



# The Water Lily Cross

*Anthony Eglin*

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## **The Water Lily Cross** Anthony Eglin

Lawrence Kingston is asked to search for a botanist friend who has gone missing. With nothing but a scrap of paper with a bewildering cryptic message, he begins to investigate. He discovers that his friend was experimenting with aquatic plants and has stumbled on a horticultural breakthrough with staggering implications, one that could ultimately generate billions of dollars in revenue: a unique and giant form of Amazonian water lily. Convinced that influential people are involved in the disappearance, he pursues more leads, but circumstances beyond his control plunge him deeper into jeopardy and a corporate world of ruthless, greedy men who are not to be stopped. Kingston presses on, knowing that his missing friend's life--and his own--both hang by a very slender thread.

As with the highly acclaimed *The Lost Gardens*, Eglin brings his botanical and literary skill to this new mystery.

## **The Water Lily Cross Details**

Date : Published May 1st 2007 by Minotaur Books (first published 2007)

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Author : Anthony Eglin

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## From Reader Review The Water Lily Cross for online ebook

### Kim says

Really 2 1/2 stars. The writing is very good and the mystery was fine, but there are so many holes in the plot and Kingston does so many stupid things. When he got in the car with the bad guys after his car is stolen, I just threw up my hands in disgust.

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### Diane Waldo says

Dr. Lawrence Kingston receives a call from an old friend asking for his help in finding her missing husband, a former colleague of Kingston's. What he discovers leads him into a whirlwind of threatening actions and high-stakes biology experiments. The friend appears to have hybridized a water lily which will convert seawater to freshwater, and Kingston is convinced that the man was kidnapped as a result. Kingston has cause to rue his involvement in the disappearance on several occasions before stumbling on the solution to the case and bringing about a happy ending.

I enjoyed this book although I felt the author spent too much time on mundane details in between the detecting activities. I really didn't need to know what Kingston had for breakfast, lunch, or dinner each day when he wasn't off investigating somewhere! Despite this quibble, I would recommend this book for anyone who likes a good mystery salted with a touch of humor.

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### M. says

This is the third in the series featuring retired botany professor turned reluctant sleuth Lawrence Kingston, but my first encounter. There are a few references to prior events, but little to spoil prior books or make the reader feel out of step.

Anthony Eglin is a fine writer, who produces an acceptable plot that is more of a methodical amateur detective story instead of the typical cozy murder mystery. Kingston is easy to like, and the author does a good job of immersing us into his daily life. A life that is disrupted when an old friend and colleague goes missing without a trace!

The overall impression I had with this novel is that it was Hardy Boys/Nancy Drew adventure for adults. The structure and general progression of the plot is very similar to those series...threatening notes, concussions and kidnappings. That is NOT an insult (I loved those books as a kid and still do), because the end result is a light, enjoyable read. There are a few head-shakers in the plot (the degrees of reaction Kingston received in the helicopter and then at the compound don't fit), but not enough to ruin the experience.

Eglin gets extra credit for performing a rare act: gently educating on two subjects (desalinization and English gardens) and making it a) interesting and b) integral to the plot.

I will certainly revisit Lawrence Kingston.

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## Jane C. says

I really like Lawrence's character and couldn't get enough of the botanical subject matter in this book. I enjoyed the first part thoroughly, his driving around the countryside in his Triumph uncovering clues. But less so the second half, even though it was a real pager turner. It read more like a modern thriller, with cardboard bad guys showing up all over the place. I groaned when he brought in a member of the Russian mafia and the James-Bond-esque luxury yacht. Lawrence's escape was nonsense, convincing his sole captor that Stewart needed to go to the hospital.

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## Kathleen says

A retired botany professor who drives sports cars, dresses with sartorial precision, and enjoys lavish meals while still being careful of his health is called upon to track down a kidnapped friend. But wait, it gets worse! The wife of the friend, when not being confused and weepy, cooks multiple gourmet meals and trusts in the men folk to figure out what's going on. Other women in the story, whom our white-dude-professor respects not at all, pretty much all want to sleep with him. Not that our professor respects anyone else, either. He's just so much smarter than everyone that it's difficult to take them seriously.

Even beyond the characters, this wasn't an enjoyable book. Large passages in multiple chapters are encyclopedic descriptions of various famous English gardens like Kew. I understand that that is the conceit of this kind of cozy, but it seemed excessive. As for the mystery, it wasn't one. It was completely straightforward. Even the obvious twists were left unturned. The retired professor essentially solved it by Googling a few names and asking other people about the particular plant related questions. He used his own expertise in the field not at all. Meaning the police in the land of these mysteries have to be the thickest, most illiterate bunch of apes ever to scold an aging botanist for doing their job for them.

Everything about this novel was tedious. Usually that means I won't make it past thirty pages, but someone took a red pen to this library copy to add missing articles and correct some of the most obvious punctuation errors and I wanted to see if they eventually devolved into commentary. Sadly, the red pen reader did not offer opinions, though they did point out several places where sentences ended with both a comma and a period, which leads me to believe that this book was hastily edited and rushed to publication for some reason. Maybe it could have been better with more work, but I doubt it.

I do not recommend this book. If you like gardening and mysteries, I am sure that there are other cozies out there for you.

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## Barbara says

I am really enjoying this series. The main character, a retired botany professor is a character. He can go on and on about things and not care or seem to pick-up on the fact that people are getting glassy eyed with boredom or just the fact that they are overloaded with information. Yet, have someone try to bend his ear and he gets impatient. I guess it's just okay for him to talk - he apparently loves to hear himself - but don't do the same thing to him.

Despite the lack of self awareness or denial in the character, I find the stories well crafted and interesting. It is not heavy on information regarding plants and flora, so don't be worried about that. He does overstep

bounds by continuing his own personal investigation into the disappearance of an old friend and misrepresenting himself as helping the police in the investigation. While these things can irritate me in a cozy mystery, these books are well crafted and interesting enough for me to overlook these faults.

Have gone on to next in the series. Hope the fun continues.

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### **Laura says**

Less botanical than I had hoped. The garden-y part was mostly about famous gardens in England. If I had the time, they would be fun to research and look a pictures but I doubt that will happen.

On the other hand, I liked the main character.

In some ways this reminded me of the Agatha Raisin books, pretty simple story and the "detective" mostly bumbles along and just happens to solve the mystery. The setting and character was appealing in this one. I've read lots of AR, just finished one in fact, and find that I've lost my taste for them. They are just so pat. This series might be fun for awhile.

Note: "Pat" is sometimes just what I want, something easy and relaxing.

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### **Monica says**

Ugh, after the Lost Garden I thought things were looking up as it was better than the Blue Rose... turns out that it was just about to go very much downhill. I think what Eglin really wants is to create the Cozy Spy subgenre. There really isn't any mystery here. You know what happened (Stewart is missing) and very quickly find out why (by the end of the third chapter). The suspects quickly become apparent thanks to a mysterious witness that comes forward before the close of the first 1/3 of the book... It's fine, it's just not a mystery.

My real gripe here is that the amateur sleuth becomes more detestable by the novel. He starts out as a minor character in his own series in the Blue Rose, becomes a narcissistic creep in the Lost Garden, and finally ends up here as a Grade-A asshole. He spends time looking down his nose at his friend, Desmond's, choice of nursery name (too cutesy for Kingston who has no vested interest in the enterprise but feels that his preferences should be catered to). He judges a complete stranger on the tube for the way she looks despite the fact that she invites his criticism, nor even says a word to him. Somehow he thinks that she should fit his aesthetic ideals. Apparently no one is allowed to live their own lives.

The bigger turn off to me is that neither of these journeys into Kingston's subconscious is relevant to the plot, and because of their complete irrelevance come off as Eglin's own venting of his distaste for such things.

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### **Deborah aka Reading Mom says**

This has been a moderately interesting series and I've learned a lot about English gardens in particular and horticulture in general. The plot for this offering of the series held my attention, but I had trouble with amateur investigator, Dr. Kingston's thought processes in this book. For a man of his obvious intelligence, I found him to be very gullible and naive (I'd put him in the class of a highly intelligent person who has very

little common sense this time around.)

So far, of the 3 I've read, I liked the 2nd in the series best. I'll see how the next two compare

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### **Nancy says**

This "cozy" British garden mystery was a nice summer read. I liked the ex-professor turned gardening expert and sleuth, but his very intense investigation of a friend's disappearance really strains credulity. Let's just say I'd certainly like to have one such loyal friend as he---as he chased around Britain for sin search of someone he hadn't seen in years.

That said, as light mysteries go, Anthony Elgin has the rudiments of a promising series. A charming sleuth who is definitely "smarter than the average bear"; the promise of learning something (anything will do) about gardens and gardening; and a pleasant, literate diversion. This is not a book that will leave the reader pondering the meaning of life, but on a 95 degree day it was sufficient reason to stay inside.

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### **Linda L says**

I love these Anthony Eglin mysteries -- this is my 3rd one, with one to go. I hope he keeps on with this series. I would miss them SO MUCH. The hero is a wonderful man -- a retired Botany professor. He is just so interested in everything that he gets himself in all kinds of difficulties and always manages to have things turn out well.

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### **Brandi says**

The third in the "English Garden" mystery series, is another nice read. I have not continued on in this series simply because the extreme similarity between serial installments, potboiler-type of plots, stopped appealing to me. That is not to say I wouldn't come back to this series when I am in the mood for it again.

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### **Kel Sta says**

This is what they call a cozy mystery, as I learned from the book's jacket. Maybe I like my mystery a little less cozy, but I think that poor proofreading, and a lack of convincing storyline also detracted from my wholehearted enjoyment of this novel. I picked it up because the jacket made reference to cryptic clues and the main character's "Times crossword logic", and I'm attempting to train myself in cryptic crosswords for work. I was disappointed, with only a few opportunities to test my cryptic abilities revealing themselves as I read. I would have liked some of the relationships within the book to have been developed more, rather than the focus being quite so heavily on tidbits of info about plants and English gardens. Fewer references to the author's previous 2 novels would have made room for the plot to have been fleshed out a little more too. Still, I found this book mildly entertaining.

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## Natalie says

I have several things about this book to nit-pick. First, the main character is not endearing in any fashion. He's a middle aged high class OCD British guy who drinks too much. I have nothing against British protagonists- Sherlock Holmes is one of my favorites- but this guy just rubbed me the wrong way. Perhaps it was how anal he was about his vehicle, or the way he needed to describe every alcoholic beverage he ordered. Or maybe it was his holier-than-thou command of gardens and flowers, or crossword puzzles. I couldn't really identify with him, therefore, I didn't care about him. There were hardly any crossword puzzle clues- maybe five in the whole book. I felt that even though the thought of a plant that takes the salt out of water is very intriguing, it seemed as though the author didn't know much about the crossing plants in question, or he was purposely leaving the whole thing vague enough so he didn't have to fabricate much. The story did continue on a quick enough pace, so the story didn't feel like it was dragging. The climax of the story was boring- I really expected more, and felt rather let down. The author did reference his previous novels with this main character, Kingston, and they sound much more interesting than this story. Unless you like your heroes to be middle aged, stuffy, drunk british men, stay away from this one.

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## Sep says

Lawrence Kingston searches for a missing friend who may have made a world-changing discovery.

I love the descriptions of the gardens and cosy mysteries in general. This one had 4 stars instead of 5 because it had a tiny bit too many dullish details of daily life for me. Very exciting ending with a hint of a future book.

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