

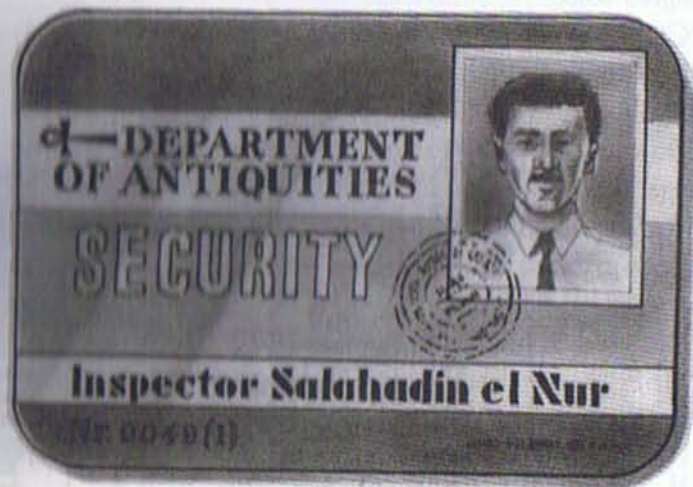
The Missing Box

Salahadin put on his coat and quickly left his office. It was much hotter outside in the street. A hot, dusty wind was blowing between the tall buildings. Salahadin jumped into a taxi. The streets were full of cars and the taxi moved slowly. It took a long time to get to the Nile Hotel.

A policeman was standing at the door of the hotel.

'I'm sorry,' said the policeman. 'No one is allowed into the hotel.'

Salahadin showed the policeman his identity card.



The policeman took Salahadin to his chief. Luckily, Salahadin knew this officer. It was Inspector Ahmed, a school friend of Salahadin's.

Ahmed took Salahadin upstairs to Pearson's room. Pearson was lying on the bed. There was a knife in his chest.

'Why are you interested in this man?' Ahmed asked Salahadin. 'Do you know him?'

'His name is Pearson,' replied Salahadin. 'He's an archeologist. He was working in the south. He was leaving Egypt soon and I wanted to see him.'

'Why was he murdered?' Ahmed asked Salahadin.

'I don't know,' replied Salahadin.

There were some boxes standing against the wall. Salahadin pointed to them.

'Perhaps there's something valuable in these boxes,' said Salahadin. 'We must open them.'

Ahmed brought in two policemen and they started to open the boxes.

Salahadin looked carefully round the room. There were some papers on the table beside the bed. Salahadin picked them up. There was a map under the papers. On the map were the words, "Valley of Zar".

These may be important, thought Salahadin. I'll take them with me and look at them later.

Salahadin folded the papers and the map and put them carefully in his wallet.

By this time, the policemen had opened the boxes. There was nothing important in them. The boxes were full of spades and other things for digging.

'There's nothing important or valuable in these boxes,' said Salahadin. 'We must speak to all of the hotel staff. Perhaps one of them noticed something unusual.'

The manager brought the staff to Ahmed and Salahadin. They asked each person many questions, but they did not learn anything important.