



## Sphinx

*Robin Cook*

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# **Sphinx**

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It was the magic and mystery of an empire long past that beautiful Erica Baron came to explore. Innocently she cast her eyes in forbidden places and discovered the clue to a treasure beyond imagination. It was then that terror overtook her, as the most fearful curse of the ancient world and the most savage menace of the modern one threatened to destroy her. One dangerously attractive man offered Erica help...he offered her protection...he offered her love. And in this strange, exotic land of seductive evils, where no one could be trusted, desire became for Erica the deadliest snare of all...

## **Sphinx Details**

Date : Published (first published 1979)

ISBN :

Author : Robin Cook

Format : Kindle Edition 324 pages

Genre : Fiction, Thriller, Mystery, Suspense

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## From Reader Review Sphinx for online ebook

### Hannah says

#### Rating Clarification: 3.5 Stars

Page turning beach fare. Still pretty entertaining after 35 years, although the late 1970's/early 80's \*feel\* creeps up now and again.

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### Nikhil Singh says

Moving away from his forte ( medical thrillers ), I think robin cook has done a great job in writing a novel that encompasses history ( ancient Egypt ) and the current situation in Egypt. Also, I love the character of Erica. She is beautiful, smart and is damn good at what she does.

All in all, if you are a robin cook fan, you must read this book. It will give you a different angle of his writing capabilities.

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### Saraswati Urao says

This Book is totally adventurous and so fiction in it. Erica is so intelligent and brave. Hope is the best medicine to get anything you want.

The valley of kings and queen.

And while reading this book, my whole memory spent in Egypt was coming to live, the Giza Pyramids and the desert, the scorching heat.

Thank God i entered in one of the tomb

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### Carmen says

3.5 stars. Overall a good read, with lots of exciting scenes in fantastic settings, but the author seems to have trouble in getting a life-like woman on paper. The negatives are 1) the naive, oblivious heroine who has a doctorate but no judgment at all and who manages to escape major injury despite herself, 2) the awkward, unrealistic dialogue whenever she is involved in the conversation, and 3) the author's propensity for having most of his male characters fall in love with her at first sight. The rest of it was enjoyable....really!

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### Brian says

Perhaps this was Robin Cook's thinking:

"Sphinx" = Egypt

"Sphinx" = riddle

"Riddle" = mystery

Sphinx = mystery in Egypt.

In any case, no sphinx figures into the plot of this novel, but it is an Egyptological mystery/thriller.

Young, beautiful Egyptologist Erica Baron, while on a sort of working vacation in Egypt, unexpectedly gets taken into the confidence of a black market antiquities dealer. The dealer shows her a fabulous statue of Seti I, a New Kingdom Pharaoh who ruled shortly after Tutankhamen, that doesn't officially exist and which hints at still more treasure from an undiscovered tomb. When the dealer is murdered and the statue stolen, Erica finds herself drawn into a world of black market intrigue and treasure hunting.

This is Cook's followup to *Coma*. For both, he chooses a female protagonist, then undercuts her authority by hinging the plot on her physical beauty. In *Coma*, the heroine was only able to pursue her research into strange coma cases at a Boston hospital because her boss had the hots for her. Here, Erica remains alive not because of her decision-making skills (extremely poor), fighting prowess (she has none), or her academic credentials (which actually make her more of a threat), but simply because not one but two men find her irresistibly attractive. (The total number is, in fact, four, but one of the other two men wants her to leave Egypt and the other is merely a lackey.) And so, with each new turn of the plot, instead of heading toward increasing excitement, the story explores new avenues of absurdity.

The lure is Ancient Egypt, but this isn't like a Dan Brown novel, in which art and architecture take center stage. For Cook, it's all merely an exotic backdrop for...well, Cook can't really decide what it's for. Romance? The black market? A treasure hunt? It's all three. *Sphinx* is a prime example of the pejorative definition of "bestseller": shallow, titillating, and superficially exciting.

The titillating part (this was published in 1979) is Erica herself, and her romantic relationships. You might think that because this is set in the land of the great pyramids, the fact that Erica finds herself at the apex of a romantic triangle is thematically or metaphorically significant, but I can tell you that Cook doesn't operate on that level. No, he sticks to the basics, giving Erica a choice between a tough ladies man and a sensitive intellectual. Almost forgotten in all this is her doctor boyfriend, who gets to say what we're all thinking -- darling, you're an Egyptologist, not a super-spy -- but who then proves what an ass he is by denigrating Erica's professional aspirations. During the course of the book, Erica has an opportunity to sleep with all three, but I'm thinking you only need one guess to figure out which one she picks.

Cooks opens the book with a quotation from Herodotus: "Concerning Egypt itself I shall extend my remarks to a great length, because there is no country that possesses so many wonders, nor any that has such a number of works that defy description." Because this novel barely describes any of these wonders (real or imagined), I will close this review with another quotation, this one from one of Herodotus' critics, substituting only the proper name: "Though we cannot entirely rule out the possibility of Cook having been in Egypt, it must be said that his narrative bears little witness to it."

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### **Elizabeth Noah Astle says**

I have read other Robin Cook books that are all medical. This one has nothing to do with medicine.

This story is about Erica, an Egyptologist from Boston, who has traveled to Egypt as she has wanted to do

for years and to get some time/space from Richard her boyfriend. On her first day there, she witnesses a murder, and sees a rare statue of Seti I. From then on, she meets a few people, Yvon and Ahmed, who claim that they want to help her as they are trying to stop the black market on antiquities. As the story progresses she starts to wonder about their motives with the black market. Through the story it talks about the tombs of King Tut and Seti I. At the end you finally get to see (read), who really has their interest in trying to stop/slow down the black market.

I know this was one of his earliest written books and the writing is not the best but I enjoyed the story line as it was a change from other Robin Cook books, but I do enjoy a good medical thriller. For me it was a quick read as it kept my attention somewhat. I think it would be a good book for someone that is interested in Egyptology or just to read about the life/scenes of Egypt.

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### **Aslı? Da mı? says**

Hastaneler, tahliller, durum değerlendirmeleri yüzünden elimde istedigimden fazla kalan #Heykel en nihayetinde bitti. Daha önce #RobinCook'un iki kitabı okumustum ve okuduğumda dayanarak medikal gerilim yazdığını kanaat getirmistim. Oysa Heykel hiç de oyle değildi. Genç bir misirbilimcinin kendini ispat etmek uğruna Misir'a gittiği ve aniden kendini sanat eseri kaçakçılığının orta yerinde bulduğu bir hikaye okumayı hiç ama hiç beklemiyordum. Ote yandan guzeldi de. Bana daha ziyade #CliveCussler'in kitaplarını animsattı.

Kitapla ilgili asıl sorun çevirisiydi. İmla hatalarından gecilmediğinden kimi yerlerde hikayeden kopmaya baslayınca sindirmeceli değil de hikayenin keyfini çıkarmacılık okuma yapmak adına hızlandı. Hızlanınca da bazı seyler gözümde batmadı. Fakat asla ama asla misirbilimi terimlerinin çevirilerinin farklılığını sindiremedi. Bunu çevirdiği yıldan oturu araştırma imkanının kısıtlı olmasına bağlıyorum. Lakin bu benim gözümde #AltınKitaplar'ı temize çıkarmıyor. Eski çevirileri ya elden geçirip modernize etmeli ya da cope atıp kitaplarını yeni çevirilerle sunmalıdır. Dunyaca ünlü yazarların kitaplarını tükendip katliamvari çevirilerden okumamalıyız.

Sırada kitabım yine Robin Cook'tan. Cunku ameliyat öncesinde, sonrasında, oram buram kesilmiş vaziyette hastanede yatarken neden medikal gerilim okumayayım? :)

İtinayla duruma uygun kitap seçilir! ?

Muahlar!

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### **J.H. Moncrieff says**

3.5

A decent thriller with a side of Egyptian mystery, this was a quick and engaging read. While I didn't really care about the protagonist so much, and wondered why she kept assessing how beautiful she looked each day in her mind (is this how men believe women think? When I was in Egypt, the last thing I cared about was how my tan set off my dress), the novel had a good plot that kept one guessing, especially about the ancient-Egyptian aspect of the mystery.

Recommended if you like adventure stories with female protagonists, especially if you have an interest in ancient Egypt. And if you've been to Egypt, it's fun to revisit it through this book.

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### **Sarah ~ says**

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### **Mark says**

I first saw the movie with Lesley-Anne Down as Erica Baron about an archaeologist who comes to Egypt to see a golden statue of the pharaoh Seti I in an antiques shop and when the proprietor gets killed and the statue taken she finds herself in danger. She essentially gets involved in an in-fight between the various factions of the Black Market selling Egyptian archaeological artifacts and the ministry responsible in stopping the traffic and selling of Egyptian treasures. The whole plot hinges on the whereabouts of the pharaoh Seti I whose statue leads to murder and mayhem.

A fairly decent thriller by the former king of the medical thriller, however it sometimes feel dated which would be understandable as the book is almost 35 years old. The pace is sometimes high and falls flat on other moments. But still there are worse books to read than this archaeological thriller.

I started this book a year ago but somehow my Kobo Glo HD stopped doing the glo bit and it was not until I got a new e-reader that I could continue the story. Hence the long period of reading.

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### **Sarah says**

*Read for the 2017 POPSUGAR Challenge prompt 'A Book that's Been on Your TBR List for Way too Long'*

#### **SPOILERS FOR IDENTITY OF BAD GUY AND WHERE THE MAIN CHARACTER ENDS UP**

I have read this before, but not in at least a decade and I had obviously forgotten a number of pertinent plot points, enough that I might as well have been reading it for the first time.

The main thing that I had forgotten and was surprised (and not pleased) to read was that there was a love

triangle (or maybe square) between Erica, Yvon, Ahmed, and Richard. I didn't go into this expecting there to be **any** romance, so to find out that Erica's relationship with Richard (and then Yvon and Ahmed when Richard turns out to be a chauvinistic dick) played a major part in the story was a disappointment. I wanted a thriller featuring the mysteries of Ancient Egypt, not a stupid and unnecessary love **square**. The 'romance' was just not necessary and didn't add anything to the plot, it almost felt like a waste of paper and ink.

While I didn't like Richard's dismissal of Erica's intelligence I also found it slightly appropriate (although he didn't know that at the time) as she did make a number of decisions that made me question her intelligence only pages after feeling the need to defend her ability to think for herself to Richard. I was especially suspicious of the too-smooth and suave Yvon. Just because he didn't try to kill her didn't automatically mean he was trustworthy enough to get naked with (which turned out to be completely right as he eventually admitted to being a cheating bastard with a wife and two children back home in France) or to allow him to put her life in danger for his monetary gain.

Originally I was thinking this was going to be an easy four star read, despite Richard's chauvinistic attitudes because Erica refused to buckle under his expectations of what how his little woman should behave. He kept denigrating her passion for Ancient Egypt and eventually he gave her the ultimatum of come home with me or lose me forever and she chose to stay (I cheered). So Erica's making her own choices and being an independent thinker and following her passion and I'm thinking "Yay, forget that idiot. You don't need him (or either of the other two)." But then that last scene where Erica gets home from Egypt, after all the excitement of being involved with a black market smuggling ring controlled by the very man supposed to be in charge of policing that kind of activity, she runs into Richard's arms and tells him "*You were right, Richard. I was over my head from the start. I'm lucky to be alive.*". To me that reads like she's relinquishing all her independence and telling Richard that it's okay for him to tell her what to do because he knows what's best for her. So all the gains that she had made when she was refusing to allow him to dictate to her what she can and can't do were just thrown away by that final piece of dialogue. So the four stars became three on the final page.

Regarding the Seti I/Tutankhamen storyline I found that fascinating and loved the way Cook was able to thread his story into real life events (Carter and Carnarvon's discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb). The fictional story made me want to look further into the true story of Seti I and King Tut (I have a very large book on Ancient Egypt as a whole as well as an only slightly smaller one on Tutankhamen that I bought when I saw the 2015 tour of the artefacts from his tomb).

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### **Tahera says**

I read this book back when I was maybe in the 10th grade so it suffices to say I don't remember much of the main plot line at all except that it had nothing to do with medicine and the mystery was based in Egypt...wouldn't mind reading it again if I find a copy to refresh my memory...

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### **KruemelGizmo says**

Die Gräber der Pharaonen, so heißt es wären alle verflucht. Erica Baron, eine junge Ägyptologin, ist fest entschlossen sich von diesen abergläubischen Ängsten nicht beeinflussen zu lassen. Kaum in Kairo angekommen, wird ihr Spürsinn belohnt, in einem Hinterzimmer eines Souvenirladens zeigt man ihr ein

außergewöhnliches und uraltes Kunstwerk. Noch während sie das Kunstwerk bestaunt wird der Besitzer des Ladens ermordet. Und das ist nicht der letzte Mord...

Der Fluch der Sphinx aus der Feder von Robin Cook stammt aus dem Jahre 1979.

Die Geschichte um die junge Ägyptologin Erica Baron konnte mich nicht wirklich auf eine Reise durch Ägypten mitnehmen. Die Protagonistin, immer wieder gerne als keine wirkliche klassische Schönheit, aber mit einer sinnlichen Ausstrahlung beschrieben, die durch diese Geschichte stolpert, war für mich in vielen Bereichen nicht wirklich überzeugend. Alle Männer waren natürlich sofort von ihr eingenommen und hin und weg von ihr, was ich schon bei dem ersten männlichen Protagonisten mehr als abgedroschen fand, leider folgten diesem dann auch noch ein paar mehr. Auch die Auseinandersetzungen mit ihrem Lebensgefährten, die bis fast zur Hälfte des Buches immer wieder eine Rolle spielten, waren für die Geschichte völlig überflüssig und zehrten auf Grund der Dialoge schon manchmal ein wenig an meinen Nerven.

Die Geschichte selbst hatte wenig Neues zu bieten, ob das 1979 anders war, kann ich heute nicht mehr wirklich beurteilen. Ein „Schatz“, eine Heldenin, natürlich ausgestattet mit einem besonderen Anreiz für die Männer, Bösewichte, der ein oder andere Tote der den Weg säumt, eine Verfolgung, die Suche nach dem Schatz in alten Grabkammern ist in knappen Worten die ganze Zusammenfassung des Buches. Aus heutiger Sicht wurden dabei auch noch das ein oder andere Klischee bemüht, was das Ganze für mich nicht gerade aufgewertet hat. Auch wirkte der ganze Ablauf arg konstruiert und vor allem zum Ende hin mehr als unglaublich.

Einzig die Beschreibungen von Kairo, mit seinem Basaren und dem Alltagsleben der Ägypter fand ich interessant und gut beschrieben und ließen einen Hauch von Atmosphäre erahnen.

Mein Fazit:

Eine vorhersehbare Geschichte mit einer nicht überzeugenden Protagonistin und einem unglaublichen Ende. Hier kann ich diesmal keine Leseempfehlung aussprechen.

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### **Roberta says**

I read almost all the books of Robin Cook and this is the one I like less. The plot is fine, characters are fine, the book is just that: fine.

A young, beautiful american girl with a doctorate in egyptology finally has the chance to travel to this country. If she were an Italian tourist she would have had food, a romance and some horrible souvenirs; if she were German, a sunburn; but no, she's American, so she witness a murder the very first day of her touring. Obviously she doesn't report it to the police but prefers to investigate the matter on her own, supported by a French millionaire who lends her his private jet and hire a clumsy bodyguard to follow her around (he let himself be spotted too many times for my taste) and the Egyptian chief of the Department of Antiquities. They both have a crush on her, but she's focused on playing Mata Hari. While looking into the blackest of the black market in search for a precious statue she also has the time to solve some ancient mystery overlooked by professional archeologists in decades of work.

I probably don't like the novel because I've only read Cook's medical thrillers, which I truly enjoy, and I don't think he added much to the genre with this exploit into an exotic location.

Nevertheless, it's a mild reading suitable for a lazy afternoon.

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**Richard Karns says**

Although far-fetched at times I still found this an enjoyable read. Being a history nut anyway I really enjoyed some of the archeological aspects of the storyline.

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