



Lady of the Reeds

Pauline Gedge

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She grew up on the reed-lined banks of the Upper Nile but she was not like the other villagers of Aswat. Intelligent and ambitious, Thu is convinced that her destiny is greater than to marry a peasant, tend crops and breed sons. She wants more. When Hui, aristocrat, healer and famed seer, anchors his barge at the nearby temple, young Thu swims to it, willing to offer him anything, even herself, for a glimpse of her future. And so she starts a journey that finally leads her to power as Lady Thu, beloved concubine of Ramses III - until, once again, she wants more.

Lady of the Reeds Details

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Author : Pauline Gedge

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From Reader Review Lady of the Reeds for online ebook

Kina says

I really very much enjoyed this book. Of all the historical fiction based in ancient Egypt, this is one of only a handful that I thoroughly enjoyed. The characters seemed fully developed, and the conversations seemed plausible. The actions and words of the main character, Thu, were believable, but I had a hard time remembering her age - I tended to imagine her as a woman in her early 20s. (I've had no children of my own, and lord knows I gave my mother enough "back talk" in my early teens - so perhaps 14-16 year old females do act in such contemptuous ways.....)

I am looking forward to reading the sequel, and most likely will follow that up by reading other books by Pauline Gedge.

Helen C says

Lady of the Reeds is the personal diary of Thu of Aswat, and it is a fascinating document. Written in the first person, each page chronicles her life from poor peasant girl in the rural Nile farming village of Aswat, to favored concubine in the Royal Harem of Ramses III at Pi-Ramesse. Omitting nothing, this blue-eyed daughter of an Egyptian midwife and Libu mercenary takes us on a journey that travels a path from childish innocence to vile debauchery. We are with her every step of the way.

The life story of Thu of Aswat continues sixteen years later in the sequel, House of Illusions. A must read.

Chris says

Gedge does a wonderful job of painting time and place. Her historical fiction placed in ancient Egypt is some of the best. This book is told from the viewpoint of a would be murderer, who Gedge draws with wonderful shading.

Adrianna says

Still not quite sure how I felt about this novel. I was really enjoying it until about the end, but I don't want to give any spoilers.

Thu is quite ambitious and ruthless for a peasant Egyptian girl and essentially works her way up to becoming the Pharaoh's concubine. She is intelligent and beautiful and eager to carve out a niche of power for herself, however, many other players are eager to do the same.

The historical representation was fairly good, I think. Thu is completely fictional, as far as I know, but Ramses III is quite real and, I guess, knowing his history, I was expecting some other kind of end. It has been on my mind quite a bit since I finished it a few days ago. I keep rehashing all the plot twists- why did she do this or that? Why would he act like that? Why didn't so and so do this? Etc. I actually feel a little angry and

can't quite decide if it is in sympathy of the characters, or for my own disillusionment.

Gregoire says

Certes le contexte historique est bien évoqué mais pour le reste ... J'aurais mieux apprécié l'histoire si je l'avais lue ado Là, franchement, je m'y suis ennuyé

Iset says

[Recent re-examinations of Ramesses' mummy have revealed that his throat was indeed cut. The perpetrators, Tiye, her teenaged son by the pharaoh, Pentawerres, and a who

Sarah says

Giving up on this. It's just frankly a little too slow and boring, but my biggest issue is the main character, Thu. I liked her ambition and confidence at first, but 100 pages in she starts to seem so self absorbed and petty. Not for me.

The Book Voucher says

Based on a known and historically attested harem plot to poison Ramses III, House of Dreams aka Lady of the Reeds is a perfect blend between historical fact and fiction, with deep and subtle, well-developed characters, detailed and compelling descriptions, and surprising plot-twists.

Full review posted on The Book Voucher

Armand says

There's some joke to be made about the Nile/denial, but that's low-hanging fruit.

So... Ayn Ra and the tell tale canopic jar.

Shira Bea says

The author has such a way with words in depicting scenarios in Ancient Egypt. I love history, but my favorite of all is studying Ancient Egypt. In no means I am an expert, but the novel made me learn more in depth about Ancient Egypt that no other history books have given me.

First, I like the setting, the culture, the way of life depicted by the author. It made me imagine what the cultural climate was like. Thu's father made me think he was a Viking, or a Gaul, or someone belonging to the northern countries. The book said that the possibility is that he belonged to the Lubi tribe, but I searched it and found nothing about them. Makes me wonder what kind of books the author used for research.

I did not like what happened to Thu, that in the end, she was banished back to Aswat.

Londa says

This book did capture my attention. The story kept me up at night reading for hours until I finished. The description of life and customs in ancient Egypt were very effective. I felt like I was right there with the characters.

I did not care for Thu at all. I don't HAVE to like the main character of a book to enjoy it but it made it difficult for me to want to see her succeed in anything. In fact, I was rooting against her a lot of times.

All of the characters were pretty well developed, but I didn't find some of their actions believable. The ending was especially contrived. Thu should have had a much different fate than the one she got. At first, I was excited that this book has a sequel, but the more I thought about it, the more I wondered if I could stand Thu in another book.

In the end, I think I will read another of Pauline Gedge's novels about ancient Egypt, but I will leave Thu exactly where she is at the end of this book.

Althea Ann says

Long eons ago, in the days when the Internet was just something called Usenet... before amazon. before paperbackswap. before goodreads... back in Those Days, I made a special trip, while in Canada, to the bookstore. I'm pretty sure it was the World's Biggest Bookstore (yes, that's its name). And I bought every single one of Pauline Gedge's books, and brought them all home with me. Very heavy.

I never really did understand why Gedge is so popular in her home, Canada, and completely unpublicized in the US. Now, of course, you can get any book online - if you know about it - but I fail to see why publishers have seemingly believed that people in the USA are significantly more uninterested in nice, juicy historical fiction about Ancient Egypt than their neighbors to the north.

Anyway, this was a re-read. I'd previously read it under the Canadian title, "House of Dreams."

I have to admit, reading it this time, it did feel slightly dated, just in the way characters interacted. I also felt mildly annoyed at having a blue-eyed protagonist (you can't really call her a heroine) in ancient Egypt. Yes, it's explained and all... but post-Memoirs-of-a-Geisha, I guess I just feel differently about it.

But I'm still giving it 5 stars, because I just really enjoy Gedge's writing. She manages just the right balance between historically researched details and vivid speculation; really bringing the era to life.

Lady of the Reeds is based on a known incident of a plot to assassinate Ramses III. However, the concubine Thu is all her creation. Starting out as a commoner, daughter of a foreigner in a small town in Egypt, Thu has always felt she is destined for greater things. Hungry for knowledge and power, she will scheme and plot to feed her ambition. She's a ruthless, and not necessarily likable character, but her story is compelling.

Heidi says

A book about an incredibly shallow Egyptian peasant girl who becomes Pharaoh's concubine and always thinks that she's two steps ahead of all the people using her, but really, she's 5 steps behind. You know it, the author knows it, everyone in the book knows it, and yet, you find yourself getting sucked in and reading on, cringing and wincing your way through the story, and hoping that it doesn't end the way you suspect that it must. If you hate second-hand embarrassment, then this book is not for you.

I didn't think that it was a bad book, in fact, it probably warrants more than 2 stars because the portrayal was probably pretty accurate and I know that the author's fictional story of Hatsheput, a female Egyptian Pharaoh, was painstakingly researched. However, at the end of the day, I'm just not sure that I'd recommend *Lady of the Reeds* to anyone because I know that I don't want to read it again and I feel like my friends would be annoyed with me for recommending this book to them. Go get *Child of the Morning* instead, which is phenomenal historical fiction about Egypt, by the same author, with more complex characters.

Lisa says

Oh, I loved this!

I wasn't really expecting to enjoy it this much, since I don't have a strong interest in Rameses III and had heard reports that the narrator-protagonist, Lady Thu, was unlikable and unpleasant. I didn't have an issue with Thu herself, because while she did unlikable things and was presumptuous, she remained likeable.

I must have a thing for Gedge's pharaohs, because the Rameses III makes three out of three of her pharaohs I've fallen in love with, though this Rameses is more human and fallible than Amenhotep III and Rameses II. Though, this is probably because we got to see more of him.

While the ending did strike me as unfair, I don't think it's out of character. Thu has always been a character with great flights of fancy, and, particularly as she has lost so much, I wouldn't be surprised if she died on her deathbed dreaming of being rescued by Rameses.

Based on the little knowledge I have of this period, I'd say that the story jives well with historical knowledge. Even the very recent discovery that Rameses III's throat was cut could fit well within the story Gedge presents us. I don't know how it works in the sequel, *House of Illusions*, though I'm dying to find out.

Paula says

Después de mucho tiempo, me apetecía leer alguna novela romántica y el tema del antiguo Egipto me gusta desde siempre.

Era exactamente lo que esperaba y lo que buscaba. Una vez empiezas leer y no puedes parar. Cada día cerraba el libro pensando lo que va a suceder a la pequeña Thu. Estoy acostumbrada de que las típicas heroínas de las novelas románticas son descritas como "las buenas". Las que se ha hecho algún daño pero

Thu es diferente. Es buena y mala, es inocente y perversa. Llegué a simpatizar con ella y en dos páginas más adelante la detestaba ...

Esto me confirma otra vez que lo bueno no es tan bueno y lo malo no es tan malo ...

Pero aunque hay que ser realistas, yo anhelaba un final diferente. Mucho más al estilo "happy end" pero no. Puede que si terminase con el típico final feliz recargado, cerraría el libro con cierta satisfacción porque era lo que andaba buscando. Pero he de admitir que Pauline Gedge le dió a la pequeña Thu un final abierto y al cerrar el libro, me dejó un poco furiosa, decepcionada pero a la vez pensativa sobre el problema del poder, del dinero, de la corrupción, de las mentiras y las manipulaciones. Pero ante todo de la libertad que pasa en muchas ocasiones en nuestras vidas totalmente desapercibida. Desapercibida hasta el momento de que la perdemos, entonces se convierte en algo tan vital como respirar.

Irena says

This was very good book that I felt needed more to make it complete. It is a lazy story, one to be while relaxing, not fast paced in any way, but definitely active enough to hold one's attention.

The story is centered and told from a common girl's POV. Her dreams, desires, irritations, opinions. She needs to be a little better developed or maybe she is just that shallow of a person, but you can definitely get a sense for her life.

Excellent pull in. I found myself thinking about the characters and their lives while I was doing my regular daily chores. I wanted to know what was going to happen next.... even without all the intrigue that I **NORMALLY** have in the books I read. I recommend it!

Rhonda says

A fantastic book by a very gifted author. Excellent!

Kimi Augusto says

Short Summary:

Peasant girl with ambitious streak's journey to become Pharaoh's top concubine and her lack of moral scruples that become her downfall.

My thoughts:

I could be biased because I just LOVE Ancient Egyptian books, but I quite enjoyed it. Yes the main character was hard to like at times because she doesn't have the moral depth of a spoiled brat. However she is intelligent and witty albeit conniving. And really, how many books can you read with your character being the pinnacle of virtue without wanting to strangle the self-righteous voice and tell her that she's a human being dammit, and faults are what make her that way. The reason I docked it a star was because I found the ending to be less than satisfactory and the character's temperament and personality to be too abruptly changed. Quite frankly I didn't believe it. However for the majority of the book I was in it with rapt attention and I would recommend you pick it up if you're short on reading material.

Hannah Mitchell says

I really love reading this book.

It is about Thu, a poor girl from a small poor village. Like most female protagonist she yearns adventure and to leave her birth village. Hui, an albino Seer, is her ticket out. Thu becomes his assistant and later a concubine to Pharaoh Ramses the 2nd.

However Thu is thrown into a conspiracy to restore Ma'at and she is the center of it all. With Hui guiding her to his groups. When it fails they all turn their backs to her and let her face the music by herself. She's found guilty of a crime that's been a set up from Hui's group.

I really enjoyed this book. Yet I'm sad that Gedge used the evil albino trope (in a certain point of view) in Hui.

But I do highly recommend this book to anyone who loves to read about Ancient Egypt. This book is one of the better historical fiction on or about Ancient Egypt.

Carrie Slager says

The last line of this blurb is very, very true. House of Dreams explores the darker side of the land of the pharaohs, the side that is usually ignored by amateur and even professional historians and archaeologists. Life was not all beauty and luxury, especially for peasants, which is demonstrated in great detail in this book. Not only is House of Dreams mostly historically accurate (except in the timing of certain events at the end of the novel), it is well-written and emotionally resonant.

Thu is a highly believable, interesting and sympathetic character. All she wants in her life is more than what life in her tiny village of Aswat has to offer. She is an ambitious and intelligent child who, under Hui's careful supervision, grows into a beautiful, intelligent and ambitious young woman. These three factors contribute to her rise in the harem of Ramses III.

Filled with palace intrigue, sex and passion, House of Dreams is an unforgettable novel. I have read all but two of Pauline Gedge's books (both of them not set in Egypt), but I must say that this is by far her best book. I would recommend it to anyone, even if they have no interest whatsoever in ancient Egypt because it has such a good plot and well-developed characters.

I give this book 5/5 stars.
