



The Hidden Oasis

Paul Sussman

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"The Hidden Oasis opens in 2152 BC with eighty priests setting out under cover of darkness into Egypt's Western Desert, dragging with them a sled on which rests a mysterious object swathed in cloth. Four weeks later, having reached their destination, the priests calmly slit each other's throats." "Four thousand years later in present-day Egypt, professional rock climber Freya Hannen arrives for the funeral of her sister, Alex, a Saharan explorer. From the outset Freya is suspicious of claims that Alex had taken her own life, and sets out to uncover what really happened to her sibling. In her quest for the truth Freya joins forces with Alex's friend, English academic Flin Brodie, a world authority on the prehistory of the Sahara. Flin is also searching for answers - he has devoted his career to tracking down a mythic hidden oasis, an Atlantis of the sands that is reputedly the final resting place of an iconic stone with extraordinary powers - the fabled Benben." In this thriller, we follow Flin and Freya on an adventure that takes them from the towering rock walls of Yosemite National Park to the teeming backstreets of Cairo, from the spectacular temples of the Nile Valley to the arid, unforgiving wastes of the Western Desert. The journey is sometimes violent, often dangerous, frequently surprising, and invariably riveting. At stake are not simply the answer to one of archaeology's greatest mysteries - the location of the legendary lost oasis of Zerzura - but also the key to the astonishing, terrifying secret that lies at the oasis's heart.

The Hidden Oasis Details

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Author : Paul Sussman

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From Reader Review The Hidden Oasis for online ebook

The Pirate Ghost (Formerly known as the Curmudgeon) says

A good read. Even when the characters weren't like-able they were rich (in detail) and interesting. In the end I grew to like them.

I particularly liked the author's soft touch and eloquence in the "Good Bye" letter to Freya from Alex and around Alex's Funeral.

The rest of this was what I call "sprint and drift" action/adventure. A chaotic flurry of action packed scenes that slow to a nice leisurely walk in places where he fills us in on back story, history and the personal touches. It's well written, an easy listen (I did the audiobook) and one of those books that, as good as the narrator was (Sorry Mr. Gordon), I wished I had actually read it myself, rather than have it read to me.

I liked the author's sense of humor, though it sometimes seemed a bit out of sync with the ugly-mean villainy from the bad guys and the very somber feel of the book at its start. In some ways the story seemed to be schizophrenic or have multiple personalities that couldn't decide amongst themselves what theme they should strike towards.

Over all, it was a wonderfully fun read (listen). I give it 4 stars. (Which is a lot of stars for me to give a book with this short of a review. Simply put, I liked it regardless of any faults I might also have with it.)

Warnings

1) There is a lot of foul language. As a Retired Sailor (US NAVY) it was tame by shipboard standards, but I'd likely want to take a swing at anyone talking like some of these guys around my children.

2) There is violence, not just shooting at people and suggested malevolence, the description of some pretty brutal interrogation through pain and torture scenes describe in enough detail to give you the eibie-jeebies. I wouldn't call them gratuitous. They fit the books timing and the scene was handled appropriately for this type of book. I'd rate the individual scenes as a bit more brutal than average, but I also point out that there were not that many scenes to avoid and, they work with the story because they helped make the bad guys look bad, not sympathetic.

3) There are some stories of violence towards women and children in the story that are told as part of a history of one of the main villains (and associated supporting thuggery). These stories are told as history, related through another character not in a way the reader has to "experience it live" in the current story thread. They help paint the main Villain as a big, bad dude of the first order. I found the violent scenes manageable, but, they also pushed the envelope where gratuity-those things that are intended to generate extra-circular book buzz about a story- and character building are concerned. Yes, even Villains need their character's built now and then.... And some of us Curmudgeons too.

4) This book is to Egyptologists what "Twister" (with Bill Paxton) was to Storm Chasers— maybe a wee bit over the top here and there. (It made up for it with interesting people and a fun, well written plot line that did keep you guessing now and then.)

6) Call me Kooky and take my biscuits. The ending of this book reminds me of the ending of an old Connery

James Bond movie (Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend?) Where the weirdest two Thugs ever survive and go skipping off through the Nevada Desert looking for Daisies to press and stuff. (yea, they were weird) this book has an ending like that. It was fun, but.. really...those two?

Sarah ~ says

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Kristen says

I expected to like this book, I tried to like this book, really I SHOULD have liked this book. Unfortunately, I didn't like this book. I pretty much knew by page 20 that I wasn't likely to like this book, but I really wanted to give it every opportunity to change my mind so I kept reading until page 80, but when I was still not liking it, I gave up.

I'm not even quite able to put my finger on exactly WHY I didn't like this book, because on the surface it has all kinds of things that normally add up to a good read for me. It's set in Egypt, a location I usually like, the main character is a strong, capable woman, there's the promise of a lot of thrilling plot twists, danger, mysteries and nasty bad guys. Like I said - I SHOULD have liked this book.

I think part of the problem is that there's a substantial amount of set up. There are clearly a large number of characters, so I guess that is necessary, but when I got to page 80 and almost nothing of import had yet happened, it made me wonder how much actual STORY there would be and how much of the nearly 500 pages in the total book I'd have to wade through to get to it.

There's also a bit too much extraneous description in this book for my tastes. I understand that, especially when a book is set in a foreign location, some explanation of pertinent details is necessary and even helpful to set a mood and get the reader into the story. However, I don't need to know what every kind of tree the character pass on a drive is, or that there are manure clumps on the road someone is walking along to a building, just give me what is necessary to put me there and then GET TO THE PLOT! I'm sure some people adore having tons of detail and getting every possible item's description and position, but I'm more about the story, so anything that keeps me from knowing what's going on is a distraction and an unwelcome irritant.

Bottom line: when I'm reading a book and find myself constantly drifting off and thinking about what I have to do tomorrow, or whether I should have chicken or fish for dinner, that book is NOT a keeper for me and it's time to take it back to the library and go on to the next one on my to-be-read list. So that's what I'm doing.

Nira Ramachandran says

A tale of murder, intrigue, lost maps, and ancient curses set in modern day Egypt with its seamy underbelly of drugs, trafficking and illicit money making. Mountain climber Freya Hannen, long estranged from her only sister Alex, learns of her sibling's sudden death, and rushes to Egypt, guilt ridden and remorseful, arriving at the oasis of Dakhla to attend the funeral, only to find indications that the death was not due to natural causes. Her attempt to investigate turns lethal, and she has to flee for her life. As she turns to her only contact in Cairo, Egyptologist Professor Flin Brody for help, the deadly investigation picks up pace, and the pair tear from Cairo to Abydos and back, dodging pursuing vehicles, in a battered Cherokee, and finally take off across the Sahara in a microlight aircraft, in search of the lost oasis of Zerzura. A fast-paced thriller, which turns into fantasy, making it an interesting read, albeit a bit weird.

Justin Lambert says

There were points where I kind of shook my head and said, "that's a little lame", or something similar. But then I reminded myself that I was not in this for a deep, philosophical fulfillment or a cerebral mystery to unfold. No, I came into this book looking for a straight-up action story with an Indiana Jones feel. And for the most part, that's exactly what I got.

While some of the action is a little too cliche' (like escaping the bad guys by jumping out of a third-story window into a flatbed truck full of mattresses... yes, that really happened,) it still managed to keep the pulse racing along with no snore-pages that I can remember. And the last 100 pages contain several very unexpected twists and turns, especially with various character loyalties. For that reason, even a cliche' ending felt satisfying enough to warrant four stars and a recommendation to anyone who loved Indiana Jones.

Suha says

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Monica Go says

I loved this book. I bought it casually at a drugstore and I'm glad of it. I love Egypt, so I loved the setting, and I loved to hear of its history (fake and not).

I was captured by the research for Zerzura and very intrigued by the matter of dealing ancient artefacts and also how it all intertwined with contemporary history. I think it was a nice thing to add. Also, the whole time I kept seeing it in my head as a movie, I could see characters, I could see things.

I got really attached to the characters and was rooting for them to make it.

Definitely worth the re-reading and even better the second time.
Almost forgot to mention how hmrorous could be dialogues at times.

Ameen Alwan says

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Araz Goran says

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Jeffrey says

Had fun reading this and using Google Earth to find and see locations in the Egyptian desert as I read about them in the story.

The book is 650 pages and all interesting. Of course the core story is fantasy, but a damned good one.

The story takes place in modern times after a flashback to the time of Saddam Hussein and arms trafficking. The main characters run about the northern half of Egypt and wind up going on a treasure hunt in the desert.

The novel contains interesting lore about Bedouins, about the garbage pickers (my words) of Cairo, and about doing archeology in Egypt.

Mohamed says

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