Miriam Riverlea, "Entry on: Secret Agent Mummy: Hieroglyphs of Horror (Secret Agent Mummy, 3) by Steve Cole ", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/486. Entry version as of November 13, 2026.

Steve Cole

Secret Agent Mummy: Hieroglyphs of Horror (Secret Agent Mummy, 3)

United Kingdom

TAGS: Egypt Egyptian Mythology Hieroglyphs





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Secret Agent Mummy: Hieroglyphs of Horror (Secret Agent Mummy, 3)
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom, Australia
Original Language	English
First Edition Details	Steve Cole, *Secret Agent Mummy: Hieroglyphs of Horror.* London: Red Fox, 2016, 232 pp.
ISBN	9781849418713
Genre	Action and adventure fiction, Fiction, Humor, Illustrated works, Science fiction
Target Audience	Children (recommended age range 7–9 years)
Author of the Entry	Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com
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Creators



Steve Cole , b. 1971
(Author)

Steve Cole (also known as Stephen Cole) is a writer of comic, fantasy and adventure books for juvenile and teenage readers, as well as crossover science fiction. After growing up in rural Bedfordshire, he studied English Literature and Film Studies at the University of East Anglia, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours. He began working at BBC Children's Magazines in 1993. In addition to overseeing the publication of several magazines and special editions, he began writing children's books, including *Cars on Mars*, *Alien Olympics*, *School on Saturn* and *Mucky Martians*. He also began to write, commission, and edit texts for the BBC's *Doctor Who* franchise, having been a lifelong fan of the series.

Cole is the author of an extensive list of serial books for young and young adult readers, including the bestselling *Astrosaurs* (2005–2011), *Cows in Action* (2007–2012), *Young James Bond* (2014–2017), and the *Secret Agent Mummy* series (2014–2016). He is a popular speaker at schools and science fiction conventions, having visited Europe, America, United Arab Emirates, Australia, and New Zealand.

Bio prepared by Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com

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Additional information

Summary

The *Secret Agent Mummy* texts are based on the premise that the gods of ancient Egypt are in fact aliens from the planet KaBa. Along with a retinue of other creatures, both good and evil, they came to Earth to be worshipped, and some are still around today. The mummified Sam (an acronym of Secret Agent Mummy) protected the Pharaohs in antiquity, and has remained on Earth to combat the monsters from KaBa, who seek world domination. He is assisted by his unique pets, Mumbum, a mummified dog equipped with robot armour, and Mew, a haughty cat goddess who demands worship and offerings of fish. Sam's sidekick is a young boy, Niall Rivers, who lives next door to Sam's headquarters (the Pyra-base). After having touched a magical relic from KaBa and accidentally absorbing its powers, he alone can see Sam's bandaged countenance and secret world (to the casual observer, Sam appears like a normal, though eccentric, human). Niall's already impressive technological skills have been strengthened, which proves useful as he follows Sam on his madcap adventures.

In *Hieroglyphs of Horror*, the third book in the series, Sam and his friends take on Sobek, the crocodile god, who has risen again and is set upon destroying the world. Using crystals of Ra stolen from collectors and museums to amplify his telepathic powers, Sobek intends to transform the animals of earth into terrifying crocodiles who will do his bidding. While seeking to protect one of the last crystals, Sam meets Moira the McMummy, another secret agent with a predilection for Scottish culture. Having long thought that he was the only Secret Agent still on earth, Sam is initially wary of this fiery female mummy and her aggressive pet bagpipes (called Bogpipes), but they soon discover they are on the same side. Together, they track Sobek to his lair, which lies beneath a loch in Scotland. Things look grim when Sobek prepares a hieroglyphic spell so powerful that it would transform every animal in the world into a human devouring crocodile, but Niall saves the day by flooding the chamber in which Sobek stores the crystals of Ra, the source of his power. After a huge explosion, Sobek's spell ends up directed only at himself, and he is obliterated by its tremendous force. Moira retires to Scotland, promising to assist Sam and his friends again should the need arise.

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Analysis

The text has a lighthearted, silly tone intended to appeal to juvenile readers (boys in particular). It features wordplay involving witty names (Niall Rivers' name recalls Egypt's famous watercourse), malapropisms (Sam confuses his detective vocabulary to say 'outvestigate' (investigate, p. 35), 'going under sheets' (undercover, p. 40) and 'make face nor bottom' (make head nor tail, p. 44), and bum jokes (the dog, Mumbum, had a terrible accident, and only his bottom survived). The notion of a child having a secret life with special friends is a recurring trope in children's literature. The text does not dwell on what Niall's family think he is doing spending time with the strange man from next door, but the reader derives vicarious pleasure from following their secret adventures.

While the book's central premise about the planet KaBa is convoluted and rather nonsensical, the text nevertheless makes a serious point about the endurance of ancient culture into the modern age. It refers to the preservation of Egyptian artefacts in museums and private collections, and the high status given to these special objects by both individuals and institutions. The text also reflects on the interaction between ancient and modern elements.Sam's Pyra-base is a jumble of high tech gadgets and ancient artefacts, and Mumbum, with his mummified bottom and robotic appendages, is a literal embodiment of this fusion of old and new. These sorts of mash-ups are extended yet further with the introduction of elements of Scottish culture through the figure of Moira McMummy. The way in which this character adopts the accoutrements of Scotland – the kilt and tam-o'-shanter, blue face paint, and thick accent and vocabulary, is a parallel of the Cole's own borrowing of elements of Egyptian culture – mummies, cats, and pyramids - in writing this series of books. His primary intention seems to be to entertain and engage the reader, with a secondary agenda to enlighten them about the culture of ancient Egypt.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Egypt Egyptian Mythology Hieroglyphs

Animals Death Friendship Good vs evil Heroism Life Reincarnation

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Religious beliefs Talking animals

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