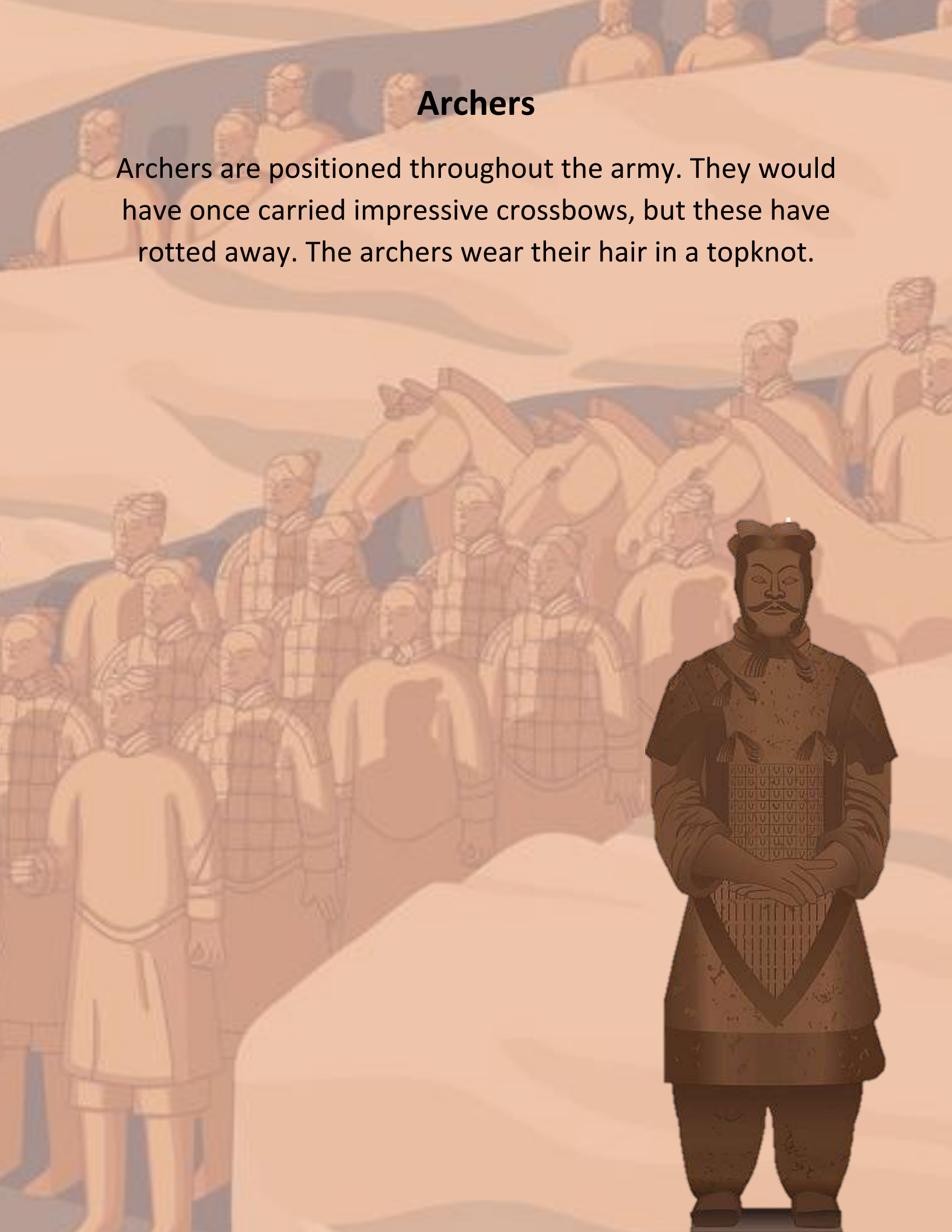
Paint Job

Although they all appear to be the brown colour of terracotta now, if you look closely, you can still see traces of paint on the soldiers. When they were finished, seeing the 7000 soldiers lined up in their bright red uniforms must have been an incredible sight.



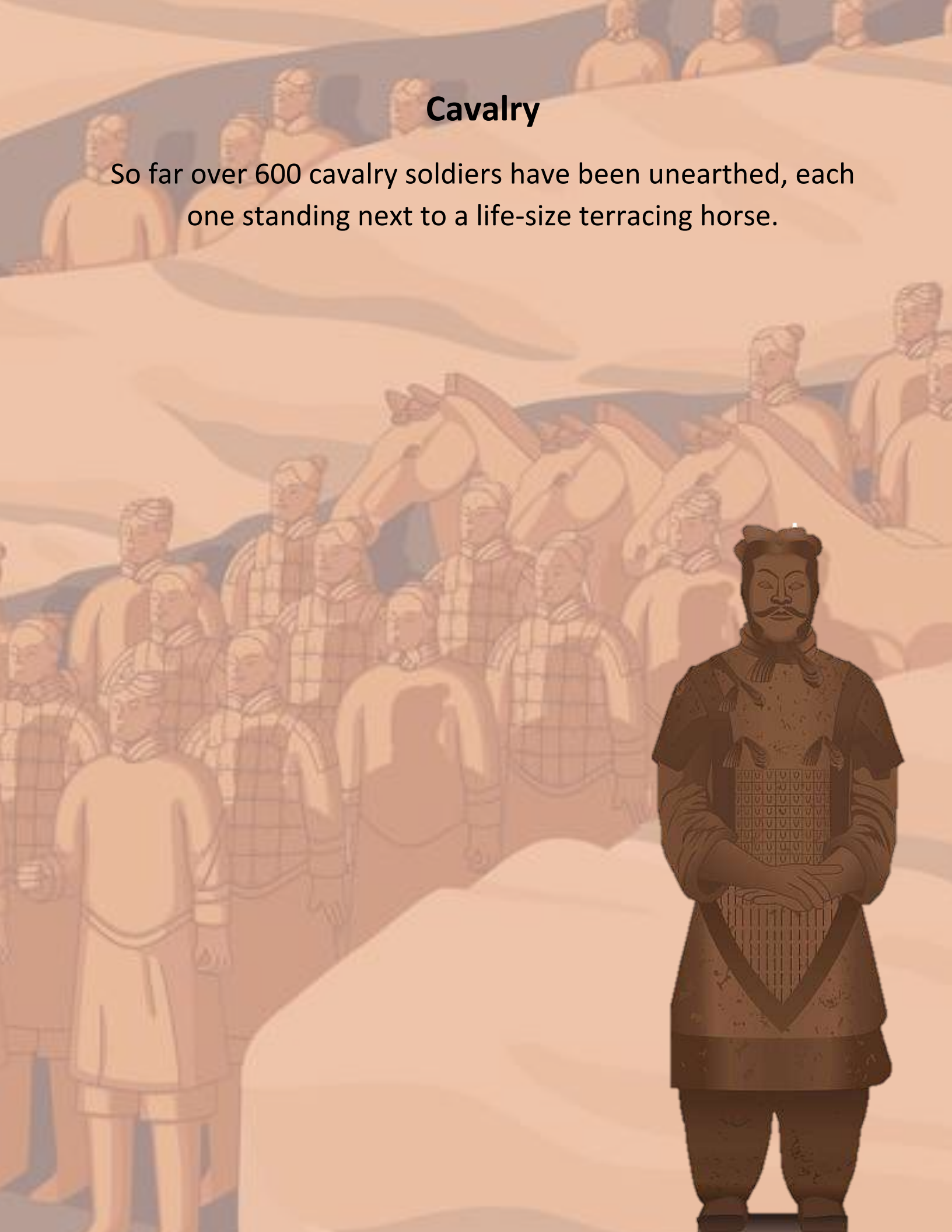
Archers

Archers are positioned throughout the army. They would have once carried impressive crossbows, but these have rotted away. The archers wear their hair in a topknot.



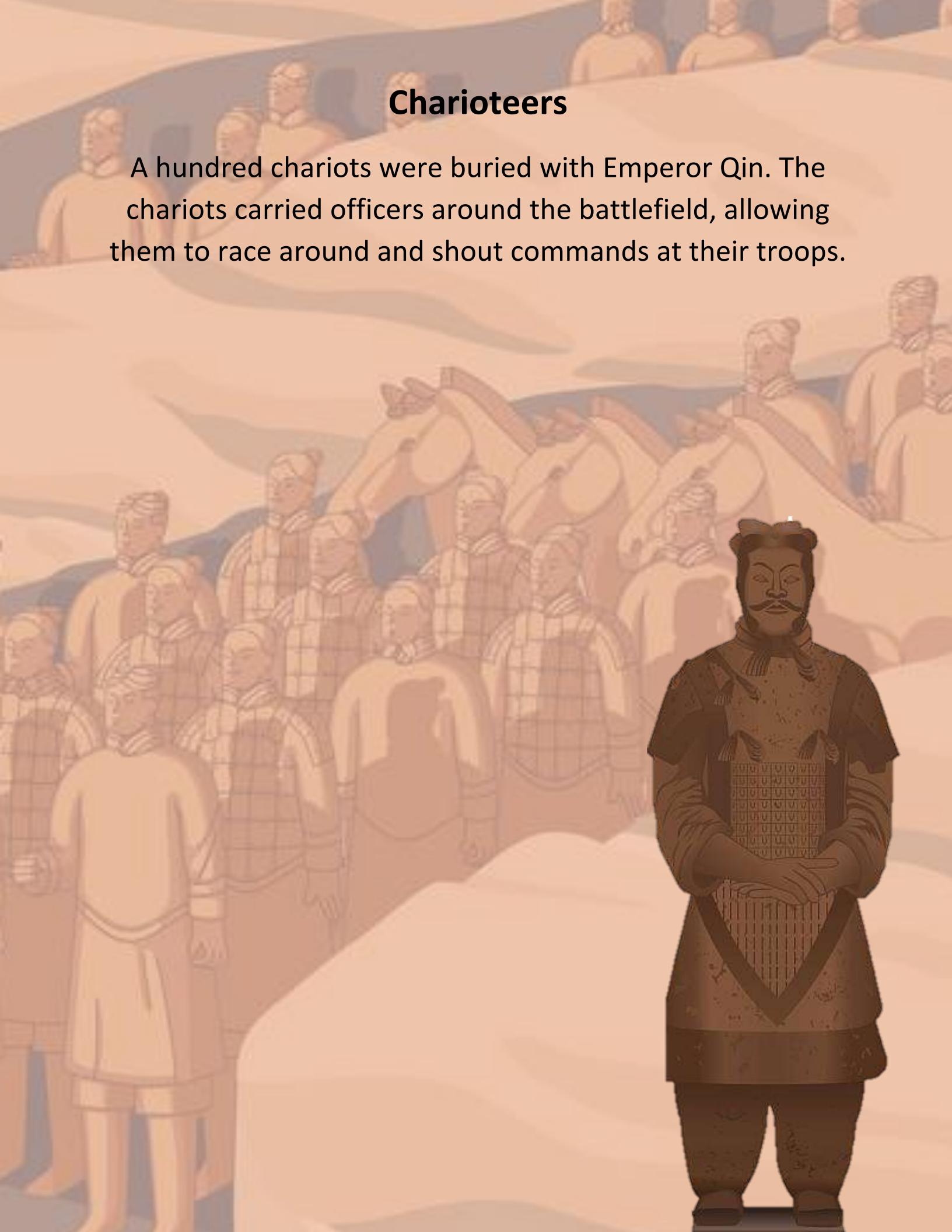
Cavalry

So far over 600 cavalry soldiers have been unearthed, each one standing next to a life-size terracing horse.



Charioteers

A hundred chariots were buried with Emperor Qin. The chariots carried officers around the battlefield, allowing them to race around and shout commands at their troops.



Generals

Officers that were buried in the tomb were made slightly taller than regular soldiers, with generals being the tallest of them all. (Though surely there were some short generals in real life)





THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY

