



Sphinx's Princess

Esther M. Friesner

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Nefertiti was far more than just a pretty face.

Nefertiti may be the dutiful daughter of a commoner, but her inquisitive mind often gets her into situations that are far from ordinary, like receiving secret lessons from a scribe. And she's the kind of girl who acts first, and apologizes later whenever she witnesses injustice or cruelty. But she is also extraordinarily beautiful. And news of her striking beauty and impulsive behavior attracts the attention of her aunt, the manipulative Queen Tiye, who sees Nefertiti as an ideal pawn in her desire for power. Even though Nefertiti is taken from her beloved family and forced into a life filled with courtly intrigue and danger, her spirit and mind will not rest. She continues to challenge herself and the boundaries of ancient Egyptian society.

Esther Friesner offers readers another fresh new look at an iconic figure—blending historical fiction and mythology in a thrilling concoction.

Sphinx's Princess Details

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Author : Esther M. Friesner

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From Reader Review Sphinx's Princess for online ebook

Kristy says

While reading this I thought I liked Michelle Moran's version of Egypt better, and I probably still do, but this book does deserve some credit:

- 1) It is very readable and easy to understand
- 2) There were many nicknames and I didn't have to learn how to pronounce some of those crazy names
- 3) Nefertiti is young in the beginning and she is still relatively young in the ending... I feel like I got more insight on her growing up.
- 4) The little bit of romance in this one is bittersweet. There is nothing inappropriate in the story.
- 5) The story of Nava showed how compassionate and caring Nefertiti could be
- 6) The relationship between N and A (the nice brother) was so sweet I can't wait to read how the rest of their relationship unfolds.
- 7) I really got a feel of court life.
- 8) Queen Tiye was interesting to know from Nefertiti's point of view.

While I can't say this was better than Mrs. Moran's version, it was still very good. I would recommend this one to younger readers as well as those of you who are interested in Egyptian history, but don't want to read for what feels like a lifetime. I know I love "Nefertiti", but I chose it for a book club and a lot of my friends did not enjoy it at all.... I wish I would have known about this one....

Give it a try, but if you're not feeling it about halfway through it's not going to change.

Wendy says

This was an excellent dramatization of Nefertiti's early life, about which not much is known. It presents quite a different picture of her than Nefertiti by Michelle Moran. In this book we meet an intelligent, deeply loyal girl who is not afraid of many things but always fears for her family's well-being and safety. She also has a strong belief in doing what is right. When she is rescued by a slave girl and the girl is sentenced to death by her master because she disobeyed him, Nefertiti tries to save her but realizes she is too late. When her family is summoned to Thebes by her Aunt Tiye, the Great Royal Wife, Nefertiti does not realize that she is being groomed for the position of her daughter-in-law because of her intelligence and beauty (she knows how to read and write which is an odd skill for a female to learn in Egypt at this time). As Nefertiti gets caught up in the palace intrigues, she realizes that she does not want to marry the elder son Thutmose. She does develop a relationship (platonic) with his younger brother and when Nefertiti is accused of killing Thutmose's sacred cat, he spirits her away down the river to find justice at the hands of his mother and Pharaoh. It is left in a way that there will obviously be a sequel. I am looking forward to when that book comes out.

Reading Vacation says

I seem to be on a bit of an Egyptian historical fiction kick lately.

This book tackles Egyptian history and mythology in a different way than *The Red Pyramid* did. *Sphinx's Princess* is not so much a story of adventure as a story of a commoner who becomes royalty. And it does this in such a nice "story-telling" fashion.

Nefertiti's name means "the beautiful woman has come." It was Nefertiti's beauty that first brought her to

fame. But there was so much more to her than just her looks. I liked that she was a strong character, a girl who did not back down.

The plot captured all of my emotions as Nefertiti found herself in so many different situations. There were even plots to kill her! The plot definitely kept my attention.

In this book, I learned about the Egyptian commoners. I learned that they OVER worshiped their Gods. If someone did something bad, the other commoners would accuse them of angering the Gods. They would often blame the Gods if things went wrong. I can't imagine living like that.

I don't want to give away the ending, but I will say that I hope there is a sequel that picks up where Sphinx's Princess leaves off.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Jennifer Rummel for TeensReadToo.com

Nefertiti is not a princess but her father is the brother of the Royal Wife to the Pharaoh. When Queen Tiye hears about Nefertiti's beauty, she's determined to make her a Princess in order to marry her firstborn son. She orders Nefertiti's family to her side, where she manipulates the family into giving Nefertiti's hand in marriage.

There is a catch, of course. Nefertiti will not marry for three years, but in that time she must reside in the royal household. Sadness overwhelms her as she says goodbye to her family, not knowing when she'll ever see them again.

She moves into the women's suite where she's given a comfortable room. The other women in the suite are junior wives of the Pharaoh. Due to Queen Tiye's paranoia, she's not allowed to communicate with any of them. Instead, her loneliness threatens her state of mind.

Before long, she begins to take secret scribing lessons again. While Nefertiti rarely spends any time with her betrothed, a cold man, she enjoys his brother's company greatly. He teaches her how to drive a chariot and shows her around the city. But when Nefertiti's betrothed learns of this, he threatens his bride-to-be.

When the Pharaoh leaves the palace for an extended period of time and leaves his firstborn son in charge, the change in him is overwhelming. Nefertiti can't believe the difference, and she just might fall in love with him. But when an accusation comes her way, can he save her?

An enchanting beginning tale of the strong feisty character of Nefertiti left me wanting to read more; the cliffhanger ending leaves me anxiously awaiting the next installment about this fascinating woman.

Arya says

Sphinx's Princess by Esther Friesner 5 of 5 stars.

Her face is a symbol of the glories of ancient Egypt.

Her life was a battlefield of the gods.

Her very name means, "The Beautiful Woman Has Come."

But Nefertiti was far more than just a pretty face...

Nefertiti is a dutiful, docile child, whose only interests, aside from the normal pursuits of a commoner's daughter, are music and dance. But an encounter with a scribe arouses her curious mind, and she cajoles him

into secret lessons in the arts of reading and writing. As she enters her teen years, her growing beauty and her developing singing and dancing skills attract attention near and far. And with her aunt, Queen Tiye, summons Nefertiti's family, her life takes an unexpected turn. The strong-willed queen plans to use Nefertiti as a pawn in her desire for power.

Even though she must obey the queen and live in the royal palace at Thebes, Nefertiti's spirit and mind will not rest. She continues to challenge herself, learning how to drive a chariot and hunt with bow and arrow. With control of a kingdom at stake and threats at every turn, Nefertiti is forced to make choices and stand up for her beliefs in ways she never imagined.

In *Sphinx's Princess*, Esther Friesner tells the story of yet another beautiful and strong young woman. *Nobody's Princess* and *Nobody's Prize* are two of my favorite books, and this one is right up there with them. The characters are believable and interesting. The story is full of action and will make you cheer for the young Nefertiti. The only thing I find funny about Esther Friesner is that in her writing the jerks are always the handsome ones and the heroes are the homely. I guess that's what makes her writing unique. Even while writing about women who are known throughout history for their remarkable beauty she is able to make it seem like a small thing. She shows that strength and character are far more precious than beauty could ever be.

For fans of: *Esther Friesner, Mara, Daughter of the Nile, Cleopatra's Daughter*

Savannah says

This was a really good mix of history and mythology. It's very appropriate for all ages. Highly recommended!

Lady Knight says

I really loved Friesner's *Nobody's Princess* (which I really need to re-read now) and was really excited to get my hands on this retelling of Nefertiti's story. Initially I was really disappointed and really had to work to read this. About half way through though, the story really picks up I couldn't stop reading. The ending is fantastic! *Sphinx's Princess* tells the story behind one of Egypt's most famous, and mysterious, queens: Nefertiti. Little is actually known about Nefertiti before she ascends to the throne and Friesner does an excellent job of fleshing out the background of one of the only woman in history who is known almost exclusively for her legendary beauty and her bust in the British Museum. While being so beautiful should make her character insufferable, either by being too ignorant or too coy/arrogant, Nefertiti in Friesner's work is down to earth, likable and while she knows she's pretty, she's want to be known for more than a pretty face and grace.

The historical details and overall feel were also quite well done. You get immersed in the aura of the Ancient Egyptian court: it's protocols, traditions, and legends.

I can't wait for *Sphinx's Queen*, and hope it's more like the second half of this one rather than as slow and tedious as the first half.

Overall this was quite a good teen historical fiction.

I would recommend this to historical fiction fans, those who love strong female characters, and any

girl/woman who every dreamed of being a princess or ancient Egypt

Lisa says

I didn't hate this as much as I thought I would, but I didn't love it either. The story is slow to get started, and then quick to finish – I'm glad I can just segue into the next book, but others won't be as lucky.

One of the biggest problems I had with it is not Friesner's fault. Given my love of Ancient Egypt, given my own interest in the personalities of this time, seeing unsavoury characterisations of the historical figures I love is not fun. As such, the characterisation of Tiye as a desperate, grasping queen is something that never sat well with me. I admit that it could be a valid interpretation, but it's not something that I could agree with. I did like the spin on the crown prince Thutmose there – though it did remind me a lot of Rameses in Dreamworks' *The Prince of Egypt*. (view spoiler)

I didn't feel anything in particular for Nefertiti. She often appeared to be a modern girl in Ancient Egypt and seemed to have little in common with the real Nefertiti. There no hints that she would become as deeply involved in the Aten heresy as she did. She's shown praying to a whole host of gods, having divine experiences, and is particularly devoted to Isis – no sign of a dissatisfaction that could lead her to abandoning them for the Aten.

I don't often read young adult novels set in an historical setting, so I can't judge whether it's the genre's fault or not, but a lot of the language did seem too modern. At one stage, Thutmose's cat, Ta-Miu is described as a "fur-covered cheese ball". What.

As far as historical accuracy is concerned, *Sphinx's Princess* follows the unproven, but very popular trope of Nefertiti being the daughter of Ay, who was the brother of Queen Tiye. Her sister is Mutnodjmet, when it's now realised that Nefertiti's sister was actually called Mutbenret. Still, these tropes are so popular and so ingrained that I won't hold it against *Sphinx's Princess*. Though I am tempted to do a blog on deconstructing these tropes because it is really tiring to read the same thing over and over again as though it's fact.

Friesner has it so that Nefertiti learns to write, but in secret in case Tiye finds out and uses her as a spy. Okay, fine, but we know that wives of the craftsmen at Deir el-Medina knew how to read and write, so it be incredibly strange and shocking if Nefertiti didn't. I think Tiye would find her niece's illiteracy far more interesting than her literacy.

Another problem is the question of marriage, and marrying into the royal family. At one stage, Sitamun makes a comment about how her father could and would give her away to a brave soldier who did well in battle. In a word, NO. Princesses could not be married to anywhere below them, nor to foreign princes. In a similar vein, much is made over the fact that Thutmose's and Nefertiti's marriage would cement Thutmose's place as the heir. Again, NO. Thutmose marrying Sitamun, or any of the his sisters, would do a lot more for securing his throne – and it was common practice throughout Egypt's history. Nefertiti is only a nobleman's daughter and she may be pretty, but she isn't royal. But brother-sister incest isn't appropriate young-adult material, I suppose.

So what is there to like about this book? I liked the idea of seeing Nefertiti before she married Akhenaten, I liked the idea of seeing her background. I liked the characterisation of Amenophis. I loved seeing Sitamun and Thutmose playing important roles in the story, even if Thutmose's characterisation wasn't the way I saw him.

Sphinx's Princess is probably a great book for young adult fans, but those with knowledge of Ancient Egypt and Nefertiti will probably be annoyed at the inaccuracies. I'm not the intended audience and with too much knowledge to really get carried away with the plot.

Kimberly says

Back in March I first borrowed *Sphinx's Princess* but I wasn't able to get to it in time before it had to go back to the library. Story of my life...however last week I saw it while browsing the shelves at my local library branch and decided to give it another shot and am I ever so glad that I did.

Sphinx's Princess was an amazing young adult historical fiction novel written by the ever popular Esther M. Friesner. When I first started the book I wasn't really sure what to expect from it. Though Danica from *Taking it One Page at a Time's* review of it made me really curious. I thought that maybe it would be a light and fluffy attempt at young adult historical with no substance but I was completely wrong.

I have always had a love for Egyptian history and so that is what initially drew me to this novel and I'm really glad I gave it a try. Like I said before I was a little concerned that the book would be a fluff piece but it really wasn't. From the first page it was evident that the author Esther Friesner had to have done an enormous amount of research to be able to pen this book. She was able to create a wonderful atmosphere for her novel by researching the historical figures that she used in this book as well as researching the day to day life of people in ancient Egypt including customs, religion and how they dressed as well as knowing quite a bit about the politics at the time. I was so pleased with the amount detail that went into the book because it helped me immerse myself in the story and it was as though I was actually there with our protagonist Nefertiti on her journey from a small child to a beautiful young woman with the gift of words.

The way that all of that rich historical detail fit in with the overall story of Nefertiti's change from being a toddler to a young woman called to court by her Aunt Tiye The Great Royal Wife to marry her son the Crowned Prince Thutmose. It added that extra substance to the story because it made it feel as though the story was playing out right in front of me. I loved the story line of the novel. Nefertiti has always interested me and while this is a fictional account of her early life it is still based upon a lot of fact.

What impressed me the most though was how well written the overall story was and the creation of the characters. I think that Nefertiti is probably one of my favourite bookish heroines of 2012 and one of my favourite heroines over all. She had a lot of spirit and had a lot of inner strength. This becomes especially apparent that this was true when she stands up to her Aunt Tiye and refuses to marry Thutmose until 3 years have passed. However, Aunt Tiye respects her a lot for her decision and outwardly acquiesce to her nieces decision but this doesn't stop her from trying to hasten the marriage along.

While she's dined in the lap of luxury at the royal palace Nefertiti's world begins to unravel as treacherous plots are uncovered, accusations are made and death sentences are passed out like tick tacs and acts of betrayal become common place. Despite these hardships the bright Nefertiti still has friends in high places and just maybe, maybe things will work out for the better. Friesner depicted all of these things incredibly well for a young adult novel where such things may be passed over and not really delved into but she got right in there and even wrote the less favourable extremely well and I think that added a lot more substance to the novel.

Overall, I thought the novel was great. There way the author used historical figures as characters in her novel was great. She aptly depicted the trials and tribulations of daily life in Ancient Egypt and wrote an incredibly well penned novel about the early life of one of the most famous queens in all of history. There was action,

romance, mystery, intrigue, betrayal and murder which I think will allow this book to appeal to a wide audience of readers. I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys historical fiction especially if you have a love for ancient Egypt and young adult fiction and want a kick ass heroine. This book is one of my favourite books of 2012 and I can't wait to start the sequel to this book.

Sandy says

Very similar to Nobody's Princess. This is the story of Nefertiti, "the beautiful woman has come". Raised by her indulgent father, she questions the ways of the world. Why can she not learn how to read, learn magic, do the things that the Goddess Isis did? She lives her quietly rebellious life until the day her aunt calls her to Thebes and announces her plan to marry Nefertiti to her son Thutmose, to ensure his place as the next Pharaoh of Egypt. Nefertiti stalls as much as she is able, and the book ends before all is resolved. We need more books about strong women like this.

Keara says

No review.

Jennifer Rummel says

An enchanting beginning tale of the strong feisty character of Nefertiti. The cover intrigues me too and it looks very similar to the Nobody YA novels. This historical fiction makes me want to read a biography of Nefertiti to find out more info. A second book is in the works, which is great because this book ends on a cliff hanger.

TL says

Hmm.... not completely sure what to think. On one hand, it's an easy read and a lot of fun... I loved the character development Nefertiti went through, Nava and Bit-Bit were adorable and her scribe friend was fun.

But I had issues with it as well, I never really felt anything for most of the other characters... It just felt like I was an observer watching them all instead of walking alongside them. The ones I was probably meant to hate I only felt annoyed by and I felt nothing when Nefertiti was in peril (apart from being mildly curious).

The ending was a nicely done cliffhanger and a good set-up for the next one I suppose but it felt 'too abrupt' after the pacing of the majority of the novel. (view spoiler)

Sometimes the dialogue felt weird but it didn't bother me much really *shrugs* Despite this being Egypt, never got the 'feel' of it. Almost felt like it could have been anywhere in a sense. The chariot rides through the city and where they practiced were the exception.

The 'villainy' in this didn't feel menacing or set my teeth on edge, more reminded me of spoiled children who wanted it to be 'my way or the highway' Was this how they were in real life? I have no idea but in this

instance I just wanted to smack them both.

Thutmose's brother was a good soul but bland overall for me... I got the sense early on he was (view spoiler) ... never bought into it. I'm guessing most of that set-up would come in the next book maybe?

All in all: half fun, half blah ... I would recommend if your looking for a quick semi-light read but for me, it was in the middle of the road.

Not interested enough to read the second book but I'll pass this on to a friend who is in love with anything ancient egypt and see what she thinks:) (Either way, it'll be a fun discussion).

Happy reading! This was rambling a bit but this is how my thoughts came out :-P

2.5 stars, rounded up. I have one more of hers on deck so I will give it a try at some point.

Natalie Hotz says

The sphinx princess was a very good book I thought. It is a historical fiction about the ancient queen of Egypt Nefertiti. I learned a lot by this book, and this book made me want to learn more about Egyptian culture.

It starts with a young Nefertiti in her village with her father. It goes through how her mother died and her care taker-- mery-- and her father are in love. She later through a series of events gets a place in the palace but she doesn't want to be there. Her aunt the queen informs Nefertiti that she will marry the queens son and heir to the throne. Nefertiti ends up in jail because of her refusal to marry thutmose (the queens son). Now that I've spoiled the basic story line for you I won't spoil the rest. Does she get out of jail or not? You may never know. Maybe you should read the book and find out!

I would recommend this book to a friend! I found it interesting and a joy to read!

Nora says

More like 3.75. It took a while to get interesting, but I really liked Nefertiti's character development. Review to come.
