Am I Human?

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Being dead for hundreds or thousands of years does not erase the fact that I am human. I am human today, tomorrow and I will always be human.

From the moment I opened my eyes to the day I drew my last breath and closed them, life has always been peaceful. Even now, lying deep beneath the desert sand, I don't feel lonely; I feel at peace. I know my loved ones are watching from the surface; but when the sun goes to rest and everyone leaves, it's just me and the dense, grainy sand. I don't know how long it's been, but I know I've been here a while. I can no longer hear the sand churning or the marching of armies as empires rise and fall. It's strange, this new quiet. This time it feels less peaceful, but more… frightening.

The Elders always said if I ever feel something amiss, then return. Unfortunately for me, there is no going back.

The earth started to move and churn. It was not soft like the hustle of everyday markets or rough like the wars; this movement felt more deliberate. I wondered what it was. Before I could wander too deep in thought, I heard it… CLANG! CRUNCH! CLANG! A round silver weapon pierced through the earth and scraped my jaw.

"We found one! Eddy, we found one! Come look!" I wondered who this Eddy person was or what they had found. It was probably something exciting, like a lost war helmet, I thought. Then I heard thumping and the sound of fast panting, with feet racing through the sand. Suddenly, I saw two sweaty faces looking down at me. The first face looked young, but the second face looked old and tired. Despite this, there was one thing they had in common: they were grinning like the Nile crocodile. By Ra, this Eddy seemed to be really happy because he and the young boy started talking and laughing.

"After all these years, finally!" I was glad Eddy was happy, but I still wondered what they had found. In Fayum, if it still existed, if someone was smiling like the crocodile, it meant Shai blessed them. After a bit of chittering, Eddy told some men to grab something. "Be extremely gentle; the bones are really brittle."

Before I could process anything, four hands reached down and pulled me up to the surface. It was hotter than normal and the desert looked less like my old home, but more abandoned. It reminded me of the time when I was a little boy and had wandered too far out of town. Through my curious eyes the wide stretch of sand felt endless and hopeful, but now looking at the desert, it seemed more, distant and colder. It almost seemed as though Geb, himself, was shunning us.

Hours passed and the sun went to bed, but Eddy and the others didn't. They worked well into the night trying to dig up the treasure they had found. I wondered, "Maybe, they'll let me see it." I tried to look over but my body wouldn't move; that is the price you paid for going into the Field of Reeds.

When the sun rose, so did my body from the earth. "Why am I moving?" Three bulky men placed me into the back of a big rectangular cave. Without notice the cave started to move. The ride was worse than riding in the back of a shabby cart, hooked to a camel. It was rough but curiosity won, and I stuck around to see the end result. After what seemed like an eternity, they opened the cave door. "Freedom," I whispered to the wind.

The same bulky men hauled my body rather roughly, and put me on a coffin mover. "Even grave robbers took better care of the bodies. May Anubis spare them." After moving my body through dark hallways and stuffed corridors, they opened big doors to reveal a wide open space. At the centre stood one lone class case, with strange writing. Although I could not read it, there were two words: Khat Kemet… Dead body?

I turned to look at Eddy and ask him what in Ra's name was going on, but when I turned around, the three bulky men were lining my body in that case. "What is happening? Why are they showing my dead body to others through this clear case? Displaying a dead Kemet was a humiliating display of a defeated enemy to show state power." The three men suddenly disappeared behind the big doors, but I couldn't chase after them. It was as though I could not move without my body.

Light then blasted throughout the space and a big dense crowd came crashing in, speaking a strange language. A huge swarm surrounded my body; they took out small rectangular blocks and a bright afterlife-like light came out of them. I stood there watching in silence, too humiliated to speak, as person after person stared and gawked at my dead body.

"How long has it been?"

The years passed and each and every day, without fail, a group of adults and young Kemets would surround and gaze at my body like I was some kind of war trophy. I didn't know how long it had been, but I was starting to wonder, "Was I even a friend to them… ? No! Forget that. Was I even… even… Was I even human to them?"