

# MPM

a bulletin on the doings and undoings of  
Barbara Mertz/Elizabeth Peters/Barbara Michaels  
Issue 42  
Spring 2003  
Kristen Whitbread, Editor

## The Amelia Peabody Books By Elizabeth Peters

In chronological order:  
Crocodile on the Sandbank  
Curse of the Pharaohs  
The Mummy Case  
Lion in the Valley  
Deeds of the Disturber  
The Last Camel Died at Noon  
The Snake, the Crocodile, and the Dog  
The Hippopotamus Pool  
Seeing a Large Cat  
The Ape Who Guards the Balance  
The Falcon at the Portal  
He Shall Thunder in the Sky  
Lord of the Silent  
The Golden One  
Children of the Storm

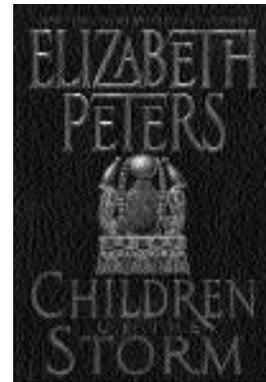
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*The official Barbara Mertz/Elizabeth Peters/Barbara Michaels website*

by Margie Knauff & Lisa Speckhardt



## PUBLISHING

The New Amelia Peabody Mystery from WilliamMorrow Publishers!

# CHILDREN OF THE STORM 1 APRIL 2003

**The Golden One**

April 2003

paperback

Avon Suspense

**Amelia Peabody's Egypt, A Compendium**

October 2003

hardcover

WilliamMorrow

**“Really,” I said, “Cairo is becoming overrun with tourists these days-and many of them no better than they should be!”**

**Amelia Peabody Emerson *Seeing a Large Cat***

MPM (on her winter travels)

Some of my friends don't think I should be allowed to leave the country without a keeper. Two of them accompanied me to Egypt last November--artist Joel Cole and long-time friend and associate Dennis Forbes, editor of KMT. We took off from JFK at 11 pm. on Sunday, Nov. 23, arriving in Cairo the following afternoon. Tired and dry-mouthed, we were delighted to see the smiling face of Khaled Fawaz, whom members of the Amelia Peabody Expedition will remember fondly. He got us through the airport and off to the Nile Hilton, where we usually stay when in Cairo because of its proximity to the Cairo Museum. Our first view of the Museum was something of a shock; in preparation for the forthcoming Centennial, it had been painted pinkish red! We celebrated our return with gin and tonics on

the balcony of my room, as we stared in wonder at the pink museum, and then staggered off to bed. I never have any problems with jet lag when I follow this procedure, and next morning I was ready to go. Where? Shopping, of course. First things first..

We did get in a few archaeological activities while in Cairo, including several trips to the Museum. One day we accompanied Salima Ikram and Roxie Walker (mummy experts and my favorite fellow shoppers) to South Sakkara, where they were filming for a tv special. The pyramid of Djedkare was a new one for us, so while Salima and Roxie worked we wandered around the site, taking photographs and, in my case, sitting on a rock and enjoying the peace and quiet and the solitude. The pyramid has pretty well collapsed, but as Amelia would say, any pyramid is better than none.

We were off to Luxor on the Wednesday, in order to be in time for Thanksgiving at Chicago House. Ray Johnson, the mudir, was one of many old friends who welcomed us. Chicago House celebrates in style--turkey with all the trimmings and a few exotic additions. And plenty to drink.

Luxor is just about my favorite place in the whole world, and there is always something new to see. Dennis always heads first for Karnak, especially the Open Air Museum, where the beautiful Red Chapel of Hatshepsut has been rebuilt by the French. We visited the newly opened Merneptah temple and museum. and were treated to a tour of the excavations at Kom el Hettan by one of the excavators, Hourig Sourouzian.

This is the site of the huge mortuary temple of Amenhotep III; those of you who have been in Egypt will remember the Colossi of Memnon, which stand at what was once the entrance to the temple. It is now a long, seemingly barren stretch of ground.



Not barren to the excavators, though; they have turned up fragments of monumental statues, foundation walls, and pavements, in addition to carefully restoring the battered colossi.

One afternoon we had “tea” on a dahabeeyah owned by Kent and Susan Weeks. They’ve done a wonderful job of refurbishing the old vessel, and it was a thrill to get some idea of exactly how Amelia and company lived on their dahabeeyah - though she would have been green with envy at the neat little kitchen and bathroom.





We also enjoyed an unexpected treat--a morning spent inspecting a new sewage system, behind Karnak and out into the desert! A nice man named Bob Kachinsky, engineer and Egyptophile, drove us around and made the whole thing not only comprehensible but fascinating. The project is funded by USAID. It made us feel good to see our tax dollars devoted to a project designed to improve peoples' lives.

The highest point (watch out for the pun) was lunch on top of the small temple at Medinet Habu, hosted by Chicago House's master stonemason, Dany Roy.



We had to climb a twenty-foot ladder to get up there; some people, mentioning no names, thought I couldn't do it, but there is nothing like the prospect of food to inspire me. Graceful I was not, but I got there. Dany showed us what he had done to stabilize the roof and



arrange a drainage system that would prevent water from collecting and leaking down into the temple. He had also cooked the food, which we gobbled without shame. I am presently negotiating with him for the recipe for his fuul. (It's basically mashed up beans, but there were magic ingredients. So far Dany isn't talking.)

Dennis and Joel spent a couple of days in Aswan while I loafed around the hotel and socialized and--well--shopped. Then we headed back to Cairo. Our schedule was getting backed up by then, and it wasn't possible to fit everything in; we didn't make it to Giza, where Ann Macy Roth had been investigating some of the mastabas (readers of **He Shall Thunder in the Sky** will recall the Emersons' work there) but we prowled the Khan el Khalili with her and her young, (everybody looks young to me these days, but they really were) and enthusiastic crew. One morning was spent on a visit to a fascinating (am I overusing that word?) old house in Cairo, which had been owned by one of those early twentieth century British eccentrics. Gayer-Andersen collected everything from Egyptian antiquities to Turkish tiles to mashrabiya screens. "The House of the Cretan Woman," as it was called, has been turned into a museum, and although we generally focus on strictly Egyptological sites, we thoroughly enjoyed being shown round by Nick Warner, who knows the place inside and out.

I've dropped names like crazy here, but I haven't been able to mention all the friends who entertained us and brought us up to date on their recent work. Going back to Egypt is like a school reunion for me; my friends are so scattered, from Australia to England to Czechoslovakia to Egypt itself. I see some of them only in Egypt, and always there are new friends to be made.

The Centennial celebrations of the Cairo Museum went on for several days; there were searchlights and music and garlands and tents and what-have-you. We attended only one of the events, which included the opening of a new gallery that displayed treasures taken from the museum's vast storage area. Most had never been on display before, and it was an overwhelming sight, too much to take in on a single visit, especially since we kept running into friends who had come from all over the world to join in the celebration. The Egyptians know how to do this sort of thing with panache; there were more searchlights, mounted guards dressed in the fezzes and uniforms of the first decade of the century, and--I love this--the sound track of "Lord of the Rings" blaring from loudspeakers.

The day before we left I did a signing and talk for the bookstore of the American University of Cairo. I've been there several times, and I love it. I also did an interview for Book Magazine; I had already spent a day in Luxor being photographed for the story. The writer of said story was as wildly busy as I; when we discovered we were both heading home on the same flight we ended up doing the interview on the plane, with Lee's cat in a carrier under the seat. The cat slept all the way, lucky creature. Those long (ten to twelve hours) flights are the only part of the business I hate, but the result makes it worthwhile. Everyone we met in Egypt, from taxi drivers to students to officials, expressed only friendship for us personally and for Americans in general. As I write this, bombs are falling on Baghdad and the vast store of goodwill the United States had earned in Egypt and other parts of the world has been squandered by the present administration. I am deeply grieved, and aggrieved, about this, and I mourn for the lives that will be lost in a needless war. Peace. Salaam. Shalom.



PS If anyone wants a more detailed account of the trip along with gorgeous color photographs of the sites we visited, then check out the spring 2003 issue of *KMT: A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* Vol. 14 No. 1, "Egypt 2002, There and Back Again: A Photographer's Tale" by Dennis Forbes.

PPS If you are interested in contributing money to these excavations or any others, write to me via the PO Box and I will pass along the necessary information. These groups are always underfunded and deeply appreciative of contributions to their work.

**Travel**  
**My heart is warm with the friends I make,**  
**And better friends I'll not be knowing;**  
**Yet there isn't a train I wouldn't take**  
**No matter where it's going**

**Edna St. Vincent Millay**

Steven Shields: Last year in May I was in the airport in Lhasa, Tibet waiting for my flight to take me back to Chengdu, China where I had been teaching as a visiting professor. One of the security guards came into the departure lounge with a paperback book (it was The Mummy Case!), and asked if it was mine. I indicated to him it was not and he went away. Some time later, when a few more white faces showed up, the guard came back through with the book. Sitting a few rows from me, but facing me, were two young women (maybe in their 20s). The guard approached them, and one woman explained to him in very British English that the book was hers, but she'd read it, so she'd left it on a chair near the check-in counters for someone to pick up, as she didn't want to throw a book in the trash. The guard couldn't understand a word of English, so the woman simply took the book from him rather than continue a fruitless conversation. With my leisure reading running low, I went over to the women, and asked if she would mind giving me the book. I had never heard of Elizabeth Peters, but since the story was set in Egypt it seemed interesting. I asked the woman what she thought of it, and she said she had spent two or three otherwise lonely evenings enjoying Amelia's adventure; that the book didn't actually belong to her, as she found it in her bunk at the Mt. Everest Base Camp in Nepal. A few days later, while cruising down the Yangtze River, I was sitting on the sundeck of the ship reading, and when I went to lunch, my table partner asked me about the book; I told her how much I was enjoying it, and when I finished, I would give it to her.

MPM Thanks for sending this - apparently Amelia gets around even more than we suspected!

Joyce Koontz (ever on top of things): In the summer/fall bulletin you mentioned the endangered "Kalahari Aye Aye". Have they moved? Or is it a case of parallel evolution? Ayes Ayes come only from the northern sector of the east coast rain forests of Madagascar! Don't mess with us zoo docents my girl! Members of the lemur species all come from Madagascar!

KDW Well, this certainly explains those fruitless hours I spent in the grasslands of Botswana tracking the Aye Aye in an attempt to fulfill a gustatory sensation from the pages of "Larousse". Thanks for setting me straight! On to Madagascar...

**It seems to me that there are two great enemies of peace - fear and selfishness.**

**Katherine Paterson in *The Horn Book***

KDW

Like so many others at this time my mind, dense with the images of war, reels at an attempt to write about something else - anything else; even a momentary diversion from the horror and pain others are suffering, from which a mere chance of location exempts me, feels a betrayal. But when the spring peepers began calling last week my heart guiltily surged with expectations and hopes of spring - the promise of life reborn and chances living come again. Don't get me wrong, I love the snow and the seeming desolation of winter, if only to remind me of that magic I understood as a child - that which appears irrevocably barren pulses with life, hidden until the right length of day, the right temperature, the right opportunity to come forth. Until the right time for tiny frogs, secreted in the soil and leaves, protected with their own form of antifreeze in response to the chill of fall, to emerge and call to one another in a frantic attempt to live and procreate. Their urgency reminds me that life is precious and tenuous and yet somehow perpetual. When the temperature dipped again this week the walls of my house, which had echoed day and night with their high pitched greetings, fell silent as they subsided into their silt to escape the cold. So I turned to my many flats of seeds - vegetables and flowers emerging in their artificially produced warmth and light - forced to grow under my watchful, expectant eye. It is not the same - if I turn off the heat, if I turn off the light, if I am careless and forget to water, or overzealous and water too much, these tender seedlings will die. I am but a small god in control of a table of seedling flats. It is a sorry thing when my need to remind myself of the urgency and unceasing march of life has come to this. Certainly I can damage this earth beyond repair in my time - a friend sprayed her wetland area with highly potent toxins in an attempt to eradicate Canadian Thistle last year and now complains that the peepers do not sing this spring. But there is something boundless, promising and brutal about the earth - go too far and my time will come to an end. The earth will see to that. Still, as much as is possible, I will be careful. Because I know the peepers are there. They will come when they know it is time, returning with clamorous voices creating a new beginning.

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