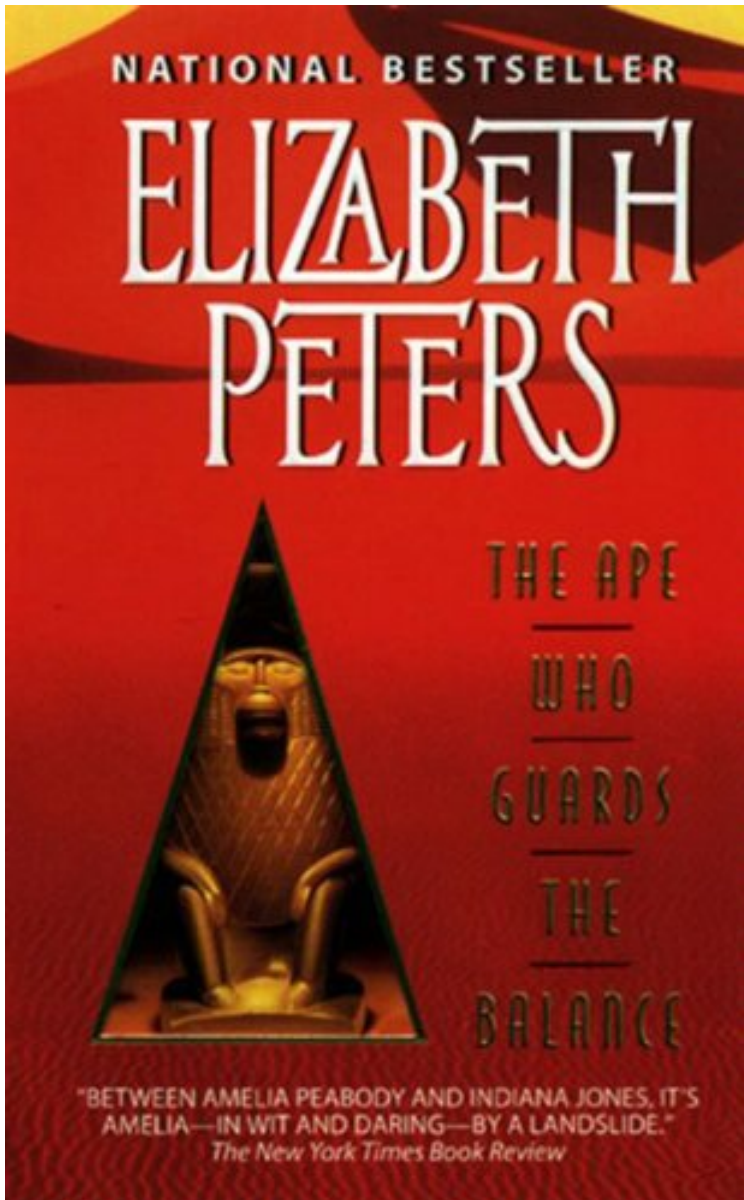


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The Ape Who Guards the Balance: An Amelia Peabody Novel of Suspense



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAfter eluding a kidnapper in London, an unperturbed Amelia Peabody accompanies her unconventional family to Cairo once moreonly to be ensnared almost immediately in a web of stolen treasures and bloodthirsty cults. Villainy is running rampant in Egypt this 1907 archaeological season, but the members of the intrepid Peabody-Emerson clan have already proven themselves to be formidable adversaries. However, when a mint-condition papyrus of the Book of the Dead falls into their hands, and the

corpse of an unscrupulous dealer in stolen antiquities is found floating in the Nile, the Emersons' prospects for surviving this excavation season unscathed appear increasingly dim.

Named 1998 Grand Master by Mystery Writers of America, Elizabeth Peters is also a doctor of Egyptology whose mysteries have submerged readers in the vivid turn-of-the-century world of Amelia Peabody. In *The Ape Who Guards the Balance* Peters captures the immediacy of uncovering a new Egyptian tomb within the context of a tightly plotted murder investigation involving the entire Emerson Peabody clan. The characters, including Amelia's husband, Radcliffe Emerson, and her gifted son, Ramses, are meticulously drawn. As in previous novels the dialogue is reminiscent of *The Thin Man*. When a man calls out to passing suffragettes, "You ought to be 'ome washin' your 'usband's trousers!" Ramses shoots back, "I assure you, sir, the lady's trousers are not in such sore need of laundering as your own." Peters also toys with differing narrative perspectives, and Ramses emerges as a possible successor to his mother's legacy of crime solving. *The Ape Who Guards the Balance* begins in 1907 in England where Amelia is attending a suffragettes' rally outside the home of Mr. Geoffrey Romer of the House of Commons. It seems Romer is one of the few remaining private collectors of

Egyptian antiquities, and a series of bizarre events at the protest soon embroil Amelia in grave personal danger. Suspecting that the Master Criminal, Sethos, is behind their problems, the Emerson Peabodys hasten to Egypt to continue their studies in the Valley of Kings where they soon acquire a papyrus of the Book of the Dead. As with past seasons, however, their archaeological expedition is interrupted. The murdered body of a woman is found in the Nile. Ramses, Radcliffe, and Amelia all have their theories as to the origin of the crime, but their own lives might soon be at stake if the cult of Thoth and their ancient book is, indeed,

involved. Other Peabody mysteries include *Seeing a Large Cat*, *The Hippopotamus Pool*, *The Snake*, *The Crocodile*, and *The Dog*, *The Deeds of the Disturber*, *Lion in the Valley*, *The Curse of the Pharaohs*, and *Crocodile on the Sandbank*.

--Patrick O'Kelley
From Publishers Weekly
In April of this year, Peters, who has been writing mysteries for 30 years, was honored as a Grand Master by the Mystery Writers of America. This captivating novel, her 10th Amelia Peabody tale (following *Seeing a Large Cat*, 1997), validates her peers' high regard. Prospects for the 1907 excavation season in Egypt seem lackluster for the Emersons,

since Professor Emerson, Amelia's beloved husband, can't abide the fools who administrate such activities?and makes no secret of that fact. But the family, including their adult son, Ramses, and his foster siblings, Nefret and David, departs for Egypt nevertheless after incidents in London point to the resurfacing of their old nemesis, known as the Master Criminal. The younger generation buys an ancient papyrus from an antiquities dealer and sets in motion a sinister chain of events. Two horrendous murders draw all of the Emersons further into the fray, and at times it seems as if the Master Criminal and his minions will at last best Amelia. But by drawing on the skills of all, the Emerson contingent once again brings villains to justice.

The plot is complicated and involving, but the maturing of Ramses, Nefret and David offers particular pleasure and gives the book depth and poignance. Rich in characterization, incident and humor, this latest adventure of Amelia Peabody is a grand, galloping adventure with a heart as big as the Great Pyramid itself.

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