



### Mayan Mystery

When Antonio had received the phone call from his editor requesting that he travel to the site of a Mayan archaeological dig to investigate claims of strange activity, he was dubious to say the least. On Monday, he boarded a train, fully expecting to be home by Tuesday lunchtime. How wrong he was...

On arrival, he had been greeted by a very flustered archaeologist called Maria who spent a solid 30 minutes gabbling about the 'strange goings-on' and the missing lead archaeologist Madame Breccia who she insisted had fallen foul of the infamous Mayan curse. Antonio had been sure that Madame Breccia, who was renowned for her flakiness, had been distracted by another job but Maria was insistent. "During the excavation of the temple, we accidentally uncovered a Mayan tomb" explained Maria. When Antonio failed to react she added, "Therefore, the only conclusion is that Madame Breccia has been cursed and dragged into the depths of the Mayan underworld by the disturbed spirit."

"You can't seriously be suggesting that Madame Breccia has been attacked by ghosts?" questioned Antonio, not even bothering to take out his notepad.

"It is a documented truth that when the last Mayan King K'inich Janaab' Pakal was buried, he placed a curse on his tomb, condemning anyone who disturbed his rest to spend eternity in the underworld," retorted Maria, her eyes wide with fear. Antonio shrugged but assured her that he would investigate her claims.

The dig site was located on the edge of the modern village, tucked between the meandering river and the rolling hillside. It was surrounded by a mesh, wire fence and entered through a locked gate. Once inside, Antonio could see the vastness of what had been uncovered. Remnants of the ancient village lay out before him, with houses round the edge and the temple and the home of the leaders in the centre. He hadn't been there long, when strange things started to happen: his watch stopped working, his laptop wouldn't turn on and there was an odd smell that seemed to follow him. Then (on the second day of his visit) some of the workers began getting sick. The mysterious illness started with a rash on the neck and quickly progressed to dizziness and vomiting. By the end of the day, those that hadn't left due to sickness had quit, fearful for their lives. Antonio was adamant that all of this would have a logical explanation but after Maria, who was hysterical and shaking, refused to return to the site, he was the only one left who could solve this mystery.

Early the next morning, he set off to the site, determined to find the root of the abnormality and wrap up the story so he could return home. The sun was just peeking over the horizon bathing the site in a warm, orange glow when Antonio crossed the threshold and made his way to the remains of the temple. At once he set to work looking for clues, for anything that would help crack the case. While he was kneeling on the dusty ground, a strange noise caught his attention. He strained his ears to focus on the barely audible whispering coming from the other side of the temple. Brushing off the dirt, Antonio strode across the room, the sound getting louder with every step. By the time he reached the source of the whispering (the cracked tomb) it felt like the murmuring was inside his head making his skin crawl. He bent down, slowly peering inside. He could see a chink of flickering, green light glowing through the crack. With his bare hands, he began moving fragments of rock from the crack trying to make it bigger. Frantically, with his heart hammering in his chest, he yanked at the widening crevice. Finally, it was big enough to squeeze his upper body through.

When he'd failed to show up at his hotel that night, Maria had raised the alarm and the site had been searched. Antonio's phone, laptop and notebook were all recovered from the scene but there was no trace of Antonio. After two days of intensive searching yielded no results, the authorities listed him as a missing person and closed the case. As Maria stared down at the site from the safety of her hotel balcony, she knew the curse had struck again but was powerless to help. As she turned her back to continue packing her case, a faint green light could be seen glowing in the distance and (if you strained hard enough) the sound of a satisfied chuckle could be heard, carried across the evening breeze.

**Purpose:** To entertain the reader with a mystery story

#### Key features



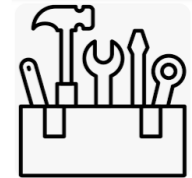
#### Structural:

Paragraph 1: prologue where the journalist is sent to investigate the mystery  
Paragraph 2: the journalist meets someone and they discuss the mystery  
Paragraph 3: the journalist visits the site of the mystery, the site is described and strange things start to happen  
Paragraph 4: the journalist sets out alone to investigate the mystery and disappears  
Paragraph 5: the story ends on a cliff-hanger

#### Language:

- Include adverbials of time and manner
- Dialogue to convey character
- Mysterious language
- Brackets to add extra information

#### Writer's toolbox



#### Mysterious words/ phrases bank

- Strange activity
- Mysterious illness
- Abnormality
- Logical explanation
- No trace
- Baffling
- Secluded

#### Brackets for parenthesis:

Adds extra information for the reader. Example:  
*Then (on the second day of his visit) some of the workers began getting sick.*

#### Punctuation:

- Remember to use:  
Commas to mark fronted adverbials  
Speech punctuation for direct speech  
Brackets for parenthesis

#### Vocabulary:

- Dubious
- Fallen foul
- Infamous
- Renowned
- Documented
- Meandering
- Remnants
- Adamant

#### Recommended reads

