

公众号：W

National Geographic Readers: Mummies

By: Elizabeth Carney

Mummies provide a ghoulish yet fascinating window on the past of cultures worldwide.

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Age Range	Length	Lexile [®] Measure	AR Level

Mummies



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Whoa, Mummy!

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A farmer is working in swampy land. His shovel hits something hard. He uncovers a blackened body.

It has hair, teeth, even fingerprints.
The farmer calls the police.
It looks like the person died recently.
But the body is over two thousand years old! It's a mummy!



The Grauballe Man, found in a swampy bog



Mummy Making

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When something dies, it decays. Insects, wild animals, and bacteria eat parts of the body.



A mummy is a dead body that doesn't decay.

A mummy can be made in two ways.

People can use bacteria-killing chemicals to make mummies.

Or, if a body is in the right place at the right time, it can also become a mummy naturally. In those places, any dead body might become a mummy!



Word Wrap

BACTERIA: Tiny living things that can only be seen through a microscope.

DECAY: To rot or break down.

Natural Mummies



A bog mummy known as the Lindow Man



What do you call a mummy who eats cookies in bed?

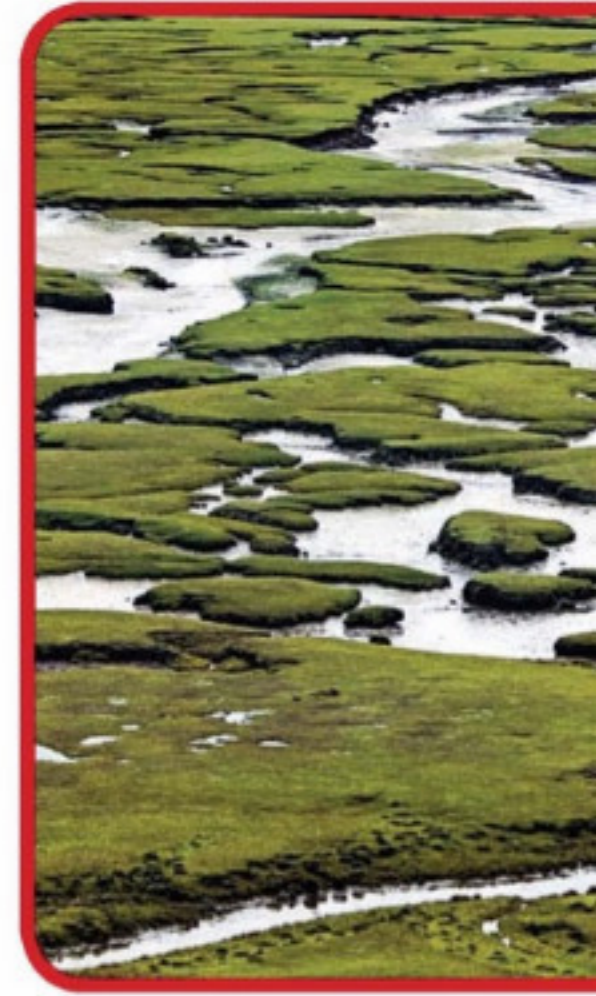
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Body-eating bacteria do not grow well in places that are very cold. Or in places that are hot and dry. Or in places called bogs. People have found mummies on frosty mountaintops and in hot deserts.

Bogs are wet, swamp-like places. Bog mummies can be so well kept that scientists could tell one ancient man used hair gel!



Word Wrap

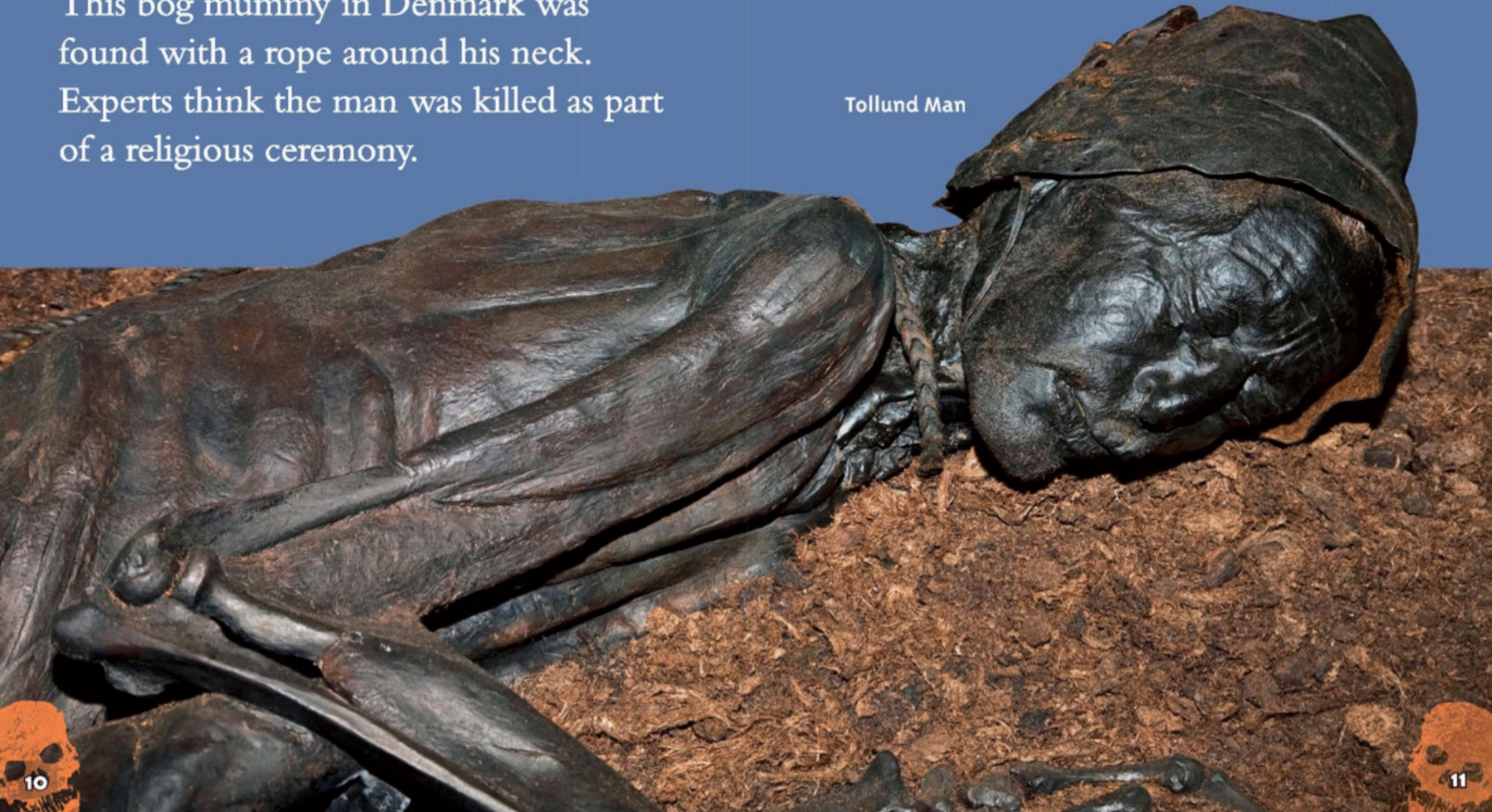
BOGS: Swampy areas where special mosses grow. The plants make the area a tough place for bacteria to live.

The man's face looks like he's sleeping.
But he didn't die peacefully.

This bog mummy in Denmark was
found with a rope around his neck.
Experts think the man was killed as part
of a religious ceremony.

The bits of his last meal, vegetable
soup eaten 2,300 years ago, are
still in his stomach.

Tollund Man





Ötzi Man

In 1991, two hikers found a man frozen in the mountains between Italy and Austria. A 5,300-year-old murder mystery! The mummy, nicknamed Ötzi (OOT-zee), is one of the oldest mummies ever found.

He wears a cape and leather shoes. But when scientists took a closer look at Ötzi's body, they found a surprise. A stone arrowhead was stuck in his shoulder. Ötzi had been shot in the back! Who killed Ötzi over five thousand years ago and why? So far the case has gone cold!



Ötzi as he might have looked

Man-made Mummies

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For thousands of years, people have made mummies. Many cultures believed that a person's spirit lives on after death.

They thought spirits might need things in the next life. That's why mummies were sometimes buried with weapons, jewelry, food, or even mummies of favorite pets.

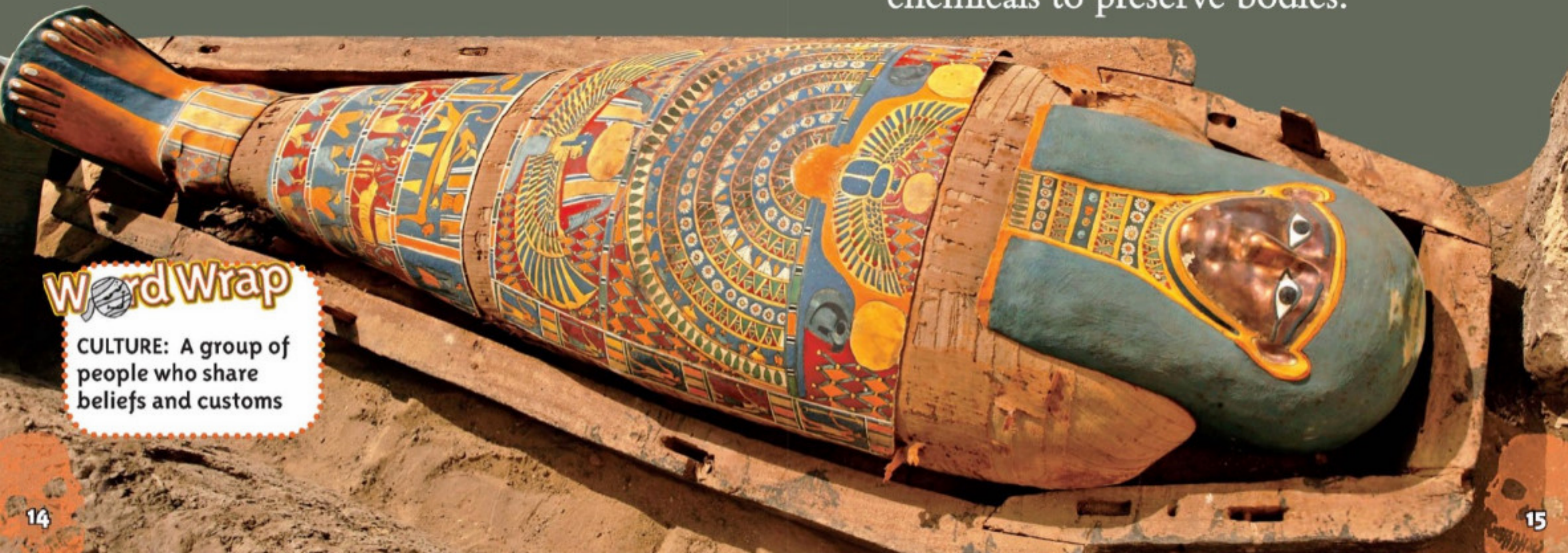
Different cultures had their own ways of making mummies. Some dried the bodies with sand or smoke. Others used chemicals to preserve bodies.



Why did the mummy call a doctor?



Because he was coffin.



Word Wrap

CULTURE: A group of people who share beliefs and customs



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The Chinchorros mummified everyone who died, from babies to the oldest adults. They covered their mummies' faces with clay masks. Then the mummies were painted to make them black and shiny.

The culture disappeared around 3,000 years ago. These strange mummies were all that was left behind.

Word Wrap

MUMMIFY: To treat a dead body so that it doesn't break down



The first people to make mummies may have been the Chinchorros.

Their mummies are 7,000 years old! They are the oldest man-made mummies ever found.

How to Make a Mummy

公众号: Wecan



Workers remove organs such as the lungs and liver.



Mummy makers take out the brain through the nose with a large hook.



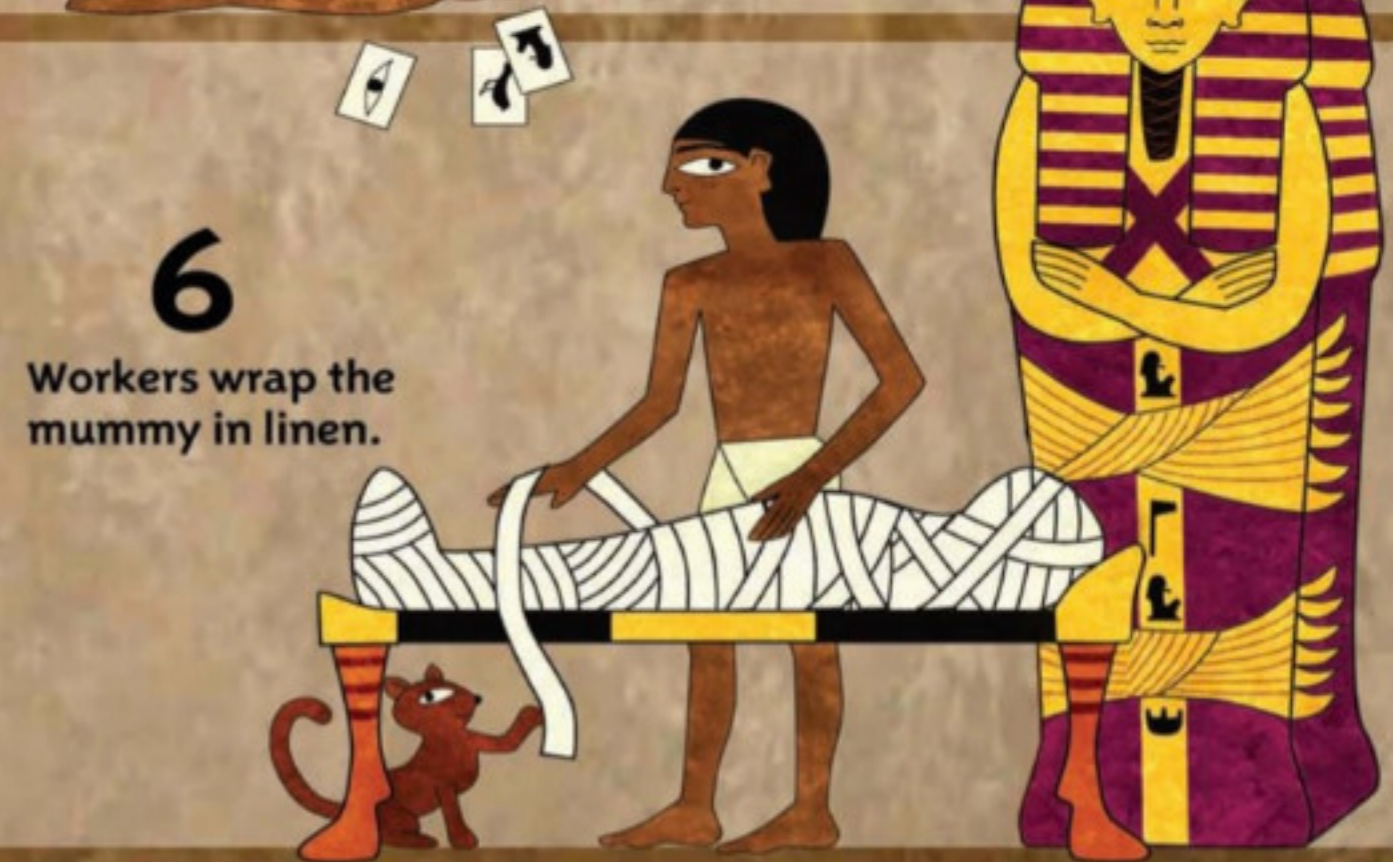
Workers wash the body and cover it with salts.



The body is left to dry for 40 days.



Workers rub scented oils on the mummy.



Workers wrap the mummy in linen.

Tomb of Treasures

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Ancient Egyptians made millions of mummies. In 1922, a scientist named Howard Carter found a special mummy in Egypt. Carter peeked into a dark tomb and was struck with amazement. Gold sparkled everywhere.



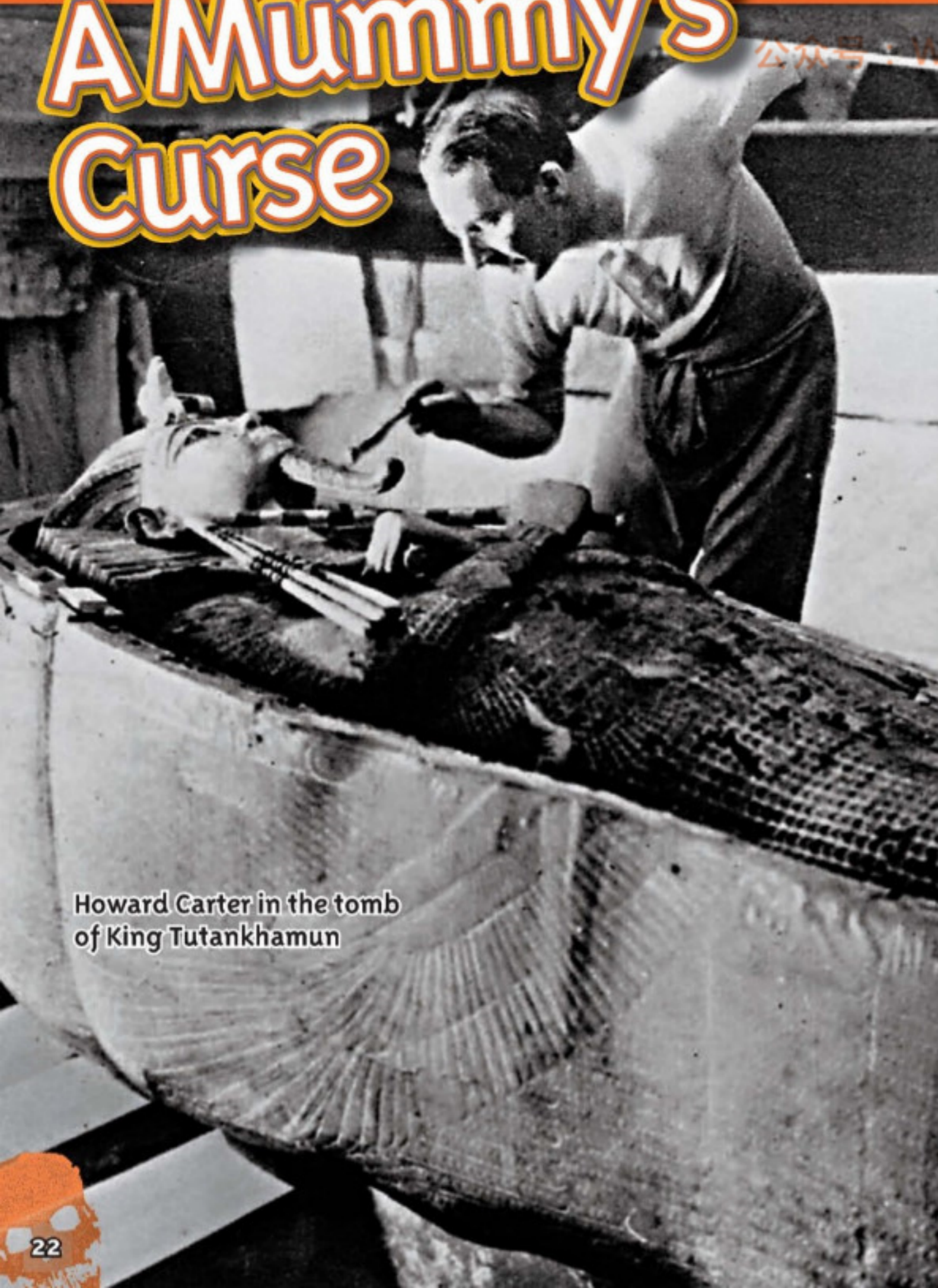
Carter had found the tomb of Tutankhamun (toot-an-KAHM-uhn)! Known as King Tut, he died over 3,300 years ago. He was only 18 years old. But the young king was buried with priceless treasures. Tut's tomb made him the most famous mummy in the world.

Word Wrap

TOMB: A grave, room, or building for holding a dead body



A Mummy's Curse

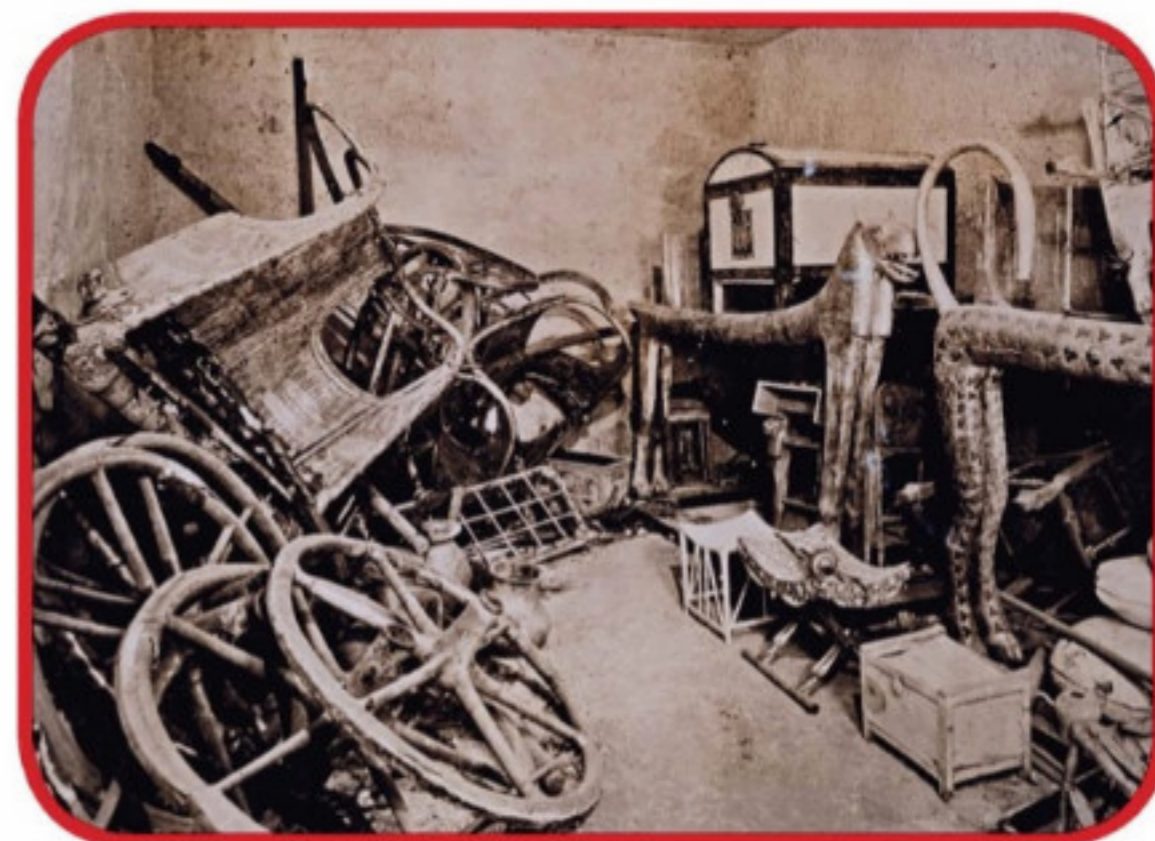


Howard Carter in the tomb of King Tutankhamun



After the discovery of King Tut's tomb, people everywhere wanted to know more about the boy king. But not everything reported about Tut was true.

Shortly after the tomb was opened, one of Tut's discoverers died. Some people said that the boy king put a curse on the tomb.



Animal Wraps

Ancient Egyptians didn't just make human mummies. They made many animal mummies too!

Favorite pets were sometimes mummified and buried with their owners. Egyptians thought cats were very special. Sometimes, when a cat died, the whole family would mourn its death.



公众号: Wagon



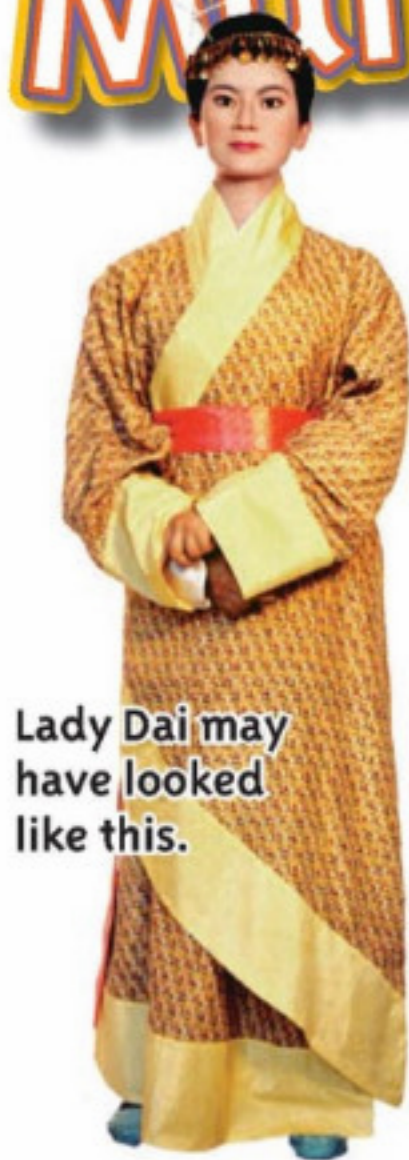
Egyptians also made mummies of dogs, crocodiles, monkeys, and birds. These animals were believed to please the gods.

MOURN: To feel or express sorrow or grief



Lovely Lady Mummy

公众号：W



Lady Dai may have looked like this.

Over 2,000 years ago, a wealthy Chinese woman known as Lady Dai died.

Her body was treated with salt. Salt takes water out of the body, which helps to keep it from rotting. The body was wrapped in 20 layers of silk.

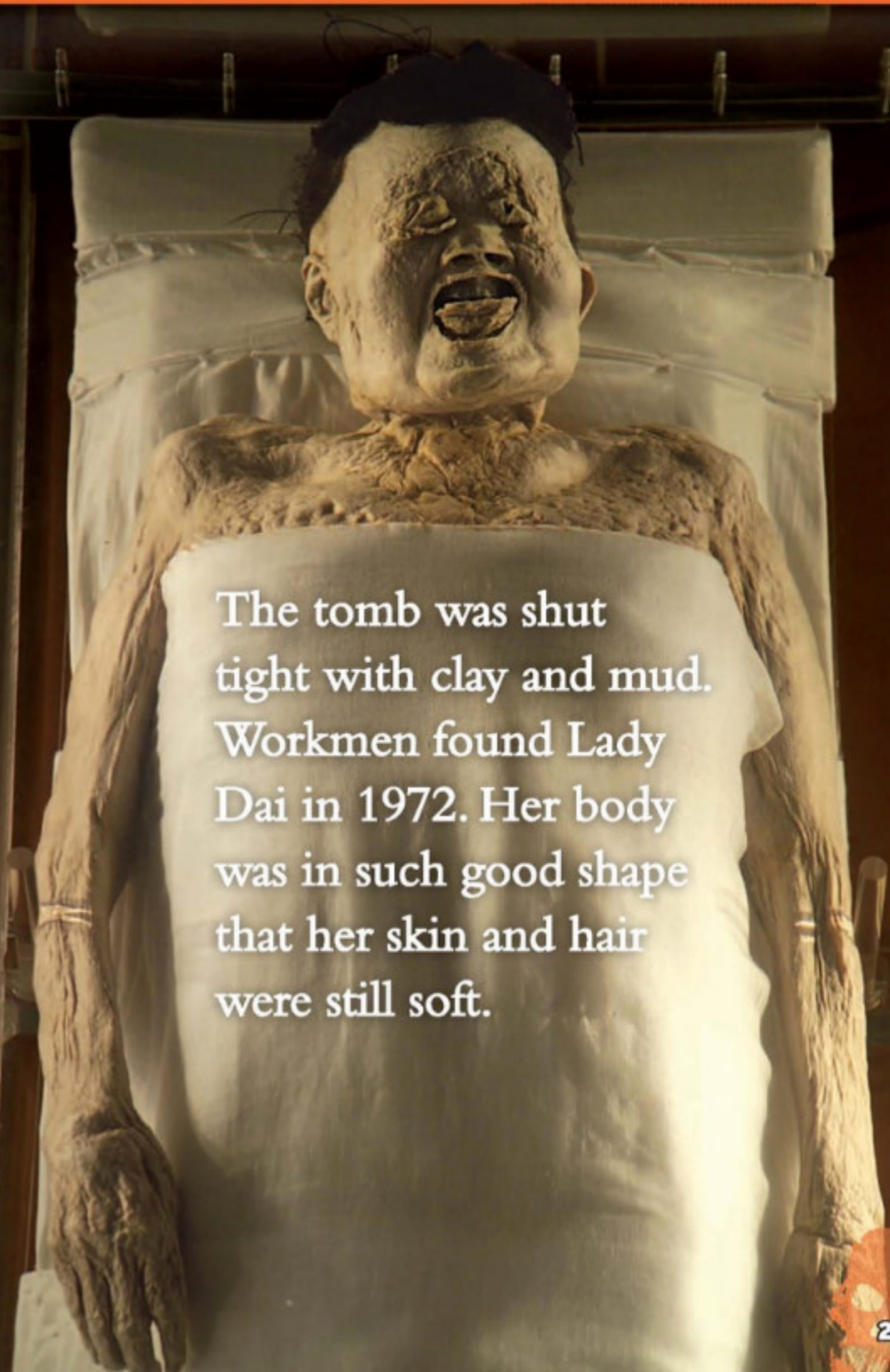
Lady Dai was put into a nest of six beautifully painted coffins. Workers buried her at the bottom of a tunnel dug deep in the ground.



Why are mummies good at keeping secrets?



They keep things under wraps.



The tomb was shut tight with clay and mud. Workmen found Lady Dai in 1972. Her body was in such good shape that her skin and hair were still soft.

Mummies Today

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Mummy-making is not just a thing of the ancient past. Some famous people have been mummified since then.

English thinker Jeremy Bentham died in 1832. He wanted his body to be used for science. Students took out his insides. They mummified his head. Then they dressed his skeleton in clothes. You can still go see him in England!



Secrets Unwrapped

公众号：Wecan

Mummies can't talk. But they can still tell us many secrets about the past. Scientists study everything in and around a mummy's body.



Food left in a mummy's stomach tells about what people ate. Broken bones tell about a person's life and sometimes about his or her death. Scientists can also examine a mummy's clothes and the objects buried with it.

All hold clues to peoples' religions and ways of life. In a way, mummies are like time machines.

They give us a peek into the past.





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TOMB
A grave, room, or building for holding a dead body



MUMMIFY
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CULTURE
A group of people who share beliefs and customs

公众号: Wecancan

Dear Reader,

See if you can use all your new science words to finish this story!

I'm hunting mummies! I walk deeper into a dark _____.

Will I find a good mummy? It is not easy to _____ someone. And if you don't get it right, the body gets eaten by _____ and then it will _____.

Mummy hunters are always bummed out when this happens. When I need to beat the heat in Egypt, I'll head north to Europe's swampy _____. Different place, different _____, but it's all about the mummy to me.