



# The Seventh Scroll

Wilbur Smith



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INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

WILBUR SMITH

# The Seventh Scroll

Retold by Stephen Colbourn



MACMILLAN



*Founding Editor: John Milne*

The Macmillan Readers provide a choice of enjoyable reading materials for learners of English. The series is published at six levels – Starter, Beginner, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate and Upper.

### **Level control**

Information, structure and vocabulary are controlled to suit the students' ability at each level.

### **The number of words at each level:**

Starter	about 300 basic words
Beginner	about 600 basic words
Elementary	about 1100 basic words
Pre-Intermediate	about 1400 basic words
Intermediate	about 1600 basic words
Upper	about 2200 basic words

### **Vocabulary**

Some difficult words and phrases in this book are important for understanding the story. Some of these words are explained in the story and some are shown in the pictures. From Pre-Intermediate level upwards, words are marked with a number like this: ...<sup>3</sup>. These words are explained in the Glossary at the end of the book.

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## A Note About the Author

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Wilbur Addison Smith was born on 9th January, 1933 in the southern African country which is now called Zambia. At that time, the country was called Northern Rhodesia. It was governed by the British and many British people lived there. Wilbur Smith was educated in South Africa, where he lived for many years.

Wilbur Smith's first book – *When the Lion Feeds* – was published in 1964. Since then Wilbur Smith has written more than twenty-eight novels. His work has been translated into twenty-five languages. All of the novels are adventure stories and many of them take place in Africa. Although some of Wilbur Smith's novels are set in the late twentieth century, most of them are historical novels. The author has written several series of novels about the adventures of families over a long period of time.

Wilbur Smith publishes a new novel every two years, and several of his books have been made into successful films.

*The Seventh Scroll* is a modern thriller that is set in the late twentieth century. But it is a sequel<sup>1</sup> to an earlier book called *River God*, which is a historical novel set in Ancient Egypt, nearly 4000 years ago. A retelling of *River God* is also available in this series of Readers, although it is not necessary to read it before you read *The Seventh Scroll*. *River God* is set at the time when Egypt was invaded<sup>2</sup> by people from western Asia, who the Egyptians called the Hyksos. In the story, *The Seventh Scroll*, some Ancient Egyptian records are discovered. They had been written on scrolls of papyrus<sup>3</sup> and one of them told of a tomb that had been built for an Egyptian king at the time of the Hyksos invasion.

## The People in This Story

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Duraïd and Royan Al Simma



Nicholas Quenton-Harper



Nahoot Gudabbi



Geoffrey Tenant



Gotthold von Schiller



Boris Brusilov



Woizero Tessay



Mek Nimmur



Colonel Nogo



Sapper Webb and Jannie





## *Death by the Nile*

Doctor Duraid Al Simma was sitting on a chair in the garden of his villa. His wife, Doctor Royan Al Simma, was sitting beside him. It was late in the afternoon and the sun was sinking low in the sky.

The house was not far from the city of Cairo, the capital city of Egypt. There were palm trees on three sides of the area of land where the villa stood. On the fourth side, the River Nile flowed.

Duraid and Royan Al Simma were Egyptologists. They studied the ancient monuments<sup>4</sup> of their country and they studied its history. They both worked at the Department of Antiquities<sup>5</sup> in Cairo.

Royan was much younger than her husband. She was thirty-two years old. Her father had been Egyptian but her mother had been English. Royan had a British passport. She and her husband both wrote and spoke English as well as Arabic.

The two of them were eating a simple meal of dates, olives and flat bread. Royan looked across the river at the setting sun. As the red sun sank behind the palm trees on the west bank of the river, it coloured the water red. The water from the River Nile kept a narrow strip of Egypt green and alive. Beyond the trees, lay the brown, dry desert where few things could live.

The air became cool as the sun set. Soon, night had fallen and stars were shining brightly in the dark sky. The noises of crickets and frogs came from the river, together with the gentle sound of the flowing water.

Duraid stood up and went into the villa through the back door. He turned on the lights in the villa, then he called to his wife. 'Well, it's time to start work,' he said.

Royan went into the main room of the house – the living room. As usual, the living room looked like a library. There were books and papers everywhere. There were piles of books on shelves and piles of papers on the floor. All of the books and papers were about Ancient Egypt.

In the corner of the room was a steel safe. Royan opened the heavy door of the safe and took out a scroll made of papyrus. It was very old.

‘The Seventh Scroll,’ Royan said to herself.

This scroll was almost 4000 years old and she loved to hold it and read it. The words on the scroll were written in hieroglyphics<sup>6</sup>. This was the written language which the Egyptian people used for thousands of years before they wrote and spoke Arabic.

The man who had written the scroll was a slave<sup>7</sup> called Taita. He had lived at the time of the Hyksos invasion of Egypt, nearly 4000 years ago.

Taita was the slave of Lostris, a Queen of Egypt. When the Hyksos invaded the land, Lostris had led her people to the south to escape the invaders. She had led them into the land of Cush – the area which now forms the countries of Sudan and Ethiopia.

Somewhere, in Ethiopia, these exiled<sup>8</sup> Egyptians had built a tomb for their dead king – the Pharaoh Mamose – Lostris’s husband. Later the exiles had returned to Egypt. Taita had written about the life of Lostris, soon after her death. He had written this record on ten scrolls. The scrolls had been found in Lostris’s own tomb, which had recently been discovered. In the Seventh Scroll, Taita had described the building of Mamose’s tomb. But the slave did not describe the place exactly, because he did not want anyone to find it. He had done his work well – the location of the tomb was still a secret!

Now Royan and her husband wanted to find that tomb.



- 66 **AK47s** (page 87)  
a type of automatic rifle. (See Glossary 36). The AK47 – Automatic Kalashnikov 47 – was first designed and made in Russia by a man named Mikhail Kalashnikov in 1947.
- 67 **jetty** (page 88)  
a small wooden or concrete platform that is built out from the bank of a river. Boats and ships can stop at a *jetty* to load or unload their cargo or passengers.
- 68 **gathered speed** – to gather speed (page 92)  
started slowly, then moved faster and faster.

## A Guide to Pronunciation

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Dr Duraid Al Simma	/,dɒktə ,duəreɪd æl 'sɪmə/
Dr Royan Al Simma	/,dɒktə ,rɔɪən æl 'sɪmə/
Nicholas Quenton-Harper	/,nɪkələs ,kwentən 'hɑ:pə/
Nahoot Gudabbi	/,nɑ:hu:t gu:'dɑ:bi:/
Mek Nimmur	/,mek nɪ'mʊr/
Geoffrey Tenant	/,dʒefri: 'tenənt/
Jannie	/,jæni:/
Colonel Nogo	/,kɜ:nəl 'nəʊgəʊ/
Boris Brusilov	/,bɒrɪs bru:sɪləf/
Woizero Tessay	/,wɔɪzərəʊ 'tesei/
Gotthold Von Schiller	/,gɒtəʊlt fən 'ʃi:lə/
Pharaoh Mamose	/,feərəʊ mɑ:'mɒhsi:/
Taita	/,tɑɪtɑ:/
Lostris	/lɒs'trɪs/
Tanus	/,tænu:s/
Seth	/set/
Osiris	/əʊ'saɪərɪs/
Isis	/,aɪsɪs/

Published by Macmillan Heinemann ELT  
Between Towns Road, Oxford OX4 3PP  
Macmillan Heinemann ELT is an imprint of  
Macmillan Publishers Limited  
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ISBN 1-405-07314-4  
EAN 978-1-405073-14-1

This text is based on *The Seventh Scroll* © Wilbur Smith 1995  
First published by Macmillan 1995

This retold version by Stephen Colbourn for Macmillan Readers  
First published 2002  
Text © Macmillan Publishers Limited 2002  
Design and illustration © Macmillan Publishers Limited 2002

This edition first published 2005

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Illustrated by Philip Bannister  
Cover illustration by Chris Brown

Printed in Thailand

2009 2008 2007 2006 2005  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1