

The Mummy Encyclopedia Article

The Mummy

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Contents

The Mummy Encyclopedia Article.....	1
Contents.....	2
The Mummy.....	3



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A near-perfect synthesis of Dracula and Frankenstein, the mummy is a supernatural (as opposed to a medico-scientific) representative of the "living dead" class of horror film monsters. Acclaimed cinematographer Karl Freund (*Metropolis*, *Murders in the Rue Morgue*) made his directorial debut with Universal's *The Mummy* (1932), otherwise known as *Cagliostro* and *Imhotep*. Originally conceived as a vehicle for Boris Karloff, screenwriter John Balderston (*Dracula*) rewrote the film after the 1931 discovery of King Tut's tomb. Accidentally brought back to life when some archaeologists read from a sacred Egyptian scroll, the mummy (Karloff) goes on a mission to claim the soul of a young Englishwoman who turns out to be his beloved but forbidden princess reincarnated. Attempting to thwart him is Doctor Muller (Edward Van Sloan, reprising his role as Van Helsing in *Dracula*). At least ten *Mummy* spin-offs, even more zombie movies, and an Anne Rice novel have since followed.

Further Reading:

Rice, Anne. *The Mummy, or Ramses the Damned: A Novel*. New York, Ballantine Books, 1989.

Twitchell, James B. *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1985, 260-264.