



# Egyptian Diary: the Journal of Nakht

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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This is Platt's third historical diary and it has most of the engaging virtues of its predecessors, **Castle Diary** and **Pirate Diary**. It follows the events in a year in the life of Nakht, a young Egyptian. Nakht's father is a scribe and Nakht himself is training to be one. Scribes occupied a place just below the nobility in the Egyptian social hierarchy and were involved in the regulation of much of Egypt's social and economic life, a role which enables Nakht to observe and comment upon aspects of trade, commerce and religion at first hand. It is a relief to read a book about Egypt that is not preoccupied with the rites of the dead and mummification. And, although it features an adventure which is concerned with tomb robbing, this is one of those aspects of the book that, because it is firmly set in a particular time in Egypt's history, helps to emphasise the elements of change and variety in a society whose life span covered over 5,000 years. By Nakht's time, the last pyramids to be built were 200 years old and the oldest were already sites of tourism. As with its predecessors, it is the little touches of everyday humanity in the text that make **Egyptian Diary** convincing, the selection of a particular ass to pull a chariot 'because he smells less than the other asses and does not bite?'; or the rhyme that justifies the punishment of inattentive schoolboys, 'The ear of a boy is on his back/ for he only listens when he is beaten.' The **Diary** is presented in the same large handsome format as the previous books, with historical notes at the back, an index, and an excellent list of sources. The only change is the illustrator. Chris Riddell is a hard act to follow, and, while David Parkins' illustrations don't mark too much of a change in style, and have the same sense of drama and scale, being equally at home with small domestic incidents or large crowd scenes, they perhaps lack the wit and deftness of individual characterisation that is Riddell's hallmark.

Running Order:

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