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some extent in He Shall Thunder in the Sky, whereby Nefret knows that Ramses is in imminent danger. Mr. Smith is a recurring character who often goes by "Smith" — partly because spies use pseudonyms and partly because it's so much easier than coping with his real name "the Honorable Algenon Bracegirdle-Boisdragon". "Near and Dear" Baby Naming: Walter "Ramses" Emerson is named for his paternal uncle, his and Nefret's twins Charlotte and David Todros and Ramses's cousin John. Walter and Evelyn's daughter Amelia "Lia" is named after Amelia, and David and Lia's son Abdulali. "Dolly" is named for David's grandfather. Non-Human Sidekick: The cat Bastet in several of the early novels, even though these are mysteries, not fantasies. She is amazingly, though not quite supernaturally, intelligent and loyal. When she eventually dies at an advanced age in Seeing a Large Cat, other cats show up — sometimes her descendants, sometimes just adopted strays — to continue the tradition, though only her daughter comes close to her calibre. By the way, the stories mostly take place in Egypt and the cat Bastet is always referred to as "the cat Bastet", never just "Bastet", as if even the very unsuperstitious Emersons wanted to be careful that she not be mistaken for any other Bastet. Not Blood Siblings: Amelia's son Walter "Ramses" Emerson is attracted to his adopted sister Nefret pretty much from the moment he meets her, but it takes Nefret a long time to see Ramses as anything other than an Annoying Younger Sibling. Only Known by Their Nickname: Amelia's son Ramses. No, a Victorian Age English couple did not name their son after an Egyptian Pharaoh, but you could be forgiven for thinking they did, given how rarely his real name (Walter) is mentioned in the books. Sethos too — his real name of Seth isn't even revealed until Children of the Storm, fifteenth in publishing order and eighteenth in in-universe chronological order. Papa Wolf: Dr. Radcliffe Emerson, the Egyptologist-detective husband of Amelia Peabody, is always short-tempered and becomes absolutely volcanic at any threat to his family. Since he is regularly described by his narrator-wife as "Herculean" in build, the results are impressive. For that matter, his son Ramses inherits this trait. Shades into Helicopter Parents with regard to Nefret sometimes; not so much about sex as about shielding her from the world's ugliness. He'll say she shouldn't be permitted to examine a gruesome corpse, ignoring the fact that she's a fully trained doctor and would politely and lovingly tell him where to stuff his objections. At least once after she and Ramses married, Ramses got a bit irritated by Emerson's attitude effectively implying that Ramses didn't do a proper job of looking after her; he was rather maliciously amused Emerson became embarrassed to realize Nefret was taking a bath in the next room. Parasol of Pain: Amelia makes an art form of this, to the point that some superstitiously 19th-century Egyptians believe it to be a magical weapon. By the time she's in her 50s, Amelia actually has custom parasols made with extra-strong steel shafts and unusually sharp, pointed finials so they aren't destroyed by the damage she deals with them and can stand up to the rigors of hiking in rough terrain and scrambling around ruins. To top it off, at least one is built along the lines of a sword cane — this latter is a special present from her husband in He Shall Thunder in the Sky, which delights her even though she doesn't actually know how to fence. Aside from this version, she's used them for: Making a path through packed crowds. Smartly applying them to the wrist to fend off women who are being inappropriately clingy around her husband. Stabbing people who attack her son. Intimidation, at least once she's developed a bit of a reputation. Police Are Useless: Amelia Peabody and her husband, who are detective archeologists, routinely ignore the police in their detective work due to believing in this trope and using it as an excuse to pursue their investigations as they see fit. Justified, in that their adventures happen in Egypt in the 1880s to 1920s, where the police are indeed ineffectual (due to a lack of training), violent, corrupt or afraid to press matters when a European is suspected of being the criminal. Less so when in England, where there are competent investigators; the friction that this attitude causes makes applying Amelia and Emerson's real expertise in Egyptian culture to incidents involving London's Cairene population... more difficult than it needs to be. Things get better by the end of the series, but by then, their habits are ingrained, to the chagrin of the new police inspector. Posthumous Collaboration: The Painted Queen was started by Barbara Mertz (AKA Elizabeth Peters) and finished by her friend and collaborator Joan Hess. Put on a Bus: Mary and Karl von Borg debut in book 2, and go multiple books without ever appearing. Percy Emerson debuts in book 4 and is then absent for seven books in a row, by chronological order. The Frasers debut in book 4, reappear in book 9, and have little role otherwise. Raised by Natives: Nefret Forth fits this trope morally if not factually. Her parents were 19th-century explorers who discovered a remnant of ancient Egyptian civilization in a lost oasis and spent the rest of their lives there. Going Native in varying degrees. When Amelia and her family arrive, they find the 13-year-old Nefret being high priestess of Isis. Her parents being dead by the end of the book, Nefret goes back to Western civilization with the Emersons, where she has a realistically rough time fitting in. "Scooby-Do!" Hoax: Unsurprisingly, considering the setting, some form of this is always used by someone, protagonists included. Sesquipedalian Loquaciousness: Walter "Ramses" Emerson tends to embody this trope through his younger years, though he (mostly) grows out of it by around age 20, as stated by Amelia in Guardian of the Horizon. Then, in the very end of Children on the Storm, his son is revealed to be the same way. In fact, David John's first sentences are requesting to be called by his full name and "What subject would you like to discuss?" which prompts Amelia to beg Emerson for a drink. Amelia herself could actually fit this trope in many regards, although it may be more her old-fashioned manner of narration than excessive verbosity. Shipper on Deck: Amelia. Every book, sometimes for more than one couple. Methods range from moderately subtle such asCarefully arranged dinner seating or dropping back in a walking party to distract the third wheel, to practically whacking Walter upside the head when he Can't Spit It Out. In Crocodile on The Sandbank she encourages Evelyn to express her feelings to Walter, despite Evelyn's fears that her Defiled Forever status would lead to a painful rejection. Turns out that Amelia read Walter correctly. Hilariously misaimed in Curse of The Pharaohs: Mary has been very assiduously nursing Arthur, who is recovering from a serious head injury. As the denouement unfolds, Amelia drags the conversation outside of his room, leaving Mary behind. Some time later, Mary joins the party, and we get this exchange:Mary: He is asleep, I am so happy for him. He will so enjoy being lord Baskerville.Amelia: And I am happy for you.Mary (blushing): But how did you know? We haven't told anyone yet.Amelia: I always know these things. Cue Karl stepping over to Mary and putting his arm around her. Mary snuggles in. Of course... Amelia being Amelia, within two pages and two and a half months, she's going on about how she knew that Mary & Arthur not have been a good match. Shout-Out: Multiple throughout the series. To Sherlock Holmes — the second book has characters belonging to a different branch of the Baskerville family, a German named Von Bork, and someone under the pseudonym of Milverton, as well as a direct reference to Holmes, while book four has Amelia meet a detective named Tobias Gregson who's not actually either of those things. There are also references to H. Rider Haggard's stories, in addition to the Homage mentioned above involving Nefret's backstory. Elizabeth Peters is a Discworld fan. One of the World War I-era stories had Sethos pretending to be a German agent reporting to a "von Überwald". Shown Their Work: The Egyptology and history of archeology in the series is solid, because the author, Elizabeth Peters (IRL Barbara Mertz) is an Egyptologist and writes non-fiction under her real name. Silk Hiding Steel: Amelia and Nefret and to a lesser extent Evelyn. Literally in the case of their parasols. Sir Swears-a-Lot: Emerson, which earns him the epithet "Father of Curses". Ramses is less prone to this, but on one occasion, he "breathed out a word even his father seldom used" when rescuing David. Nefret will swear on occasion, but justifiably when she is giving birth to the twins, Ramses tells the "Father of Curses" that, "At your most eloquent you've never surpassed it" Stroke the Beard: Archeologist Radcliffe Emerson had a beard when he met Amelia, but not after they married; he still strokes his chin meditatively as an action-equivalent to a Catch Phrase. The habit has even been picked up by other characters, including his daughter-in-law. Title Drop: In several of the novels. Unreliable Narrator: The series provides a fantastic example; the narrator's depth stems from her unreliability as a narrator, which can be due to either omission or equivocation. She reports her perceptions, but despite her vaunted skills in understanding people, she routinely misses the actual meaning of events; for example, when people speaking with her begin coughing, she totally misses their disguised laughter and offers them cough drops. She also is often oblivious to her own viewpoints and prejudices, and even when she is aware of them, pride stops her from relating them to the reader. Victorian sensibilities also prevent her from discussing delicate subjects. Unto Us a Son and Daughter Are Born: Ramses and Nefret eventually have a son and daughter between the events of The Golden One, when the pregnancy is announced, and Children of the Storm, set a few years later. Very Loosely Based on a True Story: As noted in Historical Domain Character, Emerson and Peabody clearly are versions of Real Life Flinders Petrie and his friend and patron Amelia Edwards, embellished up to 11 and married to each other. Victorian London: The series starts in this period and moves through The Gay '90s into World War I. But Amelia and her husband (though notably not her children) retain their Victorian London sensibilities throughout. Most of their adventures actually happen in Egypt, as they are archaeologists. Wouldn't Hit a Girl: Emerson, Ramses, and Sethos. Wouldn't Hurt a Child: Emerson for all his large physique, short temper and boisterousness, would never harm — or allow any harm to come to — a child, his or anyone else's. You Called Me "X": It Must Be Serious: Amelia and her husband scrap all the time, but she knows he's only really angry at her when he calls her "Amelia" rather than the usual "Peabody". The Curse of the Pharaohs (1981; covers 1892-93) Abhorrent Admirer: Emerson manages to attract the attentions of Madame Berengeria, a loathsome woman who is convinced that she and Emerson were lovers in Ancient Egypt. Being Emerson, he's as annoyed by the historical inaccuracies in her story of their past lives as he is by the lady herself. Covered in Mud: Ramses interrupts a tea party after having gone digging in the compost heap and getting covered in mud (among other things). Ramses is described as not so much leaving muddy footprints as having a stream of filth trailing behind him. I Rememble That Remark!: When Emerson is accused of raising his voice, and proceeds to deny doing so... by yelling it at the top of his lungs."I never raise my voice," Emerson bellowed. A ghostly echo came rolling back from the depths of the tomb, as if the king's spirit were objecting to being awakened. The Mummy Case (1985; covers 1894-95) Riding into the Sunset: Invoked and lampshaded when M. de Morgan returns Ramses to his parents after a minor escapeade, he deliberately rides off toward the sunset, despite having dinner plans in the opposite direction. The Emersons dryly agree: Frenchmen — Anything for a grand gesture! Deeds of the Disturber (1988; covers Summer 1896) Auto Erotica: Slightly unconventional and Downplayed a bit. Emerson and Amelia make out in the back of a (horse-drawn) cab on the way home from a stressful day. Amelia notes that something about cabs — she's not sure if it's the smell of the leather, the sound of the horses' hoofbeats, or the dark enclosed space — tends to inspire Emerson. Strange Minds Think Alike: Emerson examines a threatening note and proclaims (in a very Sherlock Holmes-esque way) that he can tell from the handwriting it was written 'by a man of education with a pen that needed mending'. Amelia understandably writes this off as complete nonsense. Enter their son Ramses... who then proceeds to make exactly the same comment, much to Amelia's annoyance. What Happened to the Mouse?: Violet Peabody is only seen in Deeds of the Disturber. She's mentioned briefly in The Falcon at the Portal, but otherwise never reappears. The Snake, the Crocodile, and the Dog (1992; covers 1898-99) Amnesiac Lover: Emerson losing his memories of meeting, falling in love with, and marrying her early on. Even after he's recovered, he fakes still having amnesia about his relationship with Amelia until the climax. Faking the Dead: Sethos, in the climax, when he's disguised as Cyrus Vandergelt and shot by Leopold Vincey, the villain of the book. However, his survival is not revealed until the events of Seeing a Large Cat. Seeing a Large Cat (1997; covers 1903-04) The Bus Came Back: The Frasers (originally from Lion in the Valley) reappear in Seeing A Large Cat. The Ape Who Guards the Balance (1998; covers 1906-07) Guardian of the Horizon (2004; covers 1907-08) The Usurper: When the Emersons arrive at the Lost Oasis, they find King Tarek is in exile, with his position usurped by a man named Zekare. In the climax, Zekare's son Marasen betrays and murders him in an attempt to usurp the throne, but he's defeated and killed, and Tarek reclaims his throne. The Falcon at the Portal (1999; covers 1911-12) The Bus Came Back: Fifteen in-universe years after his last appearance in The Deeds of the Disturber, Percy Peabody reappears. Disney Villain Death: During the climax, while the Emersons are working in a pyramid, Geoffrey Godwin attacks Amelia and is knocked off-balance by Ramses, acting to protect his mother, falling into a pit. Though Ramses grabs onto Geoffrey in an attempt to save him, the other man claws Ramses' hands, breaks loose and falls to his death. Downer Ending: Not usually, but The Falcon at the Portal did not end on a happy note. Nefret had married Geoffrey Godwin after Ramses denied Sennia was his, out of anger over both the accusation and the denial, but in the climax, Geoffrey turns out to be the book's villain and deliberately lets himself fall to his death, leaving Nefret a widow. To top it off, she suffers a miscarriage — revealed in He Shall Thunder in the Sky to have been Ramses's child, conceived the night before Sennia was brought to the family — shortly after, falls into depression, and goes off to another country on a doctor's advice. Family Eye Resemblance: This is what allows Sennia (the three-year-old illegitimate daughter of Percival "Percy" Peabody) to be passed off as Ramses' child when she's introduced in The Falcon at the Portal. Tempting Fate: In The Falcon at the Portal Nefret asks Lia in a letter, "What could Percy do to hurt Ramses?" They find out very quickly when he arranges to have his daughter brought to the family, claiming Ramses is the girl's father. And also does other things to Ramses later. The Painted Queen (2017; covers 1912) Avenging the Villain: The story starts when Amelia is bathing and a man comes into her bathroom with the intention of attacking her. It's eventually discovered that he was one of Geoffrey Godwin's five half-brothers, who are seeking vengeance for Geoffrey's death in The Falcon at the Portal. Their mother is also part of the group, and dies late in the book, while the fifth brother is finally exposed and, unlike his mother and brothers, captured by Amelia. In the Back: The plot kicks off when Amelia is bathing and a man who's been stabbed in the back comes into her bathroom, utters "You!" and "Murder", then drops dead. He Shall Thunder in the Sky (2000; covers 1914-15) Accidental Misnaming: A cab driver calls Ramses "Brother of Curses" in the first chapter. Connected All Along: Sethos is revealed to be Emerson and Walter's paternal half brother (conceived by their father and his mistress). The same book introduces Melinda "Molly" Hamilton, who's revealed to be Sethos' illegitimate daughter by his former associate Bertha. Foreshadowing. In a scene in chapter four, Nefret says that Major Hamilton had "behaved rather like an indulgent uncle" to her. It's revealed late in the book that Hamilton was actually a disguised Sethos, and that Sethos is Emerson's illegitimate half-brother. Heroic Sacrifice: Sethos, again, when he once more takes a bullet for Amelia in the climax — this time from her nephew Percy. In the Back: During the final chapter, Nefret attacks an already-wounded Percy this way, clutching her knife in both hands and bringing it down into his back. It's later revealed that it was Sethos' bullets and not her stab wound that killed him though. A Taste of the Lash: After finding Ramses spying on him late in the book, Percy does this to him. Lord of the Silent (2001; covers 1915-16) Faking the Dead: Sethos had done this a second time at the end of He Shall Thunder in the Sky. Emerson is not pleased when he finds out, and at the end of the book makes the following comment:Emerson: "I wish he would turn to a line of work that doesn't interfere with mine, but I can even put up with that, unless...".Amelia: "Unless what, Emerson?"Emerson: "Unless he has the damned audacity to die again!" War Is Hell: Cyrus' stepson Bertie is invalidated out of service after two years of service in World War I. More than his physical recovery, he badly needs someone sympathetic to listen to his doubts about his war service, and Ramses (who posed as a conscientious objector) plays this role for him:Nefret: Was it very bad?Ramses: About what you'd expect. Mud, vermin, fear, loneliness, disillusionment. The worst of it was realizing that the enemy weren't demons, but men like himself. Just as lonely for their homes and families, just as frightened. The Golden One (2002; covers 1916-17) Altar Diplomacy: Attempted while Ramses is in the hands of Ismail Pasha and Sahin Pasha, Sahin attempts to lure Ramses to his side, suggesting that if Ramses betrayed his country and joined them, he could convert to Islam and be given Sahin's daughter Esin for a second bride. Ramses, of course, declines. Egypt, 1912—Amelia Peabody and her dashing archeologist husband, Radcliffe Emerson, are once again in danger as they search for a priceless, stolen bust of legendary Queen Nefertiti and Amelia finds herself the target of assassins in this long-awaited, eagerly anticipated final installment of Elizabeth Peters' bestselling, beloved mystery series.Arriving in Cairo for another thrilling excavation season, Amelia is relaxing in a well-earned bubble bath in her elegant hotel suite in Cairo, when a man with knife protruding from his back staggers into the bath chamber and utters a single word—"Murder"—before collapsing on the tiled floor, dead. Among the few possessions he carried was a sheet of paper with Amelia's name and room number, and a curious piece of pasteboard the size of a calling card bearing one word: "Judas." Most peculiarly, the stranger was wearing a gold-rimmed monocle in his left eye. It quickly becomes apparent that someone saved Amelia from a would-be assassin—someone who is keeping a careful eye on the intrepid Englishwoman. Discovering a terse note clearly meant for Emerson—"Where were you?"—pushed under their door, there can be only one answer: the brilliant master of disguise, Sethos. But neither assassins nor the Genius of Crime will deter Amelia as she and Emerson head to the excavation site at Amarna, where they will witness the discovery of one of the most precious Egyptian artifacts: the iconic Nefertiti bust. In 1345 B.C. the sculptor Thutmose crafted the piece in tribute to the great beauty of this queen who was also the chief consort of Pharaoh Akhenaten and stepmother to King Tutankhamun.For Amelia, this excavation season will prove to be unforgettable. Throughout her journey, a parade of men in monocles will die under suspicious circumstances, fascinating new relics will be unearthed, a diabolical mystery will be solved, and a brilliant criminal will offer his final challenge. . . . and perhaps be unmasked at last.