

SYNOPSIS	
<p>Scene 1</p>	<p>Egypt is ruled by a cruel tyrant Pharaoh who sits impassively on his throne as the people come to him for help and advice. <b>(Song/music 1: Prelude)</b> He treats them with contempt and waves them away. A wise old Soothsayer sings a message of hope for Egypt; <b>(Song 2: The Crocodile Pharaoh)</b> preaching about a prophecy that tells of a kind and wise leader to come that will rule Egypt fairly and with compassion. The Crocodile Pharaoh will have a birthmark in the shape of a crocodile and will have the power to control the great and fierce reptiles of the Nile. The people sing of their own hopes for what the future Pharaoh will do for them but are harshly dispersed by the Royal Guards who are clearing a space for the Pharaoh’s brother, Bebnum.</p> <p>Bebnum makes his older brother look positively angelic in comparison. He is genuinely evil and is plotting to overthrow his brother become Pharaoh himself, however, the Pharaoh’s baby is the current heir to the throne and stands between Bebnum and his dastardly ambition.</p> <p>Bebnum has stolen the child from the palace and has commanded the guards and his long suffering assistant, Menkhat to leave him alone on the banks of the river. They hurry away and Bebnum takes the child from the moses basket to be thrown to the Nile crocodiles.</p> <p>Suddenly, the whistling of the Soothsayer can be heard and Bebnum hurriedly decides to hide the baby and basket in the rushes to evade detection. He hurries away and the Soothsayer arrives on the banks of the river to find a good spot to meditate. His meditations are somewhat short lived, however, as a strange and unpleasant smell distracts him and he investigates, quickly finding the baby.</p> <p>The Soothsayer checks the babies nappy and spots a birthmark which tells him that the baby is in fact the long awaited Crocodile Pharaoh. Realising the grave danger the child faces, he vows to find an adoptive family to allow the baby to grow old in safety in order to fulfil the words of the ancient prophecy...</p>
<p>Scene 2</p>	<p>Ten years have passed and the Pharaoh has grown old and weak, in no small part due to his brother’s skill with poisons. His family and servants live in fear of his dying as he has decreed that they are to be sealed into his pyramid with them to accompany and serve him in the afterlife. As the guards stand by the gates of the palace, a messenger hurriedly enters with grave news...the Pharaoh is Dead! <b>(Song 3: Death of a Pharaoh)</b> The people of Egypt sing of their mixed feelings, will they be better or worse off now? They hope this is the time that the legendary Crocodile Pharaoh will rise.</p> <p>Three Egyptian townspeople discuss their own feelings and worry that it looks likely that Bebnum will seize the throne. As they laugh about how he believes himself to be the Crocodile Pharaoh, but actually more closely resembles a snake or even a chicken, Bebnum and Menkhat appear behind them causing them to scurry away.</p> <p>Bebnum is unhappy that the people do not accord him the respect he feels he deserves. He sings of how they just “misunderstand” him <b>(Song 4: Misunderstood)</b> and actually, underneath his cruel exterior lies a “tender, loving man,” this is clearly untrue as he promptly orders the three Egyptians who were rude about him to be thrown to the crocodiles! Menkhat, somewhat in fear for his own life, reassures him that he is in fact a wonderful man and that maybe he just needs to prove his greatness to the people of Egypt.</p> <p>Bebnum decides to order the building of great pyramid in his honour, to be constructed by every man, woman and child in the country. Menkhat summons a messenger and gives the order to the people.</p>

<p>Scene 3</p>	<p>As the body of the Pharaoh lies alone at the embalmers workshop the Pharaoh’s ghost rises and looks around, puzzled that he is clearly not in the afterlife. He realises that Bebnun has finally finished him off but his musings are disturbed by the return of Intef the senior embalmer and his assistant, Bek. They are unable to see the ghostly ex-Pharaoh and go about their work, singing about the best way to prepare “The Perfect Mummy” much to the ghost’s horror as they rummage around with his organs, preparing his body for mummification. <b>(Song 5: The Perfect Mummy)</b></p> <p>Intef tells Bek of the Pharaoh’s decree that his family and servants are to be sealed into the pyramid and Bek is horrified that someone could be so cruel and misguided. The ghostly Pharaoh begins to see the error of his ways and realises the futility of his order, wishing he could somehow change things to allow them all to live. Just as he is pondering his selfishness, Bebnun strides into the workshop to inspect the embalmers work. The ghost tries and fails to attack him but Bebnun cannot see or feel his attempts.</p> <p>Bebnun orders that the mummy be immediately sent to the palace ready for entombment the next day, despite Intef’s protestations that it needs another seventy days to be properly preserved. Bebnun leaves, avoiding another ghostly attack, and Intef helps Bek to load up the cart to take the mummy to the palace.</p> <p>When they leave the ghostly Pharaoh is left sitting thoughtfully alone. Anubis, the jackal headed god of the dead enters and tells him that his remorse has earned him a chance of redemption and a place in the afterlife after all, but the ex-Pharaoh is concerned for the welfare of his family and servants and requests a chance to tell the palace that he has changed his mind. Anubis is unhappy but grudgingly follows him to the palace.</p>
<p>Scene 4</p>	<p>Bek is lost. He has delivered the mummy of the Pharaoh but has somehow taken a wrong turning and now wanders aimlessly around the maze like corridors of the enormous royal palace. Desperately he tries a nearby door and finds himself in a bedchamber and is forced to hide when he hears the sound of approaching footsteps. The room belongs to Tia, a ten year old girl and the Pharaoh’s favourite handmaiden, now destined to be sealed into the pyramid with the mummy of her former Lord.</p> <p>Tia is talking with Kemsit, another servant girl who has been ordered to look after Tia during her final days as she is now considered greatly honoured. Kemsit asks Tia if she is frightened but Tia reassures here that she has always known this would happen and sings that she has spent a long time training herself to face her fears. <b>(Song 6: Song of the Handmaiden)</b></p> <p>When Kemsit leaves, Bek reveals himself and reassures a startled Tia that he is not there to harm her. He tries to convince Tia that she should escape the palace and the fate that awaits her but she is unswayed, and remains determined to face her destiny.</p> <p>The Pharaoh and Anubis arrive unseen in the room and the ghost begs Anubis to make him visible to the children so he can convince Tia to change her mind. Anubis grudgingly agrees and the Pharaoh appears, one last time, before his subjects. Tia and Bek are shocked but listen to him whilst he explains he has changed his mind and that he no longer requires his family and servants to be interred with him in the tomb.</p> <p>The Pharaoh leaves with Anubis and the children attempt to escape the palace.</p>

<p>Scene 5</p>	<p>Meanwhile, work has begun on Bebnun’s great pyramid and, under the supervision of the Pyramid supervisor and his chief “Slave Master,” the Egyptian people have been rounded up and are working hard building the monument. They sing as they work in a vain attempt to lift their spirits. <b>(Song 7: Build it High)</b></p> <p>While Intef the embalmer worries about Bek and his whereabouts, having not seen him since his ill fated palace delivery, the miser is so desperate to escape the hard labour of the building site he attempts to bribe the supervisor!</p> <p>The supervisor is implacable and instead leads his workers to the next site close to the banks of the river Nile.</p>
<p>Scene 6</p>	<p>Bek and Tia have escaped the palace and find themselves in a nearby alley, but as they attempt to catch their breath they are unaware of a royal guard creeping up behind them. The guard grabs them and threatens to return them to Bebnun who, he hopes, will reward him by making him a captain.</p> <p>The guard is so busy gloating he fails to notice Saba, a ten year old beggar boy, who has been sitting in his begging spot against a nearby wall. Saba creeps up behind the guard and hits him over the head with his bowl, causing him to release the children and collapse in an unconscious heap.</p> <p>The children ask Saba about his parents and he sings his life story. <b>(Song 8: Life of Beggar)</b> Tia and Bek ask him to escape with them and he agrees, having nothing to lose. They decide to head to the building site of the great pyramid where they plan to disguise themselves as workers.</p>
<p>Scene 7</p>	<p>Bek, Tia and Saba arrive at the building site and are warmly greeted by Intef who is overjoyed to see his apprentice again. The workers quickly dress the children in spare hooded cloaks and give them tools to help disguise them as fellow labourers just as the pursuing guards arrive at the site.</p> <p>The guards are shrewd and are not fooled for long by the disguises, the children realised they have been rumbled and run as fast as they can towards the banks of the nearby river. The guards attempt to grab them but are hindered by the “accidental” clumsiness of the workers who try their best to aid the escape.</p>

Scene 8	<p>The children find themselves trapped on the banks of the river with the guards closing rapidly, followed by the crowd of workers and, worst of all, the distant figures of Bebnun and Menkhat who have been alerted and now hasten towards them in a chariot. Their fate seems sealed but Saba notices a small boat tied to a nearby post and they desperately pile into it and push off into the fast moving waters of the Nile.</p> <p>Bebnun, Menkhat and the guards arrive too late at the riverbank, but one of the eagle eyed guards spot that the overloaded boat seems to be sinking rapidly. Bebnun rubs his hands with glee expecting the river’s crocodiles to do his work for him.</p> <p>The panicking children try to paddle to the opposite bank but the boat has filled with water and they are spilled into the dangerous waters. Ripples of water move rapidly towards them as the Nile’s deadly crocodiles close in for the kill, singing of their deadly intent as they swim. <b>(Song 9: Crocodile!)</b></p> <p>Suddenly, when all seems lost and the reptilian jaws are just inches away, the King Crocodile calls the crocodiles to halt! Some strange force prevents their attack and he realises that it must be the presence of the fabled Crocodile Pharaoh. He quickly orders the crocodiles to raise the submerged boat, allowing the children to clamber aboard to be escorted to the river bank further along to where Bebnun waits, witnessed by the gathering crowd of Egyptian people that have assembled to watch the dramatic events.</p> <p>As the children clamber back onto dry land the King Crocodile proclaims the coming of the Crocodile Pharaoh and the crowd gasps in wonder. The Soothsayer steps forward to help the identification by looking for the birthmark but just as he is about to announce it, Bebnun bursts onto the scene closely followed by Menkhat and the royal guard.</p> <p>Bebnun demands that the guards seize Tia, Bek and Saba to hurl them into the waters of the Nile but the guards meekly refuse his order, pointing out that it would have no effect as one of them has the powers of the Crocodile Pharaoh. Bebnun flies into a rage and screams that HE is in fact the fabled Crocodile Pharaoh and that he has the birthmark, and not only that, he will prove his claim by demonstrating his power over the crocodiles.</p> <p>Menkhat tries in vain to dissuade his deranged master but Bebnun ignores him and purposely strides into the Nile where he is, predictably, eaten by the crocodiles. The Soothsayer once again steps forward and announces that the Crocodile Pharaoh is...</p> <p>...TIA!</p> <p>The crowd gasp and bend down to bow before her. Tia is bemused and insists they rise. The Soothsayer explains that he rescued Tia as a baby and delivered her into the safe hands of an adoptive family who worked as servants at the palace, where she grew up to also work as a servant. Tia listens and then vows to try her best to become a wise, fair and just Pharaoh, and offers well paid advisor jobs to Bek and Saba as a reward for their help and friendship.</p> <p>Saba leaps at the chance to escape poverty and live in the palace but Bek politely declines, explaining he would love to continue being friends but that he intends to carry on his work as an embalmer, instead asking Tia to offer the job to Menkhat. The people sing with happiness at the thought of the brighter future that Tia, their CROCODILE PHARAOH QUEEN, promises! <b>(Song 10: Crocodile Pharaoh-reprise) (Song 11: Ancient Egypt)</b></p>
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