



Crossroads

Barbara Underwood

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The sequel to Rhuna, Keeper of Wisdom, and the second book in an exciting and unique historical Fantasy series, Rhuna: Crossroads is set in exotic Ancient Egypt and features unforgettable characters and a riveting adventure.

Some years have passed since Rhuna helped to defeat the Dark Master in her new home of Atlán, and now Rhuna has a teenage daughter who accompanies her on an assignment in Ancient Egypt to investigate some disturbing reports. She soon discovers an astonishing underground network of the Dark Master's followers, along with the secret group of Atlans dedicated to stopping them.

In the process of trying to carry out her assignment, Rhuna is confronted with enormous challenges which could drastically change her entire life and everything she has ever believed in!

Crossroads Details

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From Reader Review Crossroads for online ebook

John Love IV says

The more I read the series, the less interested I was in the story or characters. I had little sympathy or liking for any of the characters. I found the men patronizing, preachy, and unrealistic. The women were no better and mostly weak followers. The writing style was stiff and overly formal as were conversations between characters.

When the lead female decided to be independent, she immediately, with little cause, rejected everything she stated she believed and her husband. I just didn't buy it. Nor did I buy the reaction of her husband or the rest of the leadership.

Basically, I didn't buy into the characters or their motivations. The bad guys, pathetic typecast, were foiled out of the blue with little tie in to the leads. The new love interest is able to draw her away from her husband without hardly trying. And new characters are introduced at the end of the book with no purpose but to get you to buy the next book.

Perhaps these things are explained in later books. I don't know and doubt I ever will. I don't see myself ever reading any more of these.

A lot of people seem to like these. If you do, good for you. To each his (or her) own.

Coco.V says

? FREE on Amazon today (1/18/2018)! ?

Sue Brooks says

This - the second book of the Rhuna Fantasy Book Series - is as amazing as the first book. Barabara Underwood does an awesome job of vividly describing her characters and describing the fast-paced plot of the story.

The contrast between the ascetic lifestyles of Rhuna's adopted home country of Atlan being compared with the fun loving people she meets on her trip to distant Egypt, will keep you interest throughout the story. I do not write spoilers -- but you will find that this is definitely one of those hard to put down books once you start reading it!!!

I was given a copy of this book for an honest review.

Darlene Cruz says

Rhuna, what shall I say? Keeper of Wisdom, representative of Atlán, healer and mother of Lozira (Melody of Dawn), wife of Tozar who is one of the most powerful twelve high council member of Atlán, Kagu-Hina (Star Child). The story started with a steady flow, not a fast read just a very steady pace. The mystic of it all caused a reaction to my third eye, I got a vibe that captured my attention slowly and build from there on. Why? Really did not know where I was being guided to, just the vibes telling me to keep reading. Pyramids, herbs and incantations, hallucination (?) or side effects , sacrificial ceremonies, summoned of visions. Gruesome behavior by whose standards? Life-sustaining energy of an animal or human life, hmm . . . now it got interesting. So much to read and so much to absorb. Rhuna makes and made decisions that will affect her life in general and with that decision I was beginning to change my mind about her. Did I like her after that decision, well I can't say because I will definitely reveal the outcome. I had a great time reading this tale, I must confess I was a bit bored with the textile thing but as I kept reading I knew the whole thing ties into something. The way the author created a tale that dealt with the class of people and groups and how one group treats and mistreat one is classic. What I did feel, the magic of it all, I could feel Rhuna's magic, her incantations and body vibrating, humming and wisps of vision increases to a vibrant mental image but something or someone questions her visions, why? A powerful Dark Influence? Hallucinations? Non-believers? Muru? The Shadows? Well partly true, read the book to find out for yourself. What caught my fancy the names of each person who has an ability of some sort, for instance Resolver of Disputes, Wanderer of the Plains, Keeper of Justice, Seeker of Mercy, Possessor of Discernment, Peace of the Valley. The most important thing that played an important role in this story was the Gazing of the Waters. However this statement got me all wild up, "Your appearance, Rhuna! Can you provide a satisfactory reason for not wearing your Masters Robe, most disturbing, once again reflect a distinct aberration in character and emotional balance. Rhuna! Consult the Healer again." Could you feel that dictatorial statement? Aww . . . bad mojo. The author's writing kept me reading I thoroughly enjoyed the characters. Each character got me excitedly wondering, friend or foe? There was this constant curiosity probing my mind, just poking it to swiss cheese and soon enough I reached the end. It wasn't action galore but it kept you on your toes trying to figure out the outcome of it all, now I'm curious about the next. I received this free book that I had won through Goodreads First Read Giveaway. Thank you, Darlene Cruz

Oh thank you so much to the author from "Down-Under" I saw the postage cost, I'm so grateful.

Anthea Syrokou says

In this second instalment in the Rhuna series, we revisit Rhuna many years later. She is living in Atlan as a Healer and as an Atlan Master with her husband, Tozar, and their teenage daughter, Lozira. From the onset, I was so happy to reunite with the characters; to see how they evolved. The first thing that struck me was the mother/daughter relationship and the struggles Rhuna faces to keep her daughter in line, to follow Atlan principles and to learn as she had. Lozira would rather study the Creative Arts instead of learning the Atlan principles. I felt that Rhuna had been deeply swayed by the Atlan Empire, by their beliefs and policies, to the point that she had no mind of her own.

However, I was so glad and surprised to see that Rhuna too felt like she had no positive energy inside of her and was, in fact, advised by her husband, the most senior member of the Atlan High Council, that she should occupy her mind with a project. He sends her to the land of Safu in Ancient Egypt with Lozira to see how the Atlans are helping the people in learning the Atlan ways, as they have witnessed that unusual herbs have been taken by some that cause weird behaviour. They are also fearful of the Atlan Council in Safu.

I was really surprised with Tozar, and really angry with the way he speaks to his wife, Rhuna — Keeper of Wisdom. Here we have a strong, powerful woman being told that she cannot be who she is in such a condescending way. I immediately get a sense that her husband is impressed but also insecure when it comes to his wife's powers.

It is here where the story takes such an interesting and unexpected direction. I was so glad to see that in Safu, amongst the pyramids and the exotic landscape, that Rhuna was able to let go and evolve into the person she was destined to evolve into. Rhuna spends her days trying to find out if the Atlans who were assigned to guide the people there are doing their jobs properly. It is so amazing to see how, at first, Rhuna follows the Atlan principles to the letter as though she has no mind of her own, but then begins to follow her instincts, which turns out to be the best option. This angers and dismays the Atlans back home and they try to make Rhuna question herself and tell her she is suffering from "Irrationality". Here, the reader gets a glimpse that the Atlan way may not always be the right way. In the first book of the series, the reader assumes that the Atlan way may be the only way for many societies, and that they know best.

I was so impressed with how beautifully this story was written. I loved the dynamics between the mother and daughter, how both can learn from each other and learn to respect each other's unique qualities. At first Lozira thinks she know best, like a typical teenager. Later we see how she begins to accept that her mother might know something — in fact, she discovers her mother knows a lot, and has powers that can influence and change society. Her daughter teaches Rhuna how to relax more with her appearance; that it is okay to have a bit of fun and to accentuate her positive features. I felt that the arguments between them were very realistic.

Another thing that surprised me in this book was the romance. I was very impressed with the author's ability to create chemistry between a couple. I loved the natural progression that took place before we see if both capitulate to their desires.

I can honestly say that this book had it all: adventure, romance, deep, raw emotions — and an intriguing and suspenseful plot. While reading, I truly felt that the world Barbara Underwood created really exists — that's how convincing the narrative was for me. At times I felt like I was walking through a fragrant garden, and at other times I felt like I was in a disturbing nightmare.

The challenges Rhuna faced, both in Safu and back in Atlan, had me cheering from the sidelines. There were times that I felt like shouting out the 90s term: "You go girl". Many thoughts also entered my mind while reading, such as that there can be many perspectives and one power may think that their policies may be the only way and we might see the positive effect those ways may have, but if we look at things from a different perspective we would see that there are many flaws in these policies as well. The Atlans want a utopian society but their methods prove to have many limitations and flaws in this book. Their ways of doing things are not as unassailable as we first thought.

Reading this book was another magical ride into the world of Rhuna. I loved the first book and simply fell in love with the second book in the series as well. I was knowledgeable in many of the terms used in the first book, such as the "Gazing of the Waters", "Inside Focusing", and many more terms. It made the book easy to follow, and I was deeply impressed with the author's ability to weave many of these intricate terms into the story in a plausible, credible way. The ending also took me by surprise — I did not foresee what eventuates at all. In fact, throughout the novel, I kept guessing what would happen, and was always surprised with the turn of events.

Rhuna — Crossroads is a unique, riveting, beautifully-written historical Fantasy book with many different

layers. It deals with relationships, power struggles, how some principles in one society may not work as smoothly as they do in others, and I felt that it also touched on women and how many may be threatened by their power. It emphasised how the right man embraces a woman's uniqueness and her abilities without placing restrictions upon her or being threatened by her. Barbara Underwood is a talented, and very creative story teller who intertwines real, deep human emotions in an imaginative world in such a clever way — making her characters believable, deep, and complex. I look forward to seeing where else Rhuna's journey takes her in the third book in the series. A wonderful, riveting, enjoyable read!

Mandy Walkden-Brown says

The story of Rhuna continues in this second book of the trilogy and centres on her visit to the land of Safu (the equivalent of ancient Egypt). This time she travels with her daughter, leaving her husband at home. It's intriguing to watch how she blossoms away from the insular Atlan capital, because she has to follow her own path through some complicated and unfamiliar territories, emotional, physical and political.

Her Atlan powers expand, much to the detriment of the sinister creepy guys still hovering in the background creating havoc.

Some delightful new characters, new challenges for Rhuna and an intriguing mystery to solve.

This world and characters have really grown on me and I'm now itching to discover what happens in the next book, especially after the very unexpected revelation that appeared in the closing pages.

I received a free copy from the author via eBook Discovery. This is my honest review.

Bobby Underwood says

Because this is my wife's book, and I did some of the proofing on it, those reading the review will no doubt weigh that in regard to the review.

That being said, however, for those who enjoy the genre of fantasy based on ancient history and events, I believe this is a great read. There is suspense, and a narrative of fairly fast-flowing events in exotic places. The locations mirror real places that students of ancient lands and peoples, or those with a background in such, will no doubt recognize, even though other names are used. Those familiar with some of Thor Heyerdahl's speculations will definitely recognize a fictional application of them the deeper the reader gets into the series.

While it was necessary in the first book to introduce the characters and the milieu, slowing the narrative down a bit, *Crossroads*, having established the world, builds on it nicely, while expanding and further developing relationships and growth. The narrative takes right off, in fact, and is probably a bit more exciting and suspenseful than the first book. It has more action because of situations the protagonist, Rhuna, finds herself in, I believe.

There is much personal drama for Rhuna in this one, as her marriage at a young age — but not too young, as a few readers may have misunderstood lunar cycles — to someone much older, begins to crumble under the

weight of her new experiences abroad, and the controlling dogma of a husband far away. Rhuna experiences passionate love as well, reluctantly coming to terms with the conflicted feelings in her heart. And of course, there is a daughter to consider, who must also begin to make choices.

Recommended for those who enjoy fantasy and speculative historical (not modern, but very ancient history) fiction, laced with a touch of magic, and a healthy dose of thinly veiled exotic locations. I actually believe Crossroads can stand alone, even if the reader hasn't read the first one — always a plus in any type of series — because it isn't too terribly difficult for the reader to get up to speed in Crossroads if they haven't. Well written and a great read for readers with a knowledgeable background.

Shirley McLain says

Great Series

This is book two of GeoRgina Series and it is great. It is well written and held my interest to the last word. I'm ready to read book three as soon as I can find it. If you like good magic, love, surprises and of course a touch of evil then you will like this book. You will need to read book one to fully understand what is happening. It can be read on it's own but you will be depriving yourself of another great read.

The Library at Lilac Cottage says

I tried twice to read "Crossroads," and I found it to be stiff, stilted, and the conversation forced and unbelievable. I abandoned reading this.

Marc Secchia says

After reading the first book in this series but having some reservations, I enjoyed the second installment much more thoroughly. The main character, Rhuna, undergoes many formative experiences in this faster-paced sequel which draws us rapidly into an ancient civilisation far from her adopted home of Atlan, far from those she loves and far from her husband Tozer. The transformation in Rhuna and her initially naive worldview is almost dazzling, yet shaded with dark events, as the plot makes clear. Separated from her kindly but older and hidebound husband by her assignment in a faraway colony, Rhuna soon comes to question the ideals of the wise and all-knowing civilisation of the Atlans, with profound consequences for her life and work, her daughter who undertakes the journey with her, the colony she arrives in, and even for her marriage.

From this perspective the work is innately more mature, complex and nuanced than the first book, and therefore for me, much more enjoyable.

[plot spoiler] I did not enjoy Rhuna's insta-love for a man she encounters in the faraway colony and the ease with which she breaks away from everything that is dear to her. While the situation is not uncommon nor unexpected, it seemed to happen rather tritely. She thinks about it and decides she's in love.

I question the author's use of the ability of visions or vision-casting to be able to show almost everything,

past and present, even from a great distance. While this allows communication as a clever plot device enabling the involvement of remote parties in the main narrative, it also began to feel clumsy at times, as though it interfered with the narrative flow or the author kept having to contrive situations where some doings could not be spied upon. On the other hand, the author used this device ably in creating and maintaining the tension.

In part one I commented strongly on the Utopian 'white' Atlan civilisation imposing its higher, more refined ways and beliefs upon native peoples and that seeming idealised in the narrative. In part 2 this is turned on its head. Fantastic! The author questions for example the reasons one might go to war, what if pacifism does not work, and what happens if the 'enlightened' become corrupt and selfish, or greedy for power? We question whether new technology, ideas and values truly are 'good' or 'what the natives need'. This is complex ground but dealt with very well by the author - kudos that both sides are portrayed, warts and all, in this fine sequel! I rate this 5/5 stars.

Simone says

I received a free copy of this novel in exchange for my honest review.

Rhuna: Crossroads is book two in the Rhuna Fantasy series. In this portion, it's several years later. Rhuna now has a teenage daughter and has grown into her powers and has become a valuable asset to the Atlan council. She however has a false sense of security believing that with the Dark One gone, that all is well. When rumors of the Atlan colony Safu's council members mistreatment of the natives come to light, Rhuna is selected to represent Atlan and investigate. Her teenage daughter Lozira decides to go with her to learn the creative arts Safu is famous for. What they didn't realize was that this journey set them on a path that will change their lives forever.

I thoroughly enjoyed this novel far better than book one. It was fast paced and quite a page turner. I was kept curious throughout the story what Rhuna's visions would uncover next. The emotional aspect was realistic as Tozar refused to believe in her and continually reprimanded her about her attire. It was as if he couldn't grasp that the robe was a source of intimidation. All in all, this was an amazing book and I look forward to reading book three, Rhuna: Star Child.

Melissa (Mel's Bookshelf) says

I don't think I have ever read a historical fiction fantasy novel before! I really enjoyed this book. It is the second of a trilogy. Even though I have not read the first one, I had no problem getting into the story and the wonderful setting.

Rhuna is a grand master in the council of Atlán, a place where there is little to no violence and people treat each other with respect. People have inner wisdom and live together in peace and harmony, quite a utopian society. Atlán also presides over numerous colonies. Rhuna gets sent to one of these colonies across the ocean to investigate some events that have occurred. She takes her daughter with her. There begins their adventure in this foreign land. Being an Atlán master, Rhuna has numerous gifts such as the ability to have visions and change elements and she soon begins helping the less fortunate members of the colony. But there are some people out to stop Rhuna from discovering that the unfortunate events that have been occurring

may have something to do with a dark master whom Rhuna had destroyed years before.

I thought this book was really well written and so clever. I just loved that she could use her powers to speak with her husband and the council back in Atlán. The fact that they could ultimately spy on each other's every move was also a really creative way to add a whole new dimension to this book to make it really unique. Rhuna was so conflicted with having to keep a proper and level mindset of a master, to that of a woman in a new place that is so different from Atlán. Her heart was taking her in a different direction than she was expecting.

I really enjoyed all the characters except I had a bit of trouble keeping up with all the "keeper of wisdom" type names. A few times I couldn't remember who was who and got a bit confused. I loved her daughter and her spirit. And I enjoyed reading about the majority of the secondary characters. I do wish that I had read the first book to get a better understanding of Rhuna as she grew up.

There was some romance in this book which I was sort of hoping for, but then conflicted as Rhuna already has a husband that she seems to love. I think maybe I would have been more conflicted if I had read the first book which apparently introduces Tozar and how they come to be together. I wasn't a fan of how abruptly she decided "Ok I love someone new now". BOOM. However I can understand how her husband was holding her back from becoming the person she was meant to be. It just felt a bit abrupt, however I am interested to see how it pans out in the future.

I enjoyed the mystery, and loved the setting with the pyramids and the secret rooms and thought this whole book was really clever.

Would I recommend Rhuna: Crossroads?

Yes for any fans of Egyptian historical fiction melded with fantasy and mystery! It was a really enjoyable read and I am really looking forward to the sequel!

Many thanks to author Barbara Underwood for a copy of Rhuna: Crossroads in exchange for my honest review.

For more reviews check out my blog
www.booksbabiesbeing.com

Twitter
www.twitter.com/BBB_Mel

Facebook
www.facebook.com/booksbabiesbeing

C.C. Hrivnak says

When the leader falls, the followers seek to finish what their master failed to complete. We were left in a sea of victory in the first installment in the Rhuna series. Rhuna captures our attention once again by bringing us along with her daughter to stop the next generation of possible Dark Masters.

Rhuna is no longer the girl we knew from the first book. She's a mother, mature, grounded, but her foundation is shaken to learn of the past coming back to attack a foreign place. We see the growth of her powers from the first book as her visions and control of the elements have increased, but notice they could be used against her if she is not careful. She may have grown up but she must grasp her master abilities and not lose control.

A complete step up from the original book! If you are in love with Egyptian historical cultures and fantasy, pick up this series! Positively enjoyed this sequel!

Debbie Viscosi says

This is the second book in the Rhuna series. We jump ahead in time from Rhuna being a young married woman in Book #1 to her as the mother of a teenager. Because of her power and involvement in the death of the Dark Master, Rhuna has been appointed to the Atlan High Council. There are troubling reports from one of their colonies about followers of the Dark Master at work. Rhuna is asked to travel to the colony and investigate. Although she and her daughter don't see eye to eye, it becomes a mother/daughter trip for Rhuna. The author does a great job portraying the complex relationship between mothers and daughters. Admiration, irritation, love, and so much more are experienced during their trip and time in Benshu. The Dark Master's acolytes are still at work, even in this remote colony. Rhuna's well-meaning inquiries cause upset with the Atlan High Council and eventually lead to her removal from the Council. I was surprised many times during this reading with plot twists that I didn't see coming. I wish a narrative brought us up to date with the changes in Rhuna's life at the beginning of the book, the gap in time was distracting. This is a good second book that expands the main character and introduces new characters that will be in the next book in the series as well. I'm looking forward to Book #3 to see where we go next!

Ian Hunter says

The author's writing style is often more lyrical and poetic than it is dramatic, but it suits the dream-like fantasy realm in which her story is couched. A lot of New Age ideas find a home in this fantasy world and are easily accepted as part of the rules of this world, as entirely apart from our own. But for those holding New Age beliefs, this book might well also serve as a primer or initiation into one path of spiritual unfolding. Definitely this is as much metaphysical and spiritual fantasy as it is an epic-style fantasy adventure. And it is also a sci-fi fantasy fusion. Fans of legends and stories of Atlantis and Lemuria will be right at home here. But if you read book one, you know what to expect, and if you didn't, the sequel stands up pretty well on its own.

Fans of the Ancient Aliens TV series should also feel welcome. A small example from early in the book will suffice to illustrate: "The three large pyramids, each covered in different metals and alloys, constitute the most powerful energy harnessing and storage station of the Empire. The rainless climate of Safu guarantees continuous solar energy and the cloudless night skies provide ample lunar energies."

As you're reading you feel you're being steeped in a world with very unique and bizarre practices that will only slowly become fully comprehensible. Don't expect to take in this richly woven tapestry all at once. There is an ornate nature to the storytelling that just forces the reader to absorb what they can as they read on and expect that numerous things which are hard to understand or that seem mysterious will be clarified in

time. I suspect the elaborate extent of the world-building is why the author went with a series of books rather than a single installment. It can at times make the reading a bit dense and slow-moving. But just remind yourself you're in an act one of a novel, and good things come to he who waits for all the puzzle pieces to be slipped into place. Forget the speed reading and just relax into this one.

As the story advances, we find that Rhuna is raising a daughter to carry on in her tradition. But even as she attempts to show her daughter the way, it becomes clear that this is as much a coming of age story for the mother. Her tendency to revere the Atlan civilization (I think we can read Atlantis here) is called into question as she comes to find many of their ways questionable and corrupt. She is forced to ask herself difficult questions on just when and how it is justifiable to intervene in a more primitive culture. For those that love entertaining the idea that history does not represent linear progress, but a repeated fall from grace from prior more advanced civilizations that lost their way, before collapsing under the weight of their own corruption, this one is for you.
