

MPM

a bulletin on the doings and undoings of
Barbara Mertz/Elizabeth Peters/Barbara Michaels
Issue 50
Summer 2007
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
Guardian of the Horizon
Serpent on the Crown
Tomb of the Golden Bird

also look for:

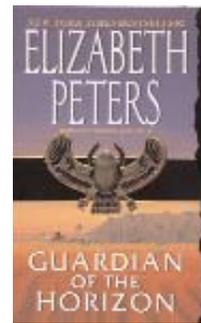
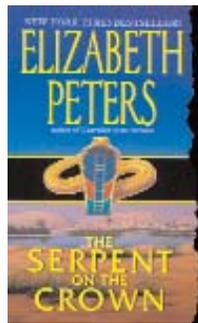
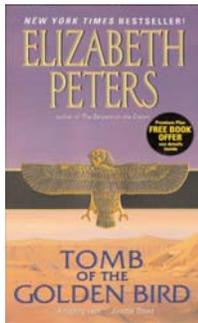
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MPM: Mertz ● Peters ● Michaels

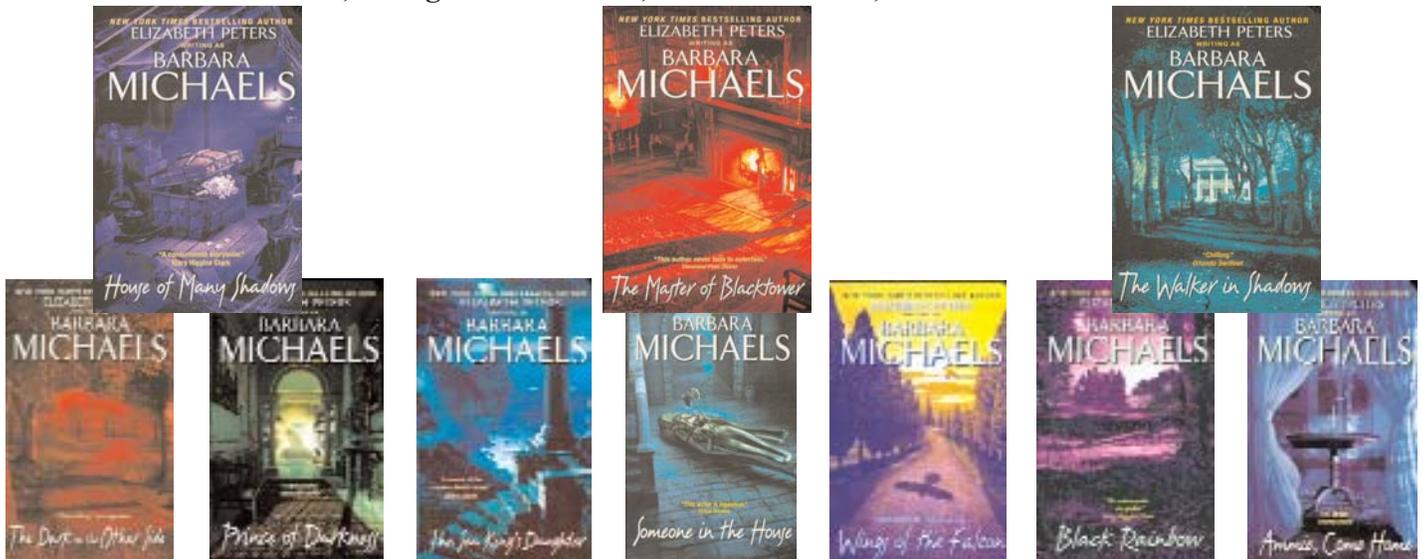
The official Barbara Mertz/Elizabeth Peters/Barbara Michaels website
by Margie Knauff & Lisa Speckhardt

PUBLISHING

The Tomb of the Golden Bird	April 2007	paperback	Harper Suspense
The Serpent on the Crown	March 2006	paperback	Avon Suspense
Guardian of the Horizon	March 2005	paperback	Harper Torch



HarperTorch Reissues Barbara Michaels: **House of Many Shadows, The Master of Blacktower, The Walker in the Shadows, The Dark on the other Side, Prince of Darkness, The Sea King's Daughter, Someone in the House, Wings of the Falcon, Black Rainbow, Ammie Come Home**



In response to the MANY queries along this general line:

1. Please tell me **Tomb of the Golden Bird** isn't the last Peabody-Emerson book - all the loose ends seemed neatly wrapped up in the end...

and

2. When will you be writing a new Vicky? I miss her...

1. **Tomb of the Golden Bird** is not the last Peabody-Emerson novel - MPM has another contract for Amelia just as soon as she finishes her current contract for...

2. the new Vicky Bliss - MPM is writing the new Vicky as you read this! Well maybe not precisely as you read this unless I chase her out of her garden and back to her desk again. But soon enough, when our Washington summer hits hot and heavy, she will be immersed in their lives for extended periods so that you and I may do so as well in the near future!

MPM

The February doldrums are over and we are seeing faint signs of spring. High time, too. (KDW Actually, the faint signs of spring fled and were replaced by March mud and snow and then April snow showers and now May serious heat...) The dog refuses to stay outside for more than ten minutes. (KDW This hasn't changed...this never changes!) He's over eleven and has arthritis, so as a fellow sufferer I can't blame him. The cats are divided on the issue. Some go outside and stay, some return almost at once, muttering irritably. At me, of course. I am responsible for the weather, along with everything else. (KDW And this never changes either!)

Some of you may have noticed that there will not be a new Elizabeth Peters this spring. After forty plus years and sixty plus books, I decided I was entitled to slow down a bit. I did finish revising my two non-fiction books, one of which--Temples, Tombs and Hieroglyphs--will be published in December in the States, and sometime or other in England. Morrow has decided to reprint some of the earlier Amelias in hardcover. The first, The Mummy Case, is due out in April. In case you wonder why they didn't start with Crocodile on the Sandbank, it is because they don't have the rights to that first Amelia or to the second, The Curse of the Pharaohs. Feel free to complain to Warner, who holds those rights and won't let me have them back.

The next E.P. will be a Vicky Bliss. I started it in January and then realized that although I had pulled off a spectacular crime, I had no idea who had committed it or why. Having found myself in this position before, I calmly await inspiration.

Letters from many of you have brightened winter days. I'm not always as prompt about answering as I would like to be, but I enjoy your comments as well as photos of cats, dogs, and babies. A number of people have asked for advice about travelling to Egypt, so I am going to offer a few general suggestions.

Unless political conditions change dramatically I would have no fears about going. Egyptians are very friendly people; they like Americans even when they detest our government's policies. As in any big city, Cairo has its perils, and there are areas into which one should not venture at night; but personally I feel safer in Cairo than I do in New York City or Washington.

Only very experienced travellers should try to manage on their own instead of signing up for a tour. The wonderful magazine KMT, which is indispensable for serious Egyptophiles, contains advertisements by reputable tour companies. You can find others online, but it would be advisable to ask around before settling on one. Some travel companies can arrange private tours if you don't want to join a group. A representative of the company will meet you at the airport, get your visa for you, steer you through customs and passport control, take you to your hotel, and make sure your reservations are in order. He or she can also arrange for local trips. I've been to Egypt innumerable times, but I wouldn't dream of going without the assistance of such a courier. It saves time and nervous energy, and may not cost much more in the long run than trying to negotiate for yourself.

What should you see when you get there? There is so much, I can only tell you what I would do. For first time travellers there are a few must-sees: in the Cairo area, the Museum and the Giza pyramids. My favorite among the other ancient sites is Dahshur, but Sakkara is also cool. A visit to the Khan el Khalili is high on my list. The beautiful medieval buildings of Cairo are wonderful, and so are the Christian remains in Old Cairo, if your interest includes those periods.

Luxor is also a must for me--even more of a must than Cairo, if truth were told. It's a nice little town, very safe and friendly. The temples of Karnak and Luxor on the East Bank are on all the standard tours, and the major attractions of the West Bank include the Valley of the Kings and the temples of Deir el Bahri and Medinet Habu. You can hire a taxi for a day (negotiate in advance) on the East Bank, and cross the bridge to the West Bank; or you can cross the river in one of two ways, the local ferry, which is crowded and grubby and lots of fun, or by private motor boat. There are always dozens of the latter lined up on the piers outside the major hotels. Negotiate! And negotiate again, when you reach the West Bank and find taxis waiting. Incidentally, don't use the private boats if you get the shakes when you cross a narrow board set at an alarming angle. That is what passes for a gangplank. However, there are willing hands ready to help you across and into the boat. I've never fallen in yet!

If you have more time you'll have to decide for yourself what you want to see. Read your guidebook and--modesty be damned--the Amelia books.

Cruises can be fun if you are so inclined. (Those boats have large, wide gangplanks with handrails.) It is no longer possible, alas, to sail from Cairo to Luxor. The standard cruises go from Luxor to Aswan, or vice versa, stopping at several major temples along the way. Aswan isn't one of my favorite cities, but it is fascinating if you've never been there. The new museum is sensational. Consult your guidebook or tour guide for other options.

Unfortunately Middle Egypt is more or less out of bounds these days. You can arrange a visit to Tell el Amarna from Cairo, and it is quite wonderful, though I don't advise it for the very young or the very old. There's a lot of climbing. Abydos can be visited from Luxor, but the process is very complicated and allows only a few hours at the site. Don't ask me about the Red Sea resorts, I've never visited them and don't intend to. Trips to the oases are possible for the adventurous. Alexandria? It's not one of my top choices; there aren't enough pharaonic remains there.

A word about baksheesh. Bear in mind when it is requested (and it will be) that it is regarded as a present. Someone does you a favor or provides a service, and you express your appreciation with a gift. It's really very civilized, when you come to think about it. Don't let yourself be bullied into giving more than you should, but I have always preferred to err on the side of generosity. After all, you are a rich tourist, and the amount you spend on a meal at the hotel would support many Egyptian families for a week. Even the guards at the various sites are sadly underpaid. Your small tips buy food and clothing, not luxuries.

A few words of Arabic are greatly appreciated, especially "thank you." And I am sure I need not say that showing respect for local customs and for the religion of the country is the least one can do. You don't have to envelop yourself in head to foot garments, just don't show great expanses of bare skin. Don't make dumb remarks about Islam, even when you think you won't be understood. Most Egyptians speak at least a little English. Show interest, if you like, so long as your questions are polite and neutral. I once walked into the bank next to the Winter Palace, to have a check cashed, and found the cashier reading his Koran. (This was during Ramadan, and there was no one else in the office.) I stepped back and told him to finish his prayers before attending to me, whereupon he smiled and asked if I would like him to read aloud. He had a beautiful, sonorous voice, having trained, as he told me, as a muezzin. It was a lovely experience, which I would not have had if I had not demonstrated a little extra courtesy. (And I got wonderful service at that bank from then on.)

So be courteous. Be nice. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you if they were in your country. And when you are in Luxor do take time to watch the sun set across the Nile and the shadows darken on the western cliffs while you listen to the muezzins during the evening call to prayer. It is an unforgettable experience. I have found that a gin and tonic is the perfect accompaniment.



Lorraine Liotta: I was extremely excited to find that your Amelia Emerson is based on the journals of Amelia Edwards....After reading the first nine novels I would just adore to read the original journals Amelia penned during her travels. Is this at all possible? Are her descendants amenable to them becoming public domain?...

MPM I don't know where you heard that my Amelia Emerson had anything to do with Amelia Edwards' journals. There are no such journals. Edwards wrote a splendid travel book, **100 Miles Up the Nile**, which I'm sure you would enjoy. I drew a few contemporary historical details from it, but that's the only connection between Amelia Edwards and Amelia Emerson. The relationship between the two Amelias, consists solely of their first names and the names of their dahabeeyahs. In almost every other way they have nothing in common. Amelia B. Edwards was a novelist, she never married nor had children, she never excavated; her contributions to Egyptology included helping to found the Egypt Exploration Fund and founding a chair for William Flinders Petrie, whom she greatly admired. She was a conventional Victorian lady who never strayed off the beaten paths--unlike such adventurers as Isabella Bird and Mary Kingsley and Amelia Peabody. Except for actual historical figures such as Howard Carter, my characters, like those of most writers, are "things of shreds and patches"--composites of people I know, people I read or hear about, and myself. And things I just make up.

Amelia Garvey: Were [the Emersons] actual living, breathing people on earth? What were their true names? Are there any more journals? Do Ramses and Nefret really leave Luxor for Cairo? Will Amelia and Emerson ever show their age?

MPM I'm sorry to tell you that all the Emersons came straight out of my over-active imagination. I'm so glad you find them convincing and fun.

Jackie Dabbs: Please let Emerson find out that the child Nefret lost was Ramses' ... In Tomb of the Golden Bird you left Nefret pregnant -- what is her name? Is she the connection to John Tregarth his mother born in 1924--or a later child born in 1932? Nefret would have been 47--but, hey--she was a late blooming priestess of Isis.)

MPM Ramses does realize the baby was his - see **Thunder**, after one of his visits to el'Gabri. Nefret also tells Amelia, in the same book.

KDW Rest assured if they know then Emerson knows.

MPM The rest of your questions will (probably) be answered in the next book(s).