# Introduction

**Plot**

The family travels from New York to Cairo. During the traveling scenes (waiting for the flight, being on the flight, arrival in Cairo airport) learn details about the trip via dialog and Claire’s third-person POV:

* Claire (10) and Wyatt (13) are sister/brother who attend the same Middle School in NYC
* Last year, Claire and Wyatt were participating in a public event for students in Central Park that turned into national news because of a dangerous episode during the day which they were instrumental in resolving. (details of that day can come out as tidbits throughout the book that reveal personality traits, school projects, and the nature of their relationship with Professor Singleton)
* Professor Singleton is the eccentric owner of the mansion in which the episode took place, and invited the Hunter family on this trip to Egypt because of his friendship with them since the episode.
* With the help of Professor Singleton, and their fame related to a real-life puzzle, Claire and Wyatt have a book contract to write about logic puzzles for kids. The trip to Egypt will be the inspiration for their first book. I just wonder whether this plot aspect will end up being distracting. How does it help the plot? The book contract can come at the end for example.

The introduction ends with the family’s arrival in a hotel in Cairo, the last cushy part of their trip to the desert (this is a way to tell the readers about some tourist stuff).

**Exposition (not all details necessarily ending up in the book. Sometimes this is background, for us):**

Claire loves drawing and has already started sketching for the book, based on everything they’ve been learning throughout the year, the cast of characters, and some preliminary puzzle brainstorms (they don’t have to be real puzzles, just sketches like of the pyramid or something). She’s a B-student because she’s a daydreamer and doesn’t jive yet with the structure of school (but she’ll be ok. She’s super smart. It’s just a phase where grades don’t correspond to creative thinkers)

Wyatt is an A student. He’s good-natured. He is innovative, inquisitive. We also know that he is very active in his pursuits based on his constantly skinned knees and tendency and get his tendency to get involved in hands-on things that interest him at a gut level and not necessarily academic-related (like assisting the super).

Claire and Wyatt have a good relationship. They have different strengths/weaknesses but complement each other. She looks up to him and hopes she’ll be able to “*know so much!”* like he does as she goes through Middle School. He admires her creativity and her drive to explore. I thought she was a great sketcher too.

The book they are writing includes writing and logic puzzles. Professor Singleton is more than a wealthy Central Park West mansion owner who likes Math. He’s a visionary, and sees something special in Claire and Wyatt. It would never even occur to him that sponsoring this book without doing lots of research on the setup or on the authors’ capabilities might seem strange/impulsive. And even if it did occur to him, he wouldn’t care in the slightest what anyone thinks. That’s cool, but it could be that he just wants them to see the tomb whose excavation he is financing.

**Related puzzles:**

None

# Chapter 1

**Plot**

The Hunters travel on the Upper Nile. They visit The Colossi of Memnon and other sites on the journey (I was thinking I’ll read some essays/blogs by some people who have taken that trip)

We learn through dialog that their destination is Aswan, which is where Professor Singleton will meet them. Aswan has a famous dam, and Wyatt digs that.

At the Colossi of Memnon, as they gaze up at the statues, Wyatt tells Claire that he bets he can say within ½ of a foot how tall they are without looking at the tourist guide. She guesses that he just memorized it, but he said there’s a way to do it with their protractor. They act out the puzzle using Claire’s height and their Dad’s steps, and Wyatt’s “guess” was within 2.3 inches of the tourist guide. They realize that it’s a good one for the book. On the boat at night they draft the writing in a fun way, and Claire sketches the scenario. I don’t see how they would be that accurate.

They arrive in Aswan and see Professor Singleton waving at them from the dock. He’s standing with a man, late 20s or early 30s who turns out to be Musa, a researcher.

**Exposition**

As the meaty part of the trip commences, we learn more about all of the characters, especially Claire and Wyatt. How they look at the scenes, how they interact…

We learn more about the adventure in Central Park through dialog. Claire wonders how they’re going to write puzzles that match how exciting that one had been. She and Wyatt brainstorm at a high level about puzzles, about their purpose and what makes the difference between a boring puzzle and an awesome one (all informal) If you can make this work, I’ll be convinced, but we may not need it.

Claire (and the reader) learns more about the excavation project they’re heading too from her Dad, because she starts to ask more specific questions about it during the slow times of their trip when they are just resting and watching the river go by.

**Related Puzzles**

The Colossi of Memnon: Geometry

[Hydroelectricity or History puzzle for the Aswan Dam?]

# Chapter 2

**Plot**

The Hunters disembark and meet Professor Singleton and Musa. Everyone knows Professor S. already but introductions are made to Musa. Professor Singleton explains what the journey will be like that day, and Claire and Wyatt are able to take in a bit of Aswan through observation as their luggage is transported to the jeep along with other supplies for the camp that Musa had ordered.

The group travels to the excavation site. It’s really boring. Professor Singleton asks Claire and Wyatt about puzzles and the book, and they’re able to have a good brainstorm during the journey.

When they start to make out the site, they see other jeeps on the land, and maybe 20 tents/yurts of all sizes. It could be an alien planet. There is one gigantic one, and people are walking in and out of it. Musa points to it as they approach and turns around to the family, “that’s the opening to the tomb.”

As they pull up closer to the camp, Claire notices that of all the yurts, only one looks like it had been erected in a sloppy way. Most of it looks fine, but for some reason it isn’t a legitimate dome. It’s missing something. That doesn’t distract from the story – BUT it comes in much later on, when they realize that two of the sticks (or whatever they’re called) used to hold up the yurt had been tied together to stick into the tunnel behind the sarcophagus. It is how Dudley and accomplice first verified that there was another room behind the sarcophagus, since they could push the stick in through the tunnel they started and reach a point where there was no longer any resistance. At this point in the story, the messed-up yurt is just a random clue at the back of Claire’s mind that just seems like a random observation and not a clue.

The Hunters start unpacking. Dudley introduces himself. He has a posh British accent, talks about boring things like the weather and tea (allll the time), AND he looks like he’s on vacation, with crisp desert clothes and a nice hat and hands that aren’t weathered. (Wyatt notices that when he shakes his hand). Claire can’t figure out for the life of her can’t figure out why he’s even there.

The sun sets so there’s nothing to see, and they all gladly roll out their sleeping bags and go to bed. (I guess the tent is pretty big, if they’re going to be comfortable)

**Exposition**

Most of this chapter is about revealing the excavation site.

Dudley’s intro is important. Dudley is acting like some stereotypical wealthy British traveler from a 1920’s movie, but something stinks. First of all, why is he there? Why is he even interested? Dudley talks to one of the guys on the research team who is from Aswan, and that’s about it. Why are Dudley and that guy friends, when the guy seems to be entrenched in the larger team? MUCH more about Dudley will come out along the way – he’s good comic relief but also the main source of tiny clues that only Claire picks up on, and that only come together in the climax.

Everyone just ignores Dudley though especially since he doesn’t do anything useful so it’s not really a bother.

**Related Puzzles**

[Something about the tents/yurts, maybe for the next chapter? Not a big deal..]

A **clue** for: [The Tunnel Behind the Sarcophagus] (i.e., the missing support beams for the yurt)