



The City of Refuge

Diana Wilder

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It was once the glory of Akhenaten's reign, called 'The Horizon of the Aten'. Now the imperial city of Akhet-Aten lies wrecked, abandoned and accursed, dreaming in the darkness on the edge of the Nile.

Police Commander Khonsu has never believed in curses, but he can't deny his own foreboding when he learns that the city's stone quarries are to be reopened at Pharaoh's command by a delegation from the great temple of Ptah at Memphis, headed by Lord Nebamun, its second-ranking priest, a man without a past who is not afraid of ghosts, curses or the dead.

As commander of the provincial police force assigned to guard the expedition, Khonsu accompanies the enigmatic Nebamun to the ruined city, where he finds himself entangled in a drifting web of betrayal, murder and revenge that has its deepest roots in the shadows of the city's heresy-tainted past.

THE CITY OF REFUGE is a story of hidden treasure, revenge and murder and one man's discovery that the paths of righteousness may lie through peril, but they will always bring you home.

The City of Refuge Details

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From Reader Review The City of Refuge for online ebook

Amanda says

This is a murder mystery set in Ancient Egypt. Admittedly, I'm not much of a classics historian, so Wilder's deconstruction at the end was a great asset. I think it would be more useful at the beginning, though.

The story is a basic whodunit and hidden identity and bait and switch. It was too obvious what was going to happen from the beginning, so it lost a lot of its punch to me. I finished it, because the descriptions of places and statuary and the architecture are well worth it.

Dantegideon says

I didn't enjoy the writing style, which I found a bit stilted.

Tona says

I am so glad that I won this book. I am a sucker for any book that deals in Egyptian topics. I am glad to say this is an amazing read.

When the Pharaoh decides to open a deserted and haunted city; it is up to Commander Khonsu to protect the workers. Lord Nebamun is representative of the Pharaoh and is assigned to inventory the deserted city. Lord Nebamun has his own reasons to return to the city. He wants to put the ghosts of the city to rest once and for all.

Elizabeth says

I didn't really enjoy this book I felt like it wasn't really going anywhere until about halfway through and then someone is killed yay now we're getting somewhere... I don't like when the answer to the mystery is super obvious it kills the book for me, especially when you reveal everything and there's still a quarter of the book left? GRRR frustrated, I'm glad I didn't pay for this because I was really disappointed.

Susan Swiderski says

Tell ya what, I could have breezed through this book much more quickly if my brain didn't keep stumbling over the characters' names. I mean, what's wrong with using easy-to-pronounce (and remember) names like Bob and Jim?

Just kidding.

This story isn't just awash in exotic names; it plunges readers into an exotic world, as well, and immerses them in the pomp, pageantry, and intrigues of ancient Egypt. Wilder's vivid descriptions skillfully depict life in a world that's oh-so-different from what we know today, but her story also resonates with the familiar... things like love, jealousy, treachery, betrayal, and... ghosts. Ghosts? Maybe. Maybe not. But there isn't a ghost of a chance that I'm gonna TELL you. Guess you'll have to read the book to find out for yourself.

Parts of this book are slower-moving and keep the reader at arm's length by telling the tale in a semi-detached manner, and then, wham! Wilder reels the reader back in with her lyrical prose and/or a wonderful "showing" section. Those drawing-in parts are my favorite, and for me, that's what makes a story and its characters most memorable. No matter what their names may be.

Beth Carpenter says

A complex story of mystery and drama. It did throw in a lot of Egyptian names and places up front, which confused me a little, but as I was drawn into the story, the names and relationships begin to fall into place without too much effort. The two main characters are both men of integrity, men who take their duty seriously, and yet they are charmingly human. They worry about their families, are amused at the antics of younger soldiers, and sometimes struggle to do the right thing.

The story drew me in, made me feel the burning sun, the blowing sand, and the confusion in the labyrinth of paths and hidden tombs. Highly recommended for anyone with even a passing interest in ancient Egypt. Don't let the names throw you, just read on. You'll be glad you did.

Ia Uaro says

A RICHLY DETAILED INTRIGUING MYSTERY

(Reviewed by Ia Uaro of <http://www.sydneyssong.net/> and <http://www.youtube.com/user/IaUaro>)

The former glory of Pharaoh Akhenaten's reign, the imperial city of Amarna has been abandoned after his death, and now lies in wreck on the edge of the Nile. To study the viability of reopening of the city's stone quarries, the ruling pharaoh sends a delegation from the Memphis temple of Ptah, headed by its second-ranking priest, an enigmatic man without a past who is not afraid of ghosts, curses or the dead.

Police Commander Khonsu from the nearby city is assigned to guard this expedition, only to find himself entangled in a web of betrayal, murder and revenge from the city's dark past.

Presented with a skillful flair of the English language, Diana Wilder peoples her story with real humans and uses practical philosophy as she visits the paths of righteousness and peril of these scrupulously developed believable characters.

From an author with a degree in Ancient History who has done extensive research for her writing, you can expect The City of Refuge will enrich readers' knowledge with fascinating details from the past. But The City of Refuge is so much more than a well-written historical novel because Diana Wilder is, first of all, an observant human being with deep empathy for those around her. She brings the ancient world to you and

makes it look and feel so real, as if you were together with her characters and could see what they wear, observe what they do, as well as understand their perspective. Diana shows readers the human side of seasoned war generals that is touching, and keeps us in suspense until the end.

Charlie Kravetz says

This review is for the Kindle edition ebook.

Hidden treasure, murder, suicide, revenge, in ancient Egypt all thrown together to make an interesting story.

This is the story of revenge and murder in ancient Egypt. One man must prove he was betrayed without revealing his story to those accompanying him.

A good, fast paced story with some history and facts woven in, this book was able to hold my attention. It was difficult to sort the names used, as is true for any book involving old Egypt. The story did not take the turns I expected it to, and was unable to guess the ending early.

Diane Wilder writes because she enjoys telling stories. She has traveled extensively and through her writing she is able to give readers a glimpse of what could have been. While the stories may not be factual accounts, she does give us a summary at the end of this one separating the facts and fiction.

Any reader that enjoys books about ancient Egypt will enjoy this one. It will appeal to some mystery readers as well. I will probably skip the rest of this series, because I stumble too much on the names and places of Egypt.

Ashley says

I was very excited to jump into this book and had been waiting to find the time to be able to enjoy it... sadly I think it was a little predicatable. By about halfway through I knew what was going to happen and the "big" mysteries about the hauntings.

I am a huge egyptian mythology fan, but am an even bigger Egyptian history fan but this book didn't keep me gripping the pages wanting to find out what happened next. The premise was amazing! The ties to history were good as well. The set up was amazing, the story line would have been great as well, again, except for the predictability of the set up at the beginning half of the book. If the author meant it that way, then she did a good job of a set up.

Debbi says

I got this book for free through Amazon Prime, and now I must read the next one! For Egyptian historical fiction buffs, this book is great.

Years after the fall of Akhenaten, his royal city lies abandoned in the desert. Once a beautiful place, it's now

full of tombs and ruins...and possibly ghosts. Commander Khonsu is sent to investigate reopening the quarries there, but there are many who would profit from keeping things as they are. Khonsu takes his men and investigates, over the objections of the Mayor. Accompanying Khonsu, the leader of the expedition, is Nebamun. Who exactly Nebamun is, and how he became the Second Prophet, is a mystery, but he is clearly a courageous and intelligent man.

When Nebamun and Khonsu arrive at the Imperial City, they find all sorts of dangers. A ghost causes a collapse in one of the mines. The men are scared witless...but not Nebamun. As Khonsu gets to know Nebamun better, it becomes clear that he might not be exactly who he says he is...but then, who is he?

The story is set after the fall of Akhenaten and there is not a lot of history to the tale, but the characters are well written and sympathetic. There are politics and ambition and corruption and love all playing a role in solving the mysteries behind the fallen city.

This is the first book of Diana Wilder's I've read, but I am eager to read the rest of this series. I really enjoyed the people, the setting, the mystery and the human stories that make up City of Refuge.

Karen says

Took me a while to pick this book up as it's not my usual type of read but once i started and pushed through the first 6th of the book i was hooked.

The writing style is good and there was enough of a mystery to keep me reading and ignoring my housework.

I am really enjoying trying books i wouldn't normally choose. This era in history is one i am fascinated by but never have time to explore so the book gave good insights into the history without bombarding a non-historian with too much overkill.

xx

Lisa says

City of Refuge is a story of mystery set against the destruction of the city of Akhet-Aten (modern day Amarna) during the later years of Horemheb's reign. The King has ordered that Akhet-Aten's quarries be investigated with a view to reopening – but there are reports that the city is haunted by ghosts. In the city itself, the team finds not only talk of ghosts, but cases of murder, tomb robbery, betrayal and the systematic looting of the city.

I had difficulty getting into the book at first, which was disappointing – though that might have been due to the late night reading. Sadly, the mystery was never that compelling to me. I suspected the main twist from fairly early on and by half-way I was convinced I was right (and I was). That said, I did eventually settle into the book and found it a pleasantly enjoyable read.

I thought the premise was good, though the mystery could have been a lot tighter (view spoiler) I never really felt like there was much danger posed, even towards the end.

The historical accuracy was on the whole good – though I did question the invention of a new pharaoh,

Huy, that ruled between Tutankhamun and Ay and basically existed to take the blame for the "bad things" that happened. Wilder explains that she did this to avoid defaming the dead, which is admirable, but I wasn't entirely comfortable with it. I was surprised by the fact that Prince Thutmose, son of Amenhotep III, survived his father and brother in this version of events – though I have read (somewhere) a theory that backs this version of events up.

At times, the dialogue struck me as a bit too modern, but that was a fairly minor complaint.

As far as characters go, there was room for more depth, but what was given worked well with the story. I enjoyed getting to see Seti I before he was king. I was a little disappointed I didn't get to see more of Horemheb (given that he is one of my favourite pharaohs), but I didn't expect him to be present in this novel, so even the small glimpses seen of him were a pleasant surprise.

All up, *City of Refuge* was an enjoyable read. Yes, the mystery at the centre of it could have been stronger and added more tension and danger to the story, but it didn't affect my enjoyment too badly.

Hart Johnson says

As historical fiction I thought this was fantastic. As a mystery, I had just a few quibbles. I think the characters, backdrop, setting and details were very well done. The perfect level of description to really put me there. I feel though, the author might have made a slightly stronger story had there been something up front that suggested WHY they group was going to the dead city--I mean an official reason was given, but a "why then" would have hinted at the suspected looting--a motive for the second prophet. I mean I get that it is tied to the mystery, so important not to give too much away, and he isn't the PoV, but it would have increased the readers drive forward. As it was, I was about a quarter of the way in before I really grasped what the story was about. It all came through in the end and things fell together well, but it was a little hard to get into because of that.

James Hockey says

This is a mystery set in a fascinating period of Ancient Egyptian history. The dissenting monotheistic sun-worshipping world of Pharaoh Akhenaten has fallen. Egypt has returned to it's traditional Gods. The city of the sun, Akhenaten's capital, lies in ruins and is occupied by a royal expedition sent to assess its usefulness as a source of architectural quality stone.

The discipline of this party of priests, police and soldiers is disturbed by rumours of ghosts and noises in the night. There are murders and the danger of mutiny.

Of the trilogy of Ancient Egyptian tales by Diana Wilder that I have read, this is my favourite. She has captured the flavour of the aftermath of tumult where heresy and dissent have been overcome and toppled by the forces of reaction. The excellent afterword is manna to feed the curiosity of non-Egyptologists aroused by this well researched story. Her writing style is lyrical and evocative of the ruined and failed but magnificent city by the Nile.

Once again the message that can be taken from this story of ancient times is applicable to our own. We do

not have to look far to the east to see a parallel innovation overturned by a return to tradition.

In addition to the riveting action in the surrounding ruins this is a cracking good mystery with betrayal and vengeance at its heart. I would recommend this to lovers of Ancient Egyptian yarns and mysteries alike.

Lee Holz says

I was wrong in believing that Diana Wilder's *The City of Refuge* was the second in a series. While also set in ancient Egypt, this is a standalone novel. The period is that immediately following the reign of the monotheist Pharaoh Akhenaten, which if I remember correctly predated that of the Pharaoh Ramesses II in *Pharaoh's Son*. It makes no difference to the excellence of this story. This is again "you are there" historical fiction at its best. There is mystery (actually two) and plenty of action, but the character driven storytelling is what makes this outing most enjoyable.
