

The Passion of Cleopatra (2017): Anne Rice's Sequel to The Mummy (1989)

Anne Rice and her son Christopher recently announced a joint book project (<http://annerice.com/index.html>) which would be a sequel to her novel *The Mummy*. It is scheduled to appear in November 2017. This promises to be a significant addition to the reception of Cleopatra, because, influenced by *The Mummy* and the subsequent graphic version, a much darker version of the Egyptian Queen began to emerge in American Popular culture, especially in comics. Rice seems to have launched several decades of immoral immortals, be they mummies, vampires or Witchblade wielders; e.g., Maria Dahvana Headley, *Queen of Kings: A Novel of Cleopatra, the Vampire* (New York, New American Library, 2012). While Rice's vision was influenced by the *Fin d' Siecle* treatments by H. Rider Haggard, Victorien Sardou and the Helen Gardner/Theda Bara films, she also tapped into the forces which had created the graphic *Vampirella* #36 (1974). The reception of Cleopatra has taken many strange turns over the centuries, but this one was quite remarkable. The sequel could have a similar impact on future receptions.

After a brief synopsis of the historical Cleopatra and an overview of her appearances in twentieth century American popular culture, this illustrated paper will examine Rice's place in the Cleopatra tradition by detailing historical elements, the influences of the varied aspects of her reception, and the role of contemporary events and popular culture in transforming her into a Mummy. It will be quite fascinating to learn what this millennium holds for the continuing tale of Cleopatra's reception.

Bibliography

Rice, Anne. *The Mummy or Ramses the Damned* (New York: Random House, 1989).

_____. (adapted by Faye Perozich), *The Mummy or Ramses the Damned* (Tampa: Millenium, 1990-1992) 12 volumes.