

The Carswell Covenant

Steve Fisher

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This adventurous thriller blends fact with fiction to draw attention to an ancient mystery.

Steve Fisher's *The Carswell Covenant* is a thriller based on real events. This creative novelization of the author's own travels finds the character version of Steve Fisher journeying to Egypt to discover the truth behind his grandfather's archaeological legacy. Its pages include romance, action, and world-shattering revelations.

Steve has cultivated a lifelong fascination with his legendary archaeologist grandfather, Clarence Fisher. A series of discoveries and clues, including a strange map, prompts him to dig deeper into his grandfather's secrets, and he decides to recruit a team and set off for Egypt. There, Steve gets caught up in a mystery that's haunted the country since biblical times, delving ever deeper without realizing the true danger he's putting himself in. Dueling secret societies are adamant about protecting the so-called Carswell Covenant, which connects a biblical hero with a historical figure. They believe that revealing the secret would turn an area already in turmoil upside-down.

The book has a fascinating premise, particularly the underlying mysteries around Clarence Fisher and his hidden tomb. That these factors have a basis in reality, and that the author did investigate Clarence Fisher's legacy in a parallel way, is intriguing. Real-life details such as a strange map and an heirloom ring help to drive the story forward, albeit at a slow pace.

The narrative does not always focus on the mysteries, though, and scenes in which Steve travels from tourist site to tourist site are more like snippets from a travelogue than from a thriller. Passages focus on Steve as he works to connect with his grandfather's legacy, and genuine details add a nonfiction element to the story. Such variety is sometimes enriching, though it confuses the book as a whole.

The narrative is also impeded by repetition. The last third of the book essentially consists of Steve recounting his adventure verbatim to two separate audiences. Scenes sometimes come through multiple points of view, though differing perspectives don't seem to add much. Information is repeated with frustrating frequency.

In addition, characters don't always behave in intuitive ways, and much of the dialogue, which often relies on overly ominous tones, reads as unnatural and unengaging despite the exciting subjects being discussed. Cumulatively, such issues result in a story that limps toward a lackluster ending.

The Carswell Covenant, with its interesting blend of fact and fiction, is an adventurous mystery that draws attention to a world of danger, discovery, and truth.

JOHN M. MURRAY (August 18, 2016)

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