



Shadow Hawk

Andre Norton

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When his position at court is usurped by his half brother, a young Egyptian nobleman seeks to regain his standing through military victories against the enemy.

Shadow Hawk Details

Date : Published 1971 by Ace (first published 1960)

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Author : Andre Norton

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

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From Reader Review Shadow Hawk for online ebook

Leah Norton says

Very difficult for me to get into. I was trying to read it aloud to my boys but the sentences are miles long and awkward at times. Did not finish.

Murray Writtle says

A pure historical novel No sci-fi at all. Just speculative fiction built around the very few known facts about the Hyksos invasion of Egypt. Very likable main character and a fascinating intro into ancient Egyptian culture.

Celebrilomiel says

I would have adored this story when I was twelve, but unfortunately I read it too late: my exposure to good literature and my knowledge of the craft have expanded a great deal since then, and my reading tastes have matured proportionately. The political intrigue, the history, the battles, and the strategy still appeal to me, but the flaws of the story stand out to me now, even though they would not have before.

The characters were one-dimensional; the plot relied several times on certain characters being in the right place at the right time, which smacked of deus ex machina rather than seeming natural; the writer sometimes seemed to forget that a character's actions would be hampered by an injury sustained earlier; and the writing, though for the most part acceptable, contained tics and minor errors that pulled me out of the story. The greatest irritation was how the author referenced characters by both their names and descriptors. The story is told in third person and the point of view is oriented from the main character, but the text constantly switches between calling him Rahotep and calling him "the captain," even in close POV moments. I wouldn't mind him being referred to as "the captain" if that only occurred when the POV was a very distant third person, but in close third person, when the reader is nearly in his head, referring to him thus is jarring.

Despite my disappointment in the book, I did very much enjoy the history involved. It whet my interest in ancient Egypt again, and I hope I'll be luckier in the next books I read on the subject.

Denise says

Currently reading this book....before my son does. It's a challenge to get through so far.

Claire Banschbach says

This is one of my favorite books. I read it at least once a year. It has heavily influenced my own storytelling.

I highly recommend it to anyone who loves historical fiction or stories of Ancient Egypt.

emma grace says

This one took me a while to get through; it was a bit slow, but altogether a good story.

Liz says

Andre Norton is most known for her books in science fiction and fantasy but she also wrote a number of historical fiction novels for juvenile. This is a very good one, the story stands even after all this time as the characters are fully realized and the historical background is well done. I own a paperback copy of the title but was happy to find this hardcover version at a library book sale and it was an enjoyable re-read.

Rose says

Believable historical fiction set in ancient Egypt. Truly outstanding, and well worth reading.

Jeanne says

Not at all what I expected. Andre Norton does a good job of conveying an alien or unknown feeling to the things she writes about.

Elena says

This book gets two stars only because it had a good historical setting and some good descriptive scenes. Otherwise, it would get a one. Way too many characters and way too many scenes per chapter. Plus, the overall theme was confusing and there were lots of plot threads that were never followed up or developed properly. Very challenging read for the kids in my class.

Thomas E. says

I read this in high school and always remembered it. Found it in a used book store and reread it in two days. Today it would be book one of a trilogy. One of my favorites!

Darcy says

I enjoy historical fiction, but this one was very difficult for me to get through. Every chapter was exactly the same length (too long), so some were clearly trying to pack too much information into a small space, while others seemed to be stretching out what could have been said more succinctly. As another reviewer has already said, there were far too many scenes in each chapter, making it difficult to follow and digest. Each character was referred by at least 2-3 different names, and those names were not necessarily explained.

The only reason Shadow Hawk receives two stars from me is because the plot was interesting, especially near the end. The other good thing was that my students hated this book so much that they could wait to discuss it each week.

John says

1979 grade B

Ak Hauck says

Used this book as a read-aloud for our 5th grader studying Ancient Egypt. I found it quite difficult for him to track all the various characters (some of little consequence to the story) and the author writes in heavy handed, long winded, overly detailed sentences. While it is one of a scanty few books about the Hyksos invasion and rule of Ancient Egypt suitable for young people, it is tough treading for the reader, and challenging to follow for the listener.

Paul Genesse says

Great adventure set in ancient Egypt. Andre Norton is a masterful author and I loved her characterization and the excellent plot. I flew through this book, which is just over 200 pages and is a really quick read. Shadow Hawk is a must read for those who love novels set in ancient Egypt. You can pick it up used in various places.

Paul Genesse
Author of the Iron Dragon series

Peter Wilson says

I'm surprised by these high reviews. This book was a dud. It was very difficult to follow.

Valerie says

Norton skipped from one genre to another. This is another of the backwaters of history: Egypt occupied by the Hyksos, and most of the Egyptians withdrawn to Upper Egypt (which, confusingly, is in the South--always had trouble with that'n).

If I'd read the blurbs before I read the book, I would have put it down unread. Norton's tendency to glorify warfare has always been one of the things that alienated me most. But there're a lot of things that make the book worth reading: the discussion of Egyptian/Nubian relations, the descriptions of classical Egyptian society, the fact that, despite the hero's isolated state, women really do play a significant part in the story...

There's a tendency to treat Ancient Egypt as if it were an androcratic state, in which the women are off somewhere in sealed courtyard/prisons, playing no part in the action. This runs counter to simple facts like that 'pharaoh' comes from words meaning 'house of rule', that women played a big part not only in court life but in temple life, and that one of the main reasons pharaohs married their sisters was that his child does not inherit--his sister's child does. Facts like that are at least recognized in this book, and others by Norton, and supply a useful corrective to the unwomaned landscapes of too many other novels about ancient Egypt.

This book begins with a genocidal attack on a Kush village in Nubia. The survivors of the murderous attack are (literally) invisible: they're hiding so they won't be killed. This dismissive attitude toward the Kush is never revised, even though the heroes have to depend on a Kush slave later to help some of them escape from a chancy scouting ploy. The Hyksos also are rarely treated as humans. There's no talk between them and the Egyptians at Thebes, and no consideration that if the Hyksos are having trouble with their Asiatic provinces (as is said), they may be amenable to negotiation. The Minoans, though always offstage, are repeatedly referred to as 'warriors', and there's an implication of a stratified society. This is inconsistent with archaeological evidence, which reveals the contemporary Minoans to have been peaceful and egalitarian, enriching themselves and others through an extensive trade network. Norton's prejudices in favor of warfare, slavery, and military serfdom (not even helotism) strongly influence her telling of a story of which even she has to admit little was known. On the other hand, she tends to prefer guerilla warfare to the assembly-line type the Hyksos practice, and her presentations of how awful warfare truly is are fairly realistic: but only to the point of how it affects soldiers: no mention whatever is made of the effect it has on the countryside, and little of its effects on citizens, who are mostly invisible, as well. It's as if the wars were against stuffed dolls: articulated stuffed dolls, that fight back, to be sure: but not real people, with breath and bowels and nervous systems--and farms, and houses, and....
