



The Prince of the Nile

Completed: 19-08-2018

Chapter 1

I've always been fascinated by ancient Egyptian culture and one of my most memorable trips was a visit to that mysterious land of the pharaohs. After having marveled at all that magnificent art and monumental architecture it was just a matter of time before starting a series on that subject. The memory of that journey was a great inspiration and creating the elaborate setting of temples and courtyards was an endless joy. As always a project begins somewhere at the

end of a random afternoon, when I've some spare time, by creating a scene based on some vague idea. It always starts with a simple single model, with a column, a decorated wall, a statue, or an interesting character or poses. But, while exploring the possibilities of these objects, the project always tends to get out of hand. Once started, the setting continues to expand and the details become ever more elaborate. In the end a whole new virtual world comes to life.



Bringing the ancient world back to life is one of the most fascinating possibilities of 3D. The most recent reconstructions of buildings, mo-

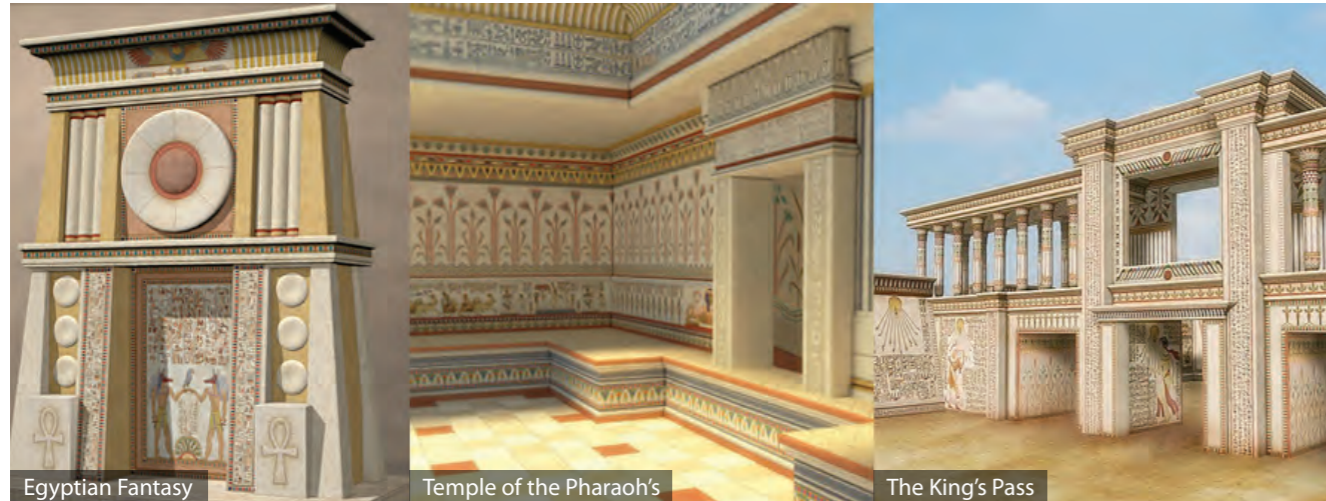
numents and urban scenes (in history books, art or cinema) are really impressive and sometimes breathtaking realistic and convincing.



3D reconstructions of Egyptian monuments

For this temple complex, I started with the model *Egyptian Fantasy* and a gateway called *The King's Pass*. The interior was based on the

Temple of the Pharaoh's and with a few additional props and characters, I completed the whole set in just a few days.



Egyptian Fantasy

Temple of the Pharaoh's

The King's Pass



My Egyptian model is of course just fantasy, based on some vague notion of how these buildings must have looked like and in retrospect the ground plan of the temple, with its huge courtyard and palace wings, seems to have

more in common with the Louvre in Paris than anything in Thebes, Amarna or Memphis. And yet, when the prince rides to the temple, it still looks convincing and it gives some impression of how monumental that world must have been.





So within a few days, the stage was set for a magnificent entrance for the young prince and it's here that the first chapter of the story begins. After entering the gate and crossing an extended courtyard, the prince reaches a massive temple complex that stretches out along the Nile, overlooking the burial site of the Pharaohs across the river. Entering the temple he is escorted by a priest through the inner courtyard that leads to a central hall. A group of masked priests, probably representing the three main deities, undress the prince and lead him in procession to another part of the temple. On a litter he's carried through many corridors and patios, into the inner sanctum; a lavish room with a monumental bed in the middle. It's here that some initiation ritual starts.



Chapter 2 The Museum

Part two of the series narrates the adventures of an explorer in search of the mysterious Prince of the Nile. It's the beginning of the 20th century, a time of great explorations and discoveries, a world of decadence, and the golden age of travel. The world is still a place of mystery and adventure, the Near East a garden of seduction and delights. With passage to Egypt the young explorer starts a priapic journey into a sensual culture in the land of the Pharaohs.

The first part of the story ends when the Prince of the Nile is escorted by three muscular priests into a lavishly decorated room with a large monumental bed. It's here that the prince is initiated into the ancient mystery cult of the god

Min, the god of reproduction, the creator of all things, "the maker of gods and man". This virile monarch would become a potent ruler, bringing peace and prosperity to the kingdom of the Nile. In part, two centuries have passed and the splendor of the ancient Egyptian world has faded into oblivion. Its monuments crumbled to dust and its many treasures lay buried in the desert. History became myth, the prince became a legend, his phallic cult a rumor. Eventually, his name fell silent, waiting to be spoken again. For it's the Book of the Dead that says: "speak my name and I shall live". But beware, for "with my name comes my spell" and "the eternal force of Min will be unleashed and many seeds will flow upon you".



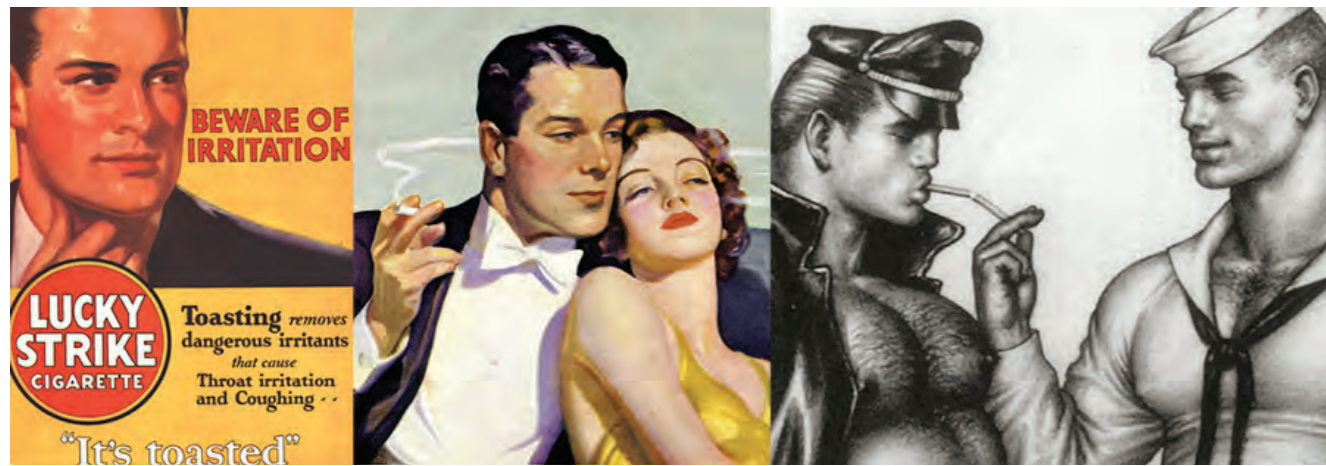
Chapter 2 begins in the British Museum and as the Prince in the first chapter, the new hero has a grand entrance in the opening scene. This time we follow a young explorer (Lawrence) and - just a few days before his departure for Egypt - he has a meeting with the curator of Egyptian antiquities, hoping to find some additional information on a forgotten prince he has been investigating. The keeper is able to provide some interesting details about a strange erotic ritual involving the prince and once his name - inscribed on a royal cartouche with a phallic hieroglyph - is spoken out loud by both men, a mysterious spell seems to be unleashed. Lawrence is possessed by a sudden feeling he never had before, the desire for another man!

Chapter 3 An officer and a gentleman

Lawrence sets sail for Egypt. On the deck of the R.M.S Leviathan, he meets Second Officer Alex. It's the beginning of a beautiful friendship. Later that evening he receives a note from him. It's an invitation for a second meeting, at a quiet place, somewhere else on board of the luxurious ocean liner.

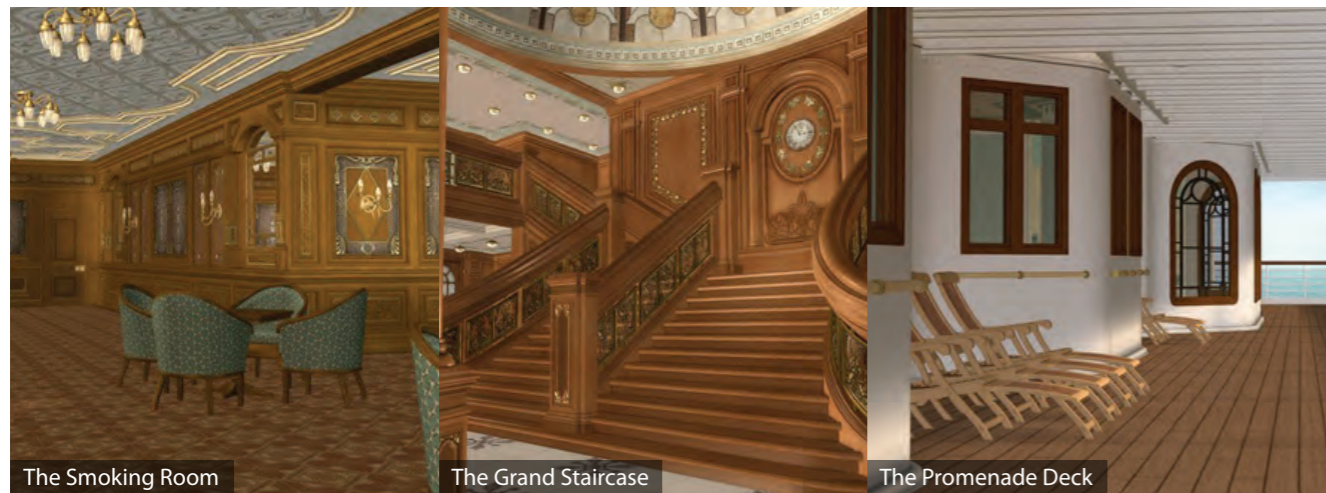
This chapter gave me the opportunity to explore the settings of such a ship from the golden age of travel. I know this isn't exactly what you've signed up for- sorry for that! - but I couldn't resist the chance to use a few models I have been working on for a long time. By adding lots of characters and details, I tried to capture some of the style and splendor of those magnificent vessels from the beginning of the 20th century. However, to get a real sense of such a steamer, one should have a look at the "Titanic, Honor, and Glory" project (www.titanichg.com), where a team of game developers is doing a magnificent job in making an entire digital reconstruction of that (in)famous ship. They even provide a free demo, where you can explore sections of the corridors, staircases, and rooms. The details are marvelous, and it really gives you a sense of the enormous scale and luxury of the ship. No wonder that the most expensive first-class ticket amounted to \$4.350. That's more than \$ 50.000 in today's value! No small price of five days on the high seas, but live music during the sinking was included.





The beginning of that 20th century was also the golden age for the upcoming tobacco industry. Advertisements from those days prescribe cigarettes against dangerous throat irritations and coughing, suggesting the chain smokers would live happily and healthy forever after. In the first brief encounter of the officer and the gentleman, I wanted to catch something of that long-gone glamour of romantic smoking. Interesting to notice is that nowadays to smoke a fag is becoming more of a taboo than being a fag. It seems that some things really are changing for the better.

For the ship itself, I used a very basic, Free3D model of the Titanic. By reducing its size and adding lots of details, the ocean steamer looks realistic enough for the purpose of this story. *The Smoking Room, Grand Staircase and Promenade Deck* are extended versions of the DAZ Originals. The bathroom is based on the *Art Nouveau Bathroom* by David Brinnen. Perhaps historically not very accurate, but the curved lines of the bathroom break the somewhat rigid Edwardian style of the original Olympic-class ocean liners.



The artworks of the young naked bathers I used in the background are by the English impressionist *Henry Scott Tuke*. Although they are contemporary, I'm not sure that they would have been used to decorate the first-class resting rooms at that time.



Felix D'Eon - To normalize the marginal

The illustrations in the magazine that the bellboy is reading are by the Mexican artist *Felix D'Eon*. I have been admiring his work for many years and his wonderful drawings seem to fit the story perfectly well. "He is enraptured by various art-historical styles, such as Edwardian fashion and children's book illustration, golden-era American comics, and Japanese Edo printmaking. In his work, he attempts to make the illusion of antiquity complete, using antique papers and careful research as to costume, set, and style. His goal is perfect verisimilitude. He subverts their "wholesome" image and harnesses their style to a vision of gay love and sensibility. D'Eon treats vintage illustrative styles as a rhetorical strategy, using their language of romance, economic power, and aesthetic sensibility as a tool with which to tell stories of historically oppressed and marginalized queer communities. By painting images of queer love, seduction, sex, and romance, the gay subject is stripped of its taboo nature.



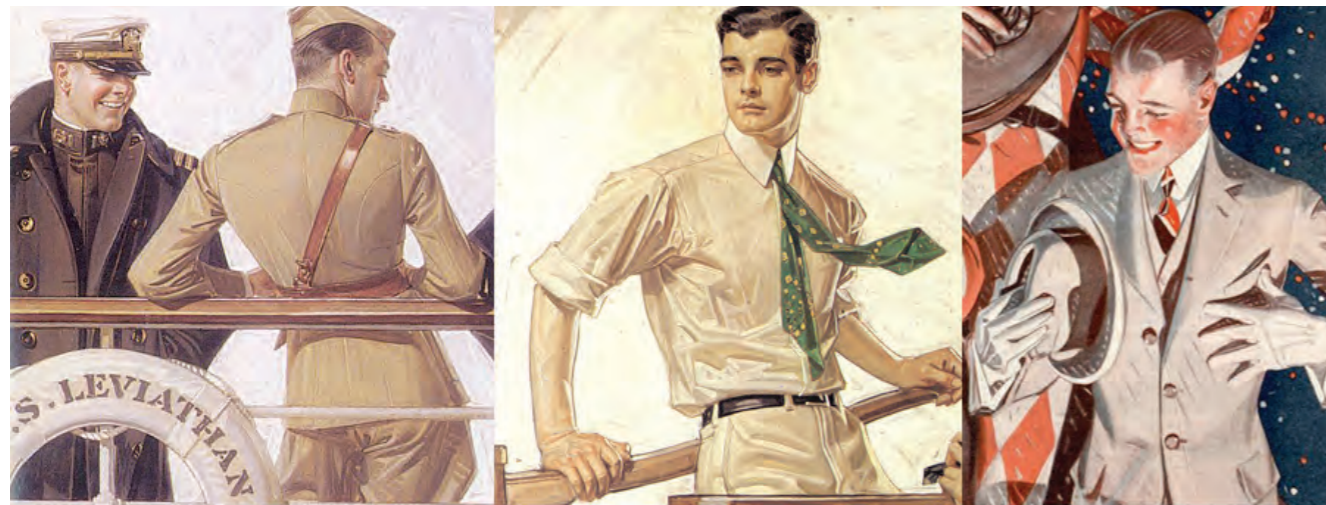
For unlike artists such as Tom of Finland, whose work is a celebration of the outlaw status of queer sexuality, d'Eon's work seeks to normalize the marginal, and place the heretofore taboo subject at the center, through the use of the rhetorical styles of the historically empowered and mainstream. In the artist's work, the illustrative imagery of the past does not cease to be wholesome through the inclusion of gay sex and sensibilities. He simply expands the notion of what wholesome is, erasing shame, and celebrating desire."

The Arrow collar style

My main inspiration for the style and fashion for this project are the beautiful illustrations by J. C. Leyendecker and the delightful comic books by Edgar P. Jacobs.

Joseph Christian Leyendecker

Leyendecker's name is nearly forgotten, but he was one of the preeminent American illustrators of the early 20th century. He is best known for his poster, book and advertising illustrations, and his numerous covers for *The Saturday Evening Post* (322 in total!). He virtually invented the whole idea of modern magazine design and his work dominated advertising in the 1920s, during the Golden Age of American Illustration.



He was one of the creators of the legendary "Arrow Collar Man", a highly successful campaign for shirts and collars during the period 1905-31. The fictional Arrow collar man became iconic in the 1920s and launched one of America's first recognizable sex symbols. Leyendecker's men were often modeled after his lover and li-

fetime companion, *Charles Beach*, making their secret romance a front-page feature across the country for decades.

His composition and technique are sublime, his models - although often somewhat aloof and decadent - are always stylish and magnificent.



Leyendecker was an example for *Norman Rockwell* and his fictional world of affluence and beauty influenced the fantastic settings of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *"The Great Gatsby"*. In a more modern and explicit setting, the characters of Leyendecker are still clearly recognizable in the work of *Benoit Prévot*.

Edgar P. Jacobs

Edgar P. Jacobs was a Belgian comic book creator and was one of the founding fathers of the European comics movement, best known for his series of *Blake and Mortimer*. His adventures are always staged like an opera, beautifully drawn, with much attention for dramatic development, costumes, stage design, and settings. The characters are always smartly dressed, elegant, and subtle in movement. Something very hard to achieve with just a few lines. His unique virtuosity became even more noticeable after his death when new books were published by two separate teams of artists and writers. Although very well executed, the new editions are sometimes somewhat painful to read.

My favorite books are *The Yellow "M"* and *The Mystery of the Great Pyramid*. It won't be too difficult to find its influence on my current project.



Benoit Prévot



Edgar P. Jacobs

Chapter 4 The Sphinx of Cairo

Lawrence has arrived in Cairo, where he continues his search for the mysterious Prince of the Nile. A vital clue is hidden in the historic part of the city, a place with many wonders, dangers, and exotic delights. A young sphinx - a member of the ancient order of the Prince - seduces Lawrence and initiates him into ancient rituals.

For this episode I've been collecting materials for the streets of Cairo, bazaar and souq, an oasis, the hammam and harem, temple ruins, and of course the setting in ancient Egypt itself. Plenty of stuff to work with and enough exotic places for exciting adventures.

