



The Shepherd Kings

Judith Tarr

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The Kingdom of Lower Egypt has been occupied for a hundred years by the Shepherd Kings, the Hyksos, conquerors from the East who came with horses and dreadful war chariots to crush the foot soldiers of Pharaoh. All of Lower Egypt is occupied by foreign lords, including the ancient household of The Sun Ascendant, where a young woman named Iry was once the lady of the holding and is now a slave.

But there is a change in the wind-the holding has passed to the son of a woman of a Far-Eastern tribe, a Priestess of Horse Goddess, and with him comes the living incarnation of the Goddess, the White Mare. The Mare has driven her people to Egypt in the wake of the foreign kings and, to the horror of the invaders, chooses Iry to be her Servant and Chief Priestess.

And now the Pharaoh Ahmose, who still rules the Upper Kingdom, will move to take back the Lower Kingdom by making a two-fold alliance: with the seafaring empire of Crete, and with Horse Goddess herself.

The Shepherd Kings Details

Date : Published December 14th 2001 by Forge Books (first published May 19th 1999)

ISBN : 9780312874223

Author : Judith Tarr

Format : Paperback 512 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Historical, Historical Fiction, Northern Africa, Egypt, Literature, Ancient, Historical Fantasy, Science Fiction Fantasy, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Shepherd Kings for online ebook

Doug says

A good 'historical fiction' I think. A bit to obsessed with the mores of the time (sex at every other moment? come on....)

Kristyn Jensen says

I loved it! The way she used the characters helped understand the division within the kingdom. All the characters were strong and introduced appropriately. The battles were intense and described beautifully. I wanted more at the end, but it still concluded on a high note. I can't wait to read more and maybe look into reading The Mares Daughter.

Roxanne says

This book was awesome. I really love Judith Tarr but I never actually seek out her books; I usually just find them at flea markets or tucked into random corners of libraries. This one I scored for 50 cents at Goodwill. It was long enough to keep me going all week (me!), and so engaging that I never wanted to put it down. A good retelling of a part of ancient Egyptian history that I hadn't thought much about before.

Joy says

So little is known about the Egypt of the Hyksos conquest that authors can arrange their plots pretty much as they choose, around a few known historical persons. Here Tarr has connected with Egypt's adoption of the horse and war chariot, which had been used by their foreign conquerors, to in turn drive the conquerors out of Egypt. Tarr, whose love of horses usually finds its way in some important way into her novels, gives us Iry, the Mare's servant chosen by the Horse Goddess. Iry is an Egyptian, a slave, singled out by the Mare revered by the foreigners. The choice creates a political crisis just as Upper Egypt is gearing up to reconquer the Delta.

Tarr rarely strays far from the personal and human, which makes her stories so vivid and alive. Iry, her cousin, their Cretan allies, and several members of a conquering family, meld in spite of the conflicts of loyalty caused by the transfer of the Mare's favor to Egypt.

My favorite novel read of 2011
