

The princes paraded the Osiris King toward the west wall. They situated him in front of the red granite sarcophagus. Shoulder to shoulder, they roughed their palms across the profound stone. Mehi's hands tingled. Blood surged under his skin. The hair on his arms erected. Exotic air he inhaled dilated him. It seemed to extend him beyond where he stood. He imagined himself as long as the Nile and as wide as the sky. He could reach out his hand and stroke all of Egypt.

Mehi and the princes drew back the sarcophagus lid, the abrasions chiming in the chamber. They reached down, slipped their hands under Khufu's mummy and raised him. Mehi, touching the holy linen that blessed his hands, helped to rest the Osiris King in his sarcophagus forever. The five sons regarded their father. Within the pyramid, within the sarcophagus, within the three hundred yards of linen, Khufu dwelled within ever more subtle bodies.