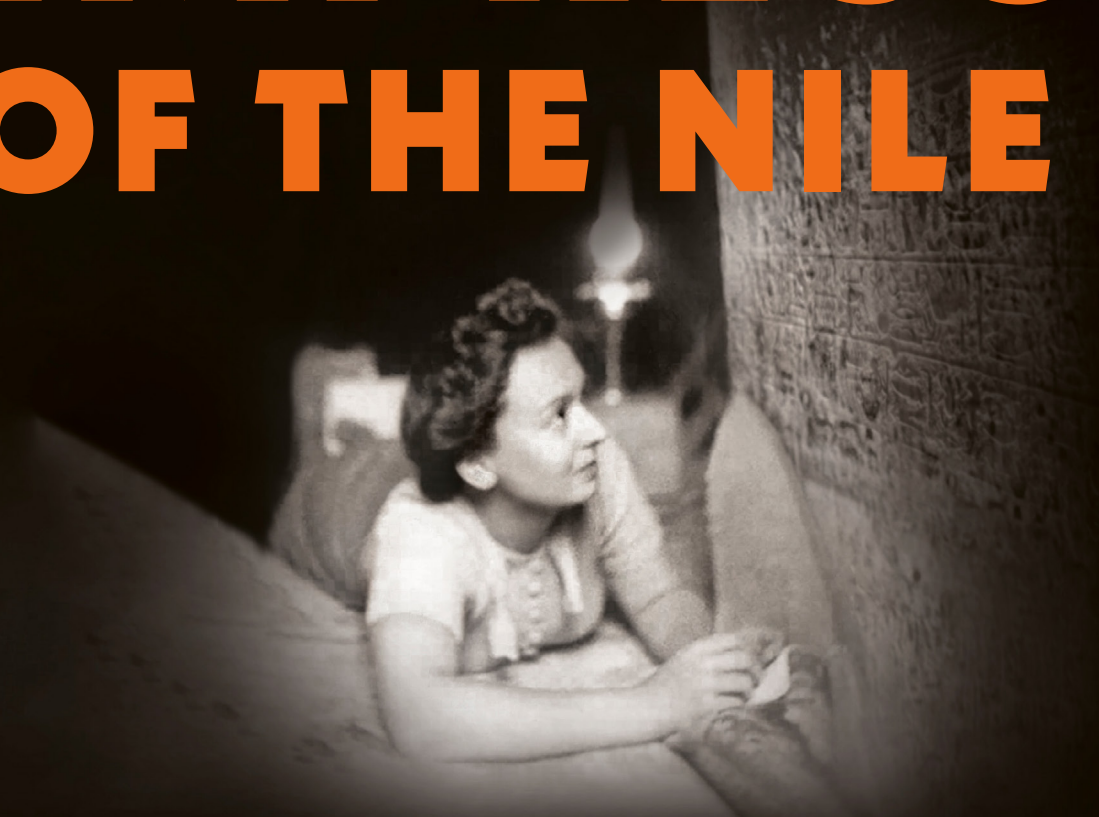


— The Daredevil Archaeologist —

Who Saved Egypt's Ancient Temples from Destruction

# EMPRESS OF THE NILE



**BOOK  
CLUB  
KIT**

## LYNNE OLSON

*New York Times* bestselling author of *MADAME FOURCADE'S SECRET WAR*

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. At the time Christiane Desroches was growing up, women in France were expected to confine themselves to their domestic roles as wives and mothers. Christiane refused to go along with such restrictions. What role did her upbringing play in that rebellion?
  2. In the book, Christiane is described as a real-life version of Indiana Jones. Do you agree with that comparison? What about her is like that movie character?
  3. What obstacles did Christiane face in establishing her career? How did she overcome them?
  4. Who were her biggest supporters/mentors? How were they able to help her? How important were they to her success?
  5. How did Christiane navigate the traditional male Middle Eastern culture in which she operated? How successful was she in doing it?
  6. What effect did international rivalries and politics have on Christiane's career? (For example, the stress between English and French archeologists, colonialism, the Suez Crisis, the rise of Egyptian nationalism.)
  7. What tactics did Christiane use in her efforts to save Egyptian antiquities from flooding in the Nile basin? How important was her intervention to the effort? Was the way she operated the same as or different than that of her colleagues?
  8. How did Christiane balance her career and her family? Was she successful at doing so?
  9. Why are the stories of the roles that Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis played in saving Egyptian antiquities so little-known? Why didn't these two women know about the contribution the other had made?
  10. Did your opinion of Jackie Kennedy change after you read about her efforts to save the Egyptian temples?
  11. What is Christiane's greatest achievement? Her greatest failure?
  12. If Christiane were to begin her career today, do you think she would face the same obstacles? If not, what obstacles would she face, if any? How has her chosen profession changed?
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## DID YOU KNOW?

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### **Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt was . . .**

- The first woman to head the Egyptian antiquities department at the Louvre
  - A member of the French Resistance during World War II
  - Among those who helped spirit the Louvre's Egyptian treasures out of Paris and into hiding during the Germans' 1940 invasion of France
  - Head of an international campaign to save ancient Nubian temples from flooding and eventual destruction, leading to the greatest cultural rescue in history
  - Joined by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy in the fight to save the Nubian temples
  - Responsible for staging the first-ever major exhibition of King Tut's treasures in 1967, which ignited the international frenzy of interest in Tut that continues to this day
  - One of only five women ever to be awarded the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, France's most prestigious honor of merit
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## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

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Here's where you can find some of the most distinguished collections of Egyptian art in the world today:

**The Louvre Museum** (Paris, France). The Department of Egyptian Antiquities, as featured in *Empress in the Nile*, remains one of the world's most-visited destinations. To learn more about the museum's famed collection of nearly 35,000 art objects from pre-historic Egypt through the 21st century, visit [louvre.fr](http://louvre.fr).

**The Egyptian Museum** (Cairo, Egypt) is the oldest archaeological museum in the Middle East and houses the largest collection of Pharaonic antiquities in the world, including statues of the great kings Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure, the builders of the pyramids at the Giza plateau. Visit [egy monuments.gov.eg](http://egy monuments.gov.eg) to learn more.

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art** (New York, NY). The Met collection of ancient Egyptian art consists of thousands of objects of artistic, historical, and cultural importance, dating from the Paleolithic to the Roman period (300,000 B.C.–A.D. 4th century). Visitors from across the globe come to the Met to see the Temple of Dendur, among other famed destinations. Visit [metmuseum.org](http://metmuseum.org) to learn more.

**The Brooklyn Museum** (Brooklyn, NY) boasts a permanent collection that includes ancient Egyptian sculpture, relief, paintings, pottery, papyri, jewelry, currency, and other artifacts. Also on view: The Mummy Chamber, featuring several mummies, coffins, and a nearly twenty-five-foot-long Book of the Dead scroll. Visit [brooklynmuseum.org](http://brooklynmuseum.org) for further details.

**The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology** (Ann Arbor, MI) houses a rare collection of Egyptian artifacts. Among the museum's most significant holdings are the coffin of Djehutymose, a nearly

complete edition of the Description de l'Égypte produced during Napoleon's 1798 campaign in Egypt and Syria, and a wide range of mummy masks. Visit [lsa.umich.edu/Kelsey](http://lsa.umich.edu/Kelsey) to find out more.

**The National Museum of Antiquities** (The Netherlands) includes a collection of mummies, the double statue of Maya and Merit, pillars from the tomb of Ptahmes, and more. Visit [rmo.nl](http://rmo.nl) for further details.

**The Museum of Fine Arts** (Boston, MA) houses a vast collection of Egyptian and Nubian works of art—sculpture, jewelry, coffins, mummies, coins, weapons, architecture, vases, carved gems, musical instruments, and more. Highlights include the painted cedar coffins of Governor Djehutynakht and his wife and the sarcophagus of Thutmose I from the Valley of the Kings. Visit [mfa.org](http://mfa.org) to learn more.

**The British Museum** (London, England) is home to some of best-known Egyptian artifacts in the world. The Rosetta Stone is one of the most visited objects in the museum—and is equally popular online. Discover everything you ever wanted to know about the tablet that unlocked the secret of Egyptian hieroglyphs at [britishmuseum.org](http://britishmuseum.org).

**The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum** (San Jose, CA) began with a single artifact collected in 1915 by the founder of the Rosicrucian Order, an organization that studies the wisdom of ancient cultures. The collection now consists of some 4,000 objects ranging from mummies and ritual objects to jewelry and textiles. Go to [egyptianmuseum.org](http://egyptianmuseum.org) for further information.

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