



River God

Wilbur Smith

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For Tanus, the fair-haired young lion of a warrior, the gods have decreed that he will lead Egypt's army in a bold attempt to reunite the Kingdom's shared halves. But Tanus will have to defy the same gods to attain the reward they have forbidden him, an object more prized than battle's glory: possession of the Lady Lostris, a rare beauty with skin the color of oiled cedar--destined for the adoration of a nation, and the love of one extraordinary man.

River God Details

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Author : Wilbur Smith

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From Reader Review River God for online ebook

Allison says

River God is one of those historical novels that broke open a whole new world to me. I have been to Ancient Egypt, lived, lost and triumphed there, and then resurfaced in my own time as if coming out of a vivid dream. The images are still with me, but what makes it truly wonderful is the main character, Taita. He is the star of this book, not the two star-crossed lovers who dominate the book description.

Taita is a slave, a eunuch, but a highly educated and privileged one. He's an artist, an inventor, a scholar, a physician, a strategist, and more. He's a genius at the middle of everything important, driving it all from the humble position of a trusted, good-natured slave. Taita can do almost anything, think a way out of most situations and turn them somehow to advantage. But there's a sense of tongue-in-cheek to his abilities at times that makes me think he's laughing at himself just a little even though his attitude is one of natural superiority. He thinks the world of himself, but is also compassionate and selfless.

What a great character. I loved seeing events through his eyes, seeing his curiosity and his innovations and ideas, and what fruit they bore. I loved the steadfastness and depth of emotion that he felt for those he loved, and those relationships made the history much more poignant in the end.

Yes, Taita's pretty much perfect, and Tanus and Lostra are also beautiful, godlike, and amazingly talented and well-loved. Readers who prefer their characters to have many shades of gray might have some qualms. This is not full of gritty realism, but is more akin to a heroic epic with characters that are larger than life. In a time when heroes could be elevated to god status in the eyes of the people, I didn't find this to be out of place.

I almost forgot to mention the adventure, the machinations, the betrayals, the hunts and the battles. Life on the Nile is wrapped all around it, teeming with life yet unmarred by humans. There are many opportunities for barbarism and civilization to clash and mingle. There are gruesome deaths aplenty that don't allow you to forget the savageness of the times (including many animals). Just in case you think it might be boring following the life of a noble slave-genius. I was mesmerized.

Ed says

How can you possibly resist a book about ancient Egyptians?

River God was a pleasure to read. At over 600 pages it still managed to keep the action flowing right until the end and it doesn't hurt that Taita is one of the sweetest and most likable characters I've come to know in a long time.

At first I wasn't too sure about this book. I bought it on a spur of the moment and didn't know what to expect from it. Taita comes across as a priss to begin with, and there is that question of how Egyptian society flourished for thousands of years without him, considering the fact that he invents just about everything. But the fact that he's a slave, and a eunuch, set him apart from the prototypical hero. He's not exactly what you'd expect from a slave, however, as he's well loved and respected and wields a good deal of power and influence. And his his being a eunuch means the book isn't filled with the gratuitous sex scenes which plague so many others of its ilk! He was lovely. Smart, resourceful, gutsy and loyal, and definitely not suffering from that irksome macho-man syndrome. He might be a bit vain, but we get to see his flaws too. And he's

pretty. Don't give up if the first few pages don't grab you immediately. It should grow on you.

The action just kept coming, and it's been a while since I was so hooked on a book, constantly wanting to know what happens next. It was an epic. Seriously. I loved it. Though the writing was a little cheesy at times, but it was still readable so that's a very minor quibble. There's something for everyone in this book. There were battles, wars, murders, marriages, medical emergencies, animals, gods, births, deaths, journeys, friendships, enemies... You won't have time to get bored.

I can't vouch for the book's historical accuracy, although obviously I would expect Taita's story to be completely fabricated, but it didn't seem too far off the mark in general aspects of Egyptian life. Besides, authors are allowed to take liberties in historical *fiction*.

I'm not sure how quickly I'll rush on to the next books in this series, if only because I want to preserve the memory of Taita as he is in *River God*. But this will certainly be a re-read somewhere down the line.

Lizzy says

Ancient Egypt mesmerizes me and I loved Wilbur Smith's River God. Taita is a very likable character and narrates the story. Not an everyday model hero for sure as a slave and a eunuch. But he's brilliant, spirited and above all loyal, even if a little vain; and I specifically like flawed heroes. I can't judge it's historical accuracy and I read it as a work of fiction; I'm not knowledgeable about Ancient Egypt, but I don't think it matters here.

It was a great adventure to read: the Egyptian Court decamps up the River Nile in their boats after the ruthless invasion by the barbarians Hyksos. Many years go by, and the Egyptians build a life in exile until they can finally return and reclaim their home. There are bloody battles, impossible love fulfilled and the coming of age of a new generation. And as we follow the river with *Wilbur Smith's* master writing, 600+ page-turner, we follow along an incredibly enjoyable "road-trip" story. Recommended!

Antonio Rosato says

Ho riletto questo bellissimo romanzo dopo oltre vent'anni dalla sua uscita (era il 1993 e io comprai la prima edizione). Primo capitolo di un'avvincente serie di cinque romanzi incentrati sulla figura di Taita, uno schiavo eunuco che grazie alle sue abilità in fatto di medicina, pittura, ingegneria, tattica militare e tante altre arti, riesce ad emanciparsi e ad ottenere la libertà per mano della sua stessa adorata padrona, nel frattempo diventata moglie (a malincuore) del Faraone Mamose, ma da sempre innamorata di Tanus, il più forte guerriero d'Egitto. Tutta la storia è raccontata dal punto di vista di Taita, un po' come se il libro stesso fosse una sorta di diario personale in cui (come in quasi tutti i libri di Wilbur Smith) troviamo inganni, guerre e tradimenti ma anche, e soprattutto, Amore con la A maiuscola... quello bellissimo ma struggente (non ci sarà il lieto fine) tra la regina Lostris ed il suo amato Tanus. Infine, c'è da apprezzare l'ottima descrizione dei luoghi, delle situazioni (spettacolare la narrazione "in presa diretta" della guerra contro gli Hyksos) e dei personaggi; ma, allo stesso tempo, come non criticare (ed è l'unico elemento negativo di tutto il volume) la troppa dovizia di particolari nelle scene di sesso o violenza? [<http://rosatoeu.blogspot.it/2015/05/i...>]

Henry Avila says

The mist clears, the clouds roll out and the fog lifts, looking down, the Nile appears. Its blue waters, dominate the desert land, like a Lion, over a savanna. And the hot sun, is always shining, bringing excruciating heat, which not even the Egyptians can tolerate too long. The scene, ancient Egypt, the life giving river flows leisurely by, going north. But no human knows where it begins, in the south, if it does have an end there. The eunuch slave, Taita, loves Lostris, daughter of the evil Grand Vizier, Intef, of the kingdom of Upper Egypt (and owner of gentle Taita). Lord Intef, has his chief guard Rasfer, beat his slave brutally, for minor infractions, and Rasfer loves his work...The weak, tired Pharaoh, has let Lower Egypt, the delta kingdom, slip away , and now there are two Egyptian nations, in the 18th century (B.C.)... But Taita has a viable rival, the imposing warrior, Tanus, rising star of the army, and he has noble blood, in his veins. The handsome eunuch is a genius, seemingly able to invent anything, he set his mind to (except one). The intelligent man, has such an overpowering love, for the lovely Lostris, she adores him too (Hapi , the River God, is her patron). He is happy, being a lowly slave, as long as he sees her every day. Naturally Lostris, loves Tanus, and he, reciprocates. The slave's best friend is, yes, that same man, this strange triangle will last, all their lifetimes. But during the feast of the great God, Osiris, in the exotic city of Thebes, with 250,000 souls , the largest on the face of the Earth. The king sees the daughter of the Vizier, in a play, written by Taita, inside the sacred temple. The teenage beauty, enchants him, the old Pharaoh Mamose, the VIII, marries her. She the heartbroken girl, becomes one of his 200 wives, he has no sons but many daughters, the dynasty must continue! Tanus, is devastate, along with her comes Taita, and becomes very useful to the Pharaoh, in his Nile River palace, on an island, many miles from Thebes. The talented slave, even begins to like the pleasant monarch, physician to the mighty king, architect to the building of his tomb. Which almost bankrupts the wealthy , desert kingdom, scribe, inventor, and fortune teller, he can do anything. He wished, it was true. Ruthless invaders from the east, the Hyksos, barbarians, invincible, with never seen animals (horses), pulling countless, strange vehicles (chariots). Having destroyed the red kingdom of the north, sacking its capital, Memphis, killing the usurper king, and now are coming up stream , in war galleys. With thousands of troops, by land , too, the white kingdom of the south, is doomed. After a bloody, battle defeat, the southerners must flee up the river . In their own boats, the fleet slowly turns away, heading southerly, from their island headquarters, a paradise in a turbulent world, green, with trees, in Egypt! The palaces are abandoned, Taita, Lostris, Tanus, the Pharaoh's son, and many thousands of others, are on board. As the Hyksos, pursue them, never stopping , the chase, and still a vague plan, to return someday . Floating, forever floating , the royal galleys, go up the endless river...

Art Tirrell says

ONE OF THE BEST ADVENTURE NOVELS OF MODERN TIMES

Only drawback; it's long, too long, but for sheer imaginative scope, Wilbur Smith's River God tops everything I've ever read. The story is narrated by the charming eunuch slave Taita, whose secret passion for queen Lostris surprises - until we learn Taita reached manhood before being castrated in order to render him "safe" for service in the harem. He retains his passion, artistic drives and incredible ego, and the exercise of these alone are entertainment of the highest order.

After his responsibility to the queen, Taita's primary task in life is to oversee the creation of the treasures the pharaoh will carry to the next life. Along the way - if you believe Taita's egotistical and often condescending reports (and I loved believing) - he engineers the cutting of stones for the pyramid, personally carves the most exquisite of the golden treasures to be entombed with the ruler, influences most of Pharaoh's decisions, protects his friends and destroys his enemies and oh yes, devises equipment and tactics which make the army invincible.

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Marci says

i really liked this book. Taita is an incredible character. this was def. a page turner, i am running to the library today(im not allowed to buy more books unless absolutly nec. yes, i am a book a holic!) to pick up seventh scroll and warlock because i read at work and cannot bear to not have a book to occupy my time btwn xraying patients! the story was very authentic from what i know about egypt. and i was surprised to read Mr smith's note at the end that it was based on a true archeologic find and taita was possibly an actual person that just fueled my fire to read the other books in this series! This was very well written.

(KFK)Juliene2010(KFK) says

This book was one of the most amazing books to have ever graced literature. That may only be my opinion, but I believe it to be true.The book had action, drama, comedy and of course a bit of sexual story as well. The book had many different fights and wars in it. Tanus was a skilled and vicious warrior and killed without hesitation. Tanus had skill, discipline and love for a woman. Taita also had the same love for the same woman and yet they were best friends. They both fought many battles both emotional and physical. Tanus used his brute strength to kill all that threatend him, his love and Taita. Taita loaned his vast knowledge and wisdom to Tanus to use and help both of the men. With this combination many foes fell at their knees with plenty of blood too.

In this book both Taita and Tanus loved Lord Intef's daughter Lostris. Lostris was beautiful and kind, both men yearned for her. They were also best of friends and Taita knew of Tanus's and Lostris's love and had to face it everyday.Although there was love drama there was also the drama of Taita facing his fears and becoming stronger and killing a pharoah who only hurt.This book takes you on Taita's journey through pain as wells as many others.

Even though there was blood,fighting and drama there was also comedy.It seems a bit hard to believe, but there was.Taiata's had his balls cut off so he could never know the pleasure of sex...I know it's cruel and all. but it was so so funny.Taita also had a very quick wit and made many comments and little gestures to make people feel stupid and like idiots.Also Taita constantly had a smart comment that was just plain funny. This book is one of my favorites and is excellent and very well written.I read this book while I was on punishment and I am glad I got to read it.If anyone is interested in Egyptian books and mythology then read this book.

Genia Lukin says

This book as written by Cecil B. DeMille.

Enter TAITA, dark haired, gorgeous, excellent physique, good at everything.

TAITA: I am a eunuch. but you can't tell, because i do weight-lifting every day.

TAITA postures significantly. His expression is sombre, profound, behind his back the Nile flows, a

crocodile ambles out of the bushes.

Enter LOSTRIS, nubile and gorgeous, dressed in saffron. [director's note: for God's sake, increase her age to 18, not even Game of Thrones got away with sexually portraying a 14-year-old girl]

LOSTRIS: I am Lady Lostris, daughter of the Evil grand Vizier! I curse my luck for having been born so beautiful, so accomplished, and so utterly implausible, the daughter of a stereotypical villain! but I rely wholly on my friend and teacher Taita, who cannot be accused of pedophilia, having been incapacitated in adolescence.

Suddenly enter TANUS, big and blond, holds out his arms to LOSTRIS, his arms full of longing.

LOSTRIS: Oh, Tanus!

TANUS: Oh, Lostris!

The two clutch each other in their arms.

TANUS: I love you, Lostris!

LOSTRIS: I Love you, Tanus, but we cannot marry, because my stereotypical evil vizier father hates you, and will kill you! But it will be all right, because TAITA will fix it with his many awesome skills and magical clairvoyance.

Enter INTEF and PHARAOH, concealing themselves in the corner, their faces in shadow, connive.

INTEF: Oh, Pharaoh, in among all my other villainous schemes, I have found the time to propose that you marry my beautiful nubile daughter. Oh, by the way, if you could kill off Tanus for me? That'd be great, thanks.

[Ominous music sounds as the wedding scene unfolds with at least three thousand extras, we can reuse the set of Cleopatra for that, or something]

LOSTRIS: I want to die!

LOSTRIS clutches a dagger in her shapely white hands, poisoning it dramatically over her throat - this is not in the book, but it makes good cinema.

TAITA: My Lady! I can predict the future! I predict immense grossing at the film release! Please do not die! Also, I predict that in five years you will be a convenient widow.

LOSTRIS: Okay!

TANUS and TAITA ride through a wind-swept desert, in the background, military march sounds. Enter a squad of ROBBERS, and a fight scene ensues. TANUS in close-shot, with his face set in determination, sword stabbing into an adversary, TAITA, in close shot, his face sombre. The ROBBERS are defeated.

TANUS: Lord Pharaoh, we found the head of the bandits!

PHARAOH: You did? Crap! I wanted you to die! Well, okay, who is it?

TANUS points a ponderous finger at INTEF while drumrolls beat in the background. INTEF is dragged off

and executed [plan for an additional three thousand extras here].

LOSTRIS: Tanus....

TANUS: Lostris....

Fade to black.

PHARAOH: I have a son!

[dies]

For the next twenty years things develop exactly as you would expect them to.

TANUS: Luke, I am your father!

The End.

Reviewer's Note: The book would not take much adjustment in order to make such a film. In fact, the writing is evocative of ponderous Hollywood close-up shots, emotional drama with all the most cliched loves, temperaments, betrayals and twists (who didn't see the issue of Lord Intef vis-a-vis the robbers coming?) and characters that are FABULOUS, with all caps.

I struggled through it, I am still not sure how.

Bettie? says

[Bettie's Books (hide spoiler)]

Giuls says

Devo dire che ho trovato questo libro abbastanza noioso. Anzi, **decisamente noioso**.

La lettura non scorre affatto: per riuscire a finirlo mi sono dovuta sforzare tra ieri sera e stamattina.

Ciò che mi ha dato più fastidio è lo sviluppo della trama: scorre lentissima su certi avvenimenti, con pagine e pagine che trattano di pochi giorni e righe e righe che raccontano delle invenzioni di Taita, seguite da pochissime pagine in cui si parla di combattimenti e simili, che poi sono i punti che più mi sarebbero interessati.

Per quel che riguarda i personaggi, devo dire che non ce n'è stato uno che mi sia piaciuto. Taita in particolare l'ho trovato abbastanza odioso e pieno di sé: ok che sembra essere l'unico egiziano con un po' di cervello e qualche idea, ma sembra davvero un Dio sceso in Terra che sa fare tutto e tutto benissimo, e ovviamente non fa che vantarsene! **Mamma mia che nervi!**

Gli altri personaggi, anche quelli abbastanza principali, proprio non mi hanno fatto né caldo né freddo e alla fine mi sono sembrati tutti di sfondo alla grandezza dello schiavo.

L'unica cosa che mi è piaciuta del libro, il motivo per cui le stelline sono 2 e non 1, è la ricostruzione del

mondo dell'Antico Egitto, un mondo che mi ha sempre affascinato e che in questo libro mi ha stregato. Peccato per tutto il resto...

Rebecca Huston says

For me, there's always a bit of trepidation when I pick up a novel set in Ancient Egypt. If I'm lucky, the book has plenty of research, an engaging story, and few anachronisms. Then there's this heap of steaming dung. There is so much to this one that I detest, from the insufferable perfection of the lovers Lostris and Tanus, the narrator, Taita the Super-Eunuch, and host of pretty much forgettable side characters. When the Hyksos attack Egypt in their chariots, the Egyptians are shocked and horrified. It's up to Taita to solve the problem and rescue the country and he does it all without hardly breaking a sweat. That's the problem with this one -- the main characters are so, so perfect. And what with all the errors -- blondes in Egypt? Really? -- I was so glad to see this book finished. Others may find it enjoyable, but I found this one to be a chore. Only three stars, and only somewhat recommended.

For the longer review, please go here:

<http://www.personapaper.com/article/2...>

Gouty says

I don't usually advocate the burning of books, but in this guy's case I'll make an exception. He has some of the worst, turgid, cliché ridden prose in the English language. This guy must have a cliché macro programmed into his computer. "Oooh! I need a cliché. What one shall I use? I think I'll use F7." I do not know how this guy got published, not even once but multiple times. If you come across a book written by this guy take it to a safe place douse it in gasoline and set fire to it. You will be doing a small part in making the world a better place.

Jwala says

I only read this book because it was highly recommended to me by someone. River God is supposedly about an epic journey and enduring love. Soap Opera history. I don't know much about Egyptian history, so I am not sure which historical elements within the book are accurate or inaccurate but the plot seemed a bit formulaic and I can't believe protagonist's utter perfection and endless accomplishments and talents. He single-handedly invented or saved every single aspect of Egyptian history and art. He never took a bad decision throughout the book. How anyone can claim realism with this character is beyond me.

I didn't mind the length though, because the book is easy to read and action-packed. I agree with my friend who called it a bad history but a good fiction.

I did not like it much but maybe if I had read this when I was 12 I may have loved it.

But I still think it's worth a read.

Paul O'Neill says

This was so good, I stopped reading a Malazan book to focus on it...

Higher praise was never given.

Kevin says

A decent story about life in Egypt around 2000BC is marred by hamfisted writing. I didn't hate the book, but I sure hated parts of it.

In general the story isn't bad, but the writing made me cringe at best, and annoyed or angry at worst. It is full of 2-dimensional characters who never change (or change from one flat personality to another), constant deus ex machina (in the form of actual Egyptian gods) and somewhat creepily sexual writing that is out of place and excessive.

River God is narrated by a slave Taita, who, the way the book tells it, is the pinnacle of human life. He is amazing at everything he does and touches - writing, invention, music, invention, military strategy, architecture, sculpture, invention, painting, invention, science, weather prediction, cartography, astrology, fortune telling, invention, etc. etc. etc. etc. He is more annoying in that he's in no way modest; since he's narrating, he constantly tells you how good he is at everything, not that he's trying to brag. And I shouldn't forget to mention how amazingly beautiful he is, irresistible to men and women. Basically if Taita had not existed, Egypt would have collapsed 4000 years ago.

The writing is better than the DaVinci Code, but not by much.

Hugo says

Há dez anos foi-me oferecido o livro *A 11ª Praga*. Não fazia ideia que era o quarto de uma série. Li-o e adorei, fiquei encantado com o Egito Antigo de Wilbur Smith e com o génio Taita. Foi sem dúvida um grande incentivo para me aventurar por outras leituras. Este ano decidi finalmente comprar todos os outros livros. *River God (O Deus do Rio, Ulisseia)* é o primeiro. Taita é um escravo e eunuco ao serviço do odioso Lord Intef, mão direita do Faraó Mamose. Na verdade é Taita que cumpre as funções de Lord Intef. Dotado de uma inteligência soberba e perspicácia, ele é arquitecto, curandeiro, professor e engenheiro, afirmando muitas vezes ser o mais sábio de todos os homens do Egito. É essa sua qualidade de polímata que retira algum entusiasmo da leitura, com Taita na equipa nada corre mal. Apesar de tudo, o livro é uma aventura fantástica, com alguma precisão histórica, por isso recomendo a quem estiver interessado em cenários e épocas diferentes do habitual.

WH says

Rhodesian born author Wilbur Smith is not as well known in the US as in the UK and many other countries

throughout the world. However, his first major novel was published in 1964 and since that time he has written over 30 additional titles with sales exceeding \$65MM. His historical fiction and adventure novels have continually received high praise, maintained a strong following, and for those who were fortuitous in starting a library collection of his earlier works, provided a fairly good return on their financial investments.

This novel RIVER GOD, first published in 1993, is the lead book of a 4 part Egyptian series. Set nearly 2,000 years BC, it chronicles a transitional period of approximately 40 years. During a time leading up to Egypt's conquer by eastern savages using strange beasts and a seemingly floating apparatus (wheeled chariots pulled by horses), to the eventual over throw of the invaders.

Of the half dozen books I've read by Wilbur Smith, this is one of my favorites so far. He undertakes sufficient amounts of research to provide a reasonable degree of time, place, and events for his dialog and story line. While there may be a few new historical learning's for novices of this period, the real purpose and draw is in the amazingly good and entertaining read.

There is also the fact (at least for me) that he deals with subject matter that is different and creative; not something that corresponds to dozens of other current writers, becoming lost in a foggy array of sameness. It is not a literary masterpiece, intellectual or profound statement; it is just a good old fashioned, fun and engrossing book that pulls you in and one you can hardly put down until finished.
