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The Shadow King: The Bizarre Afterlife Of King Tut's Mummy



Synopsis

More than 3,000 years ago, King Tutankhamun's desiccated body was lovingly wrapped and sent into the future as an immortal god. After resting undisturbed for more than three millennia, King Tut's mummy was suddenly awakened in 1922. Archaeologist Howard Carter had discovered the boy-king's tomb, and the soon-to-be famous mummy's story—even more dramatic than King Tut's life—began. The mummy's "afterlife" is a modern story, not an ancient one. Award-winning science writer Jo Marchant traces the mummy's story from its first brutal autopsy in 1925 to the most recent arguments over its DNA. From the glamorous treasure hunts of the 1920s to today's high-tech scans in volatile modern Egypt, Marchant introduces us to the brilliant and sometimes flawed people who have devoted their lives to revealing the mummy's secrets, unravels the truth behind the hyped-up TV documentaries, and explains what science can and can't tell us about King Tutankhamun.

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Customer Reviews

Smithsonian Magazine, June 2013 "A thoughtful account of the post-unearthing life of the famous royal; an entertaining, lively book; she also interjects common sense, science and authentic history into her account; In the context of Marchant's book, the initial discovery fades: Real insight lies in the layers that time and new technologies reveal about the king and his nation."—New Jersey syndicated "First Read" column, 5/26/13 "A fascinating tale"—Nature, 6/27/13 "[The] rip-roaring story unwraps the science layer by

layer, in tandem with the momentous discoveries and the emergence of theories on the ruler's health and parentage. —*Sacramento Bee*, 6/30/13; "It's been a wild ride for King Tutankhamun's mummy"; Marchant separates the facts from the fiction that has surrounded the controversial relic and explains "what science can and can't tell us" about King Tut. —*American Way Magazine*, 7/1/13; "Compelling." —*New Scientist* "An unusual, gripping spin on the familiar." *The Book Bag* "A must-read for anyone who is fascinated in the history of Egypt."

Jo Marchant is an award-winning journalist who specializes in writing about cutting-edge science. She has worked as a staff reporter and editor for *Nature* and *New Scientist*, where she is currently a consultant. She lives in London.

While the title to this book does not hold true. The author herself explains. It is not just about King Tut, but also about all the people who have been involved in Tut's "afterlife" since his discovery. Filled with all kinds of things I was unaware of. A fun read.

Heard about this book from an episode of the Jon Batchelor show. Listened to it at 9AM this morning, bought the book and have just finished it 12 hours later. Having had a long-withstanding fascination with archaeology I found the book to be a refreshing and uncharacteristically unbiased page turner.

The fascination in the life and mummy of King Tutankhamun never seems to go away. This very interesting book tells more about his death and burial than his life—which is just as well as his life still has a lot of mysteries connected with it. His mummy seems to have gone through enough trials for ten kings. With all his body has gone through you would think that somebody would have been cursed by the dead King's spirit by now. This is a well written book and definitely worth the time for those of us who can't get enough on Ancient Egypt.

Jo Marchant is a very credible, investigative writer. This book is intriguing, provides a solid history of how mummies have been (and are) treated, the politics of Egyptology, and the best treatment of the King Tut situation I have ever read.

This book is similar to Zahi's but focuses more on the story of Carter's search for Tutankhamun that

lead to the discovery that shines on a pharaoh that was minor had it not been for its complete nature. Once a shadowy figure sought but illusive to the most famous pharaoh of them all.

The story of the "Boy King" Tut Ankh Amun has fascinated the Western world since the serendipitous discovery of his tomb and its riches, in 1922. Most King Tut groupies know the tale of the accidental finding of the tomb in the Valley of the Kings, in Upper Egypt, by the English archeologist, Howard Carter, just when his financial backer, Lord Carnarvon, was about to withdraw his support. The mysterious death of the latter, a few months later; initially rumored to be caused by the curse of the Pharaoh but later on found to be septicemia (infection in the blood) in a frail old man, caused by a mosquito bite that festered. Since that time, books, pamphlets and news reports flooded the culture about Ancient Egypt and mummies. Mummy lore became popular. Then Hollywood began its series of Mummy films with Boris Karloff, Lon Chaney Jr. in the pre-WW II era, on to Hammer studios in England with Christopher Lee et al in 1959, culminating in the recent trilogy starring Brendan Fraser. On film, mummies were resurrected, reanimated, walked, mumbled (even spoke!) and pursued their victims. SNL had the unforgettable funny skit by Steve Martin "King Tut". Most recently, in 1972-81, the King Tut exhibits travelled around the world, including several major cities in the USA, to huge audiences and box office revenues. In the past decades a wave of "scientific" investigation and studies were conducted on the hapless Tut mummy, including DNA, X-rays, CT scans, MRI, chemical and tissue analysis; done mostly at the behest and financing of TV and documentary producers. The shows are populated by media savvy scholars, advancing their particular theories as to Tut's lineage, maladies and cause of death; in 2002 it was murder, in 2005 TB? Malaria? or head wound, and in 2010 a crushed chest "from a Hippopotamus stepping on him"! Jo Marchant systematically and methodically clears out the smoke of contradicting theories and conjectures, posing as facts. She does that in a clear concise prose and crisp scientific syntax without academic sophistry. The Shadow King is mainly two parts; the first section is about the so-called common knowledge about the subject but the second part is where Marchant challenges all the facts based on (dubious) scientific conclusions. The book reads like a "who-did-it" thriller and captures the attention of the reader. Amateur Egyptologists, historians and King Tut groupies will thoroughly enjoy "The Shadow King". It is even better than Jo Marchant's previous book "Decoding the Heavens" (about the Antikythera Mechanism), that was a tour de force of scientific popular writing.

Loving this book. It has such amazing detail you even some things I haven't read before.

As an Ancient Egypt fan, most events here were somewhat familiar but nothing had provided context as well as this detailed book. Especially impressive are the authors contrasting views of the real Tutankhamun. Since discovery in 1922, he has been a star, a world recognized object of wonder from whom experts in myriad fields have tried to make a reputation or a buck. The star is actually a small, blackened mummy who has lain in his Valley of the Kings tomb for 3000 years. Howard Carter, his discoverer, thought the Pharaoh belonged in this place and, surprisingly, despite the rest of the world's concerns, that idea has been honored.

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