

# **The Curse of the Pharaohs Study Guide**

## **The Curse of the Pharaohs by Elizabeth Peters**

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## Plot Summary

The Curse of the Pharaohs is a mystery novel in a series about Amelia and Radcliffe Emerson, English Egyptologists. The story is set around the turn of the 20th century in the Valley of the Kings. While the Emersons are trying to create a normal English life for their son, Ramses, they are sorely missing their seasonal trips to excavate in Egypt. An opportunity arises for them to return to Egypt when the widow of Sir Henry Baskerville asks Emerson to take over the dig. Emerson and Amelia arrive in the Valley of the Kings and soon become involved in trying to discover who is committing the murders and attacks upon the group.

Amelia suspects each of the characters for either committing or aiding in the commission of the crimes. She believes Lord Baskerville was murdered by either Alan Armadale, the original archaeologist or Lady Baskerville, Lord Baskerville's wife. The attacks on Emerson are thought by Amelia to be committed by Madame Berengeria, one of the locals, Armadale, or the reporter, Kevin O'Connell. Each of the group's members, Miss Mary, Karl, Arthur, and Cyrus Vandergelt are suspiciously eyed by Amelia in her quest for the truth.

After Lord Baskerville is murdered, a servant is brutally murdered, and the group begins seeing a mysterious Woman In White around the house. Emerson receives a blow on the head from a projectile while in the house, and Arthur is attacked in his sleep and falls into a coma. Madame Berengeria confuses everyone with her drunken accusations and one night gets too close to the truth for someone; she is found dead the next day. Alan Armadale, missing from the beginning, is found dead in a cave. Emerson tries to force the murderer out into the open by implying he will be hearing from a courier with a message about the murderer. This works, as Lady Baskerville comes to the tomb dressed as the Woman In White to murder Emerson. Amelia catches her and Lady Baskerville is turned over to the authorities. To obtain the Baskerville wealth, Lady Baskerville murdered Lord Baskerville and Alan Armadale using a lethal hat pin.

The Emersons relax after the murderer is finally imprisoned, and plan their next adventure.



# Chapter 1-2

## Chapter 1-2 Summary

The main character, Amelia Peabody Emerson, is receiving guests for tea at her home in Kent, England. Amelia, affectionately called Peabody by her husband, does not normally have tea parties, but her husband wants to do an archaeological dig on the land of one of their neighbors, and Amelia thinks perhaps she can convince the man's wife to allow it. Amelia is thinking how much she and Emerson enjoy their travels to Egypt to pursue their passion of archaeology. Their travels have been curtailed because of the birth of their son, Ramses. Emerson has taken a teaching job, and Amelia is trying her best to be the mistress of the house. The tea party does not go well because Ramses enters the room with mud and bones, and the women are alarmed and leave, but Amelia is not concerned. That evening, Amelia reads a newspaper article about the death of Sir Henry Baskerville, a famous Egyptologist. Each evening Amelia reads the latest installments and begins to imagine what really happened there in her beloved Valley of the Kings. The story makes both Amelia and Emerson miss their travels to Egypt. One evening, Lady Baskerville arrives at the Emerson house.

In Chapter 2, Lady Baskerville has come to ask Emerson to take over her deceased husband's excavation and is surprised to learn Emerson will not come unless Amelia can accompany him. After Lady Baskerville leaves, Emerson and Amelia decide that Ramses can stay with his cousins for the winter, and they begin their preparations to leave.

## Chapter 1-2 Analysis

These chapters display the life of the Emersons when they are not involved in excavation, and it is clearly not a happy time for either of them. Their love affair began in the digs of Egypt and they derive their lust for life there still. Their attempts at normalcy are half-hearted, so they literally jump at the chance of returning to Egypt. Amelia's avid interest in the Baskerville affair only increases her desire to go to the land where she and Emerson originally met and fell in love.

These chapters also introduce their precocious son, nicknamed Ramses. He is described as incorrigible, and that his parents were amused at his audacity. The boy's inclusion in future episodes of the Emerson adventure seems assured.



## Chapter 3-4

### Chapter 3-4 Summary

Amelia and Emerson are in Cairo, and they attend dinner at the Sheppards Hotel where they are staying. At dinner they hear all the local gossip from the other archaeologists. Their evening is interrupted by Kevin O'Connell, a reporter from the London Daily Yell, who insinuates Emerson has a previous relationship with Lady Baskerville, and that there is a curse on the tomb where Sir Baskerville was working.

In Chapter 4, Amelia and Emerson arrive at Luxor, and she is immersed in memories of their past times there. They are met by Karl von Bork, the site epigrapher, or ancient language specialist. Karl has made arrangements for them to go out to the site and tells Emerson of the guards already posted. Emerson is concerned that there is no artist on the site. Armadale was the artist for the excavation, but he disappeared soon after the death of Sir Baskerville. Amelia and Emerson usually employ Evelyn, but Evelyn married Emerson's brother Walter and now is happy to stay in England with her husband and their growing number of children. Karl suggests a young lady in Luxor who could serve as an artist. When the entourage departs the boat to continue their journey on donkey back, Karl does not understand why Emerson insists on diverting to a nearby village. Karl later learns that this is the village where the tomb thieves live, and Emerson wanted to let them know he was back in the country. Upon arrival at Baskerville House, where the Emersons and many of the expedition members would be staying, Amelia meets Mr. Milverton, who is very ill. After accepting an invitation for dinner at Lady Baskerville's hotel for the evening, the Emersons quickly don their customary archaeological dig outfits and walk out to the excavation site.

### Chapter 3-4 Analysis

The other players in this novel are introduced as the Emersons leave the safety of England and arrive in dangerous, mysterious Egypt. Immediately they are back into the thick of things through using Emerson's connections, the criminal element of Luxor. The couple is energized. Major and minor characters are introduced and fall into predictable roles of suspects in Amelia's mind. There are two suspicious events which Amelia interprets as attacks upon her husband, and the tension is heightened.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

Amelia and Emerson have set out to keep their dinner appointment with Lady Baskerville, at the Luxor Hotel. Upon arrival, they again meet Cyrus Vandergelt, who appears to be Lady Baskerville's escort for the evening. Also at the hotel, uninvited, is Mary and her mother, Madame Berengeria. Madame Berengeria approaches the group and, after introductions, claims she and Emerson were lovers in a previous Egyptian life. Emerson protests that it is not so, and this amuses Amelia. As the party arrives at the dining table, Madame protests that there are not enough places at the table because she is expecting her young admirer. This turns out to be the reporter, Kevin O'Connell. As Amelia enjoys her dinner, she contemplates which of the party could be the person who is trying to kill Emerson and which person killed Lord Baskerville. No one is immune from her suspicions. As dinner ends, Amelia is surprised to learn that Lady Baskerville has packed and is ready to return with them to the Baskerville House.

Back at the Baskerville House that evening after everyone has retired, there is a howl outside, and as the Emersons rush to see the cause, they are told Hassan has seen a ghost, a woman in white. By this time, all the house's occupants are in the yard, and Milverton exclaims it must have been Armadale. Milverton then faints as the exertion of running to the yard without fully recovering from his illness has caused him to be weaker.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

The drunken Madame Berengeria and her quiet daughter Mary are introduced, and the characters of Lady Baskerville and Emerson are defined. Lady Baskerville's disgust and eagerness to speak ill of other women are indicators that she is a self-absorbed woman who is interested only in men she can seduce. Emerson's avoidance of Madame Berengeria and kindness towards the lovely Lady Baskerville and Mary reveal that Emerson is a modern man only with regards to his wife. Amelia's list of suspects grows as she meets the new characters and analyzes their motives for murder and assault.



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

Emerson, Amelia, and their Egyptian workers head for the Valley of the Kings with all their equipment. The local holy man, the Imam, is at the tomb to cause trouble, but Emerson respectfully bullies him into granting a blessing and going on his way. Work begins with Emerson and Amelia pitching in like common laborers, believing that once the villagers see they are not immune to hard work, they will be able to hire some of them at the tomb, and the specter of a curse will be removed. Kevin O'Connell is there with the crowds of tourists, and Amelia is very suspicious and wary of him.

Lady Baskerville arrives with Mr. Vandergelt, to view progress on the excavation. While they are there, Emerson finds indication that this is a prominent tomb they are working on, and the team works well into the late afternoon. Emerson and Amelia return to the house, leaving guards at the tomb. That evening at tea, Emerson expounds on his theory that the tomb has already been plundered in ancient times. Karl suggests that Mary be brought in to help with the drawings, and Milverton protests mightily, not wanting to risk her because of the curse. As the group departs to their own quarters, Lady Baskerville screams at something in her room. It is discovered to be a large cat, which Amelia brings to their own quarters. That night, Hassan is murdered. The locals believe he was murdered by the ghost, but Amelia insists that the authorities do a post-mortem.

## Chapter 6 Analysis

The author's theme of sense of place is evident here as the beauty of Egypt and the mystery of the Valley of the Kings is seen through Amelia's eyes. Returning to the archaeological digs has brought the true nature of the characters of Emerson and Amelia out, making them more interesting and alive. There is a marked contrast between the efficient and scientific Emersons and the superstitious natives of the land, and the author makes it clear the British are to be considered superior. The incident of the cat in Lady Baskerville's room portrays Amelia as the practical, modern woman dealing with foolish feminine traits such as screaming, fainting, and leaning on a man for support.





# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

When Amelia joins Emerson at the dig the next morning, it is obvious by the behavior of the onlookers that news of the murder has spread. Amelia tells Emerson he should send the men to look for Armadale and get away from the tomb for a few days. Amelia is sure Armadale murdered not only Lord Baskerville, but now Hassan, and he cannot be far away. Emerson declines to do this, anxious to get on with the excavation. Mary, now employed as an artist on the site, hears Amelia and protests that Alan could never be a murderer. Mary says she refused Alan's offer of marriage, and that after Lord Baskerville's death, Alan began behaving very strangely.

When the Emersons return to the house, they are summoned by Lady Baskerville for a meeting. Milverton, Karl and Cyrus are also there. As the group is discussing the events, an object is thrown through the open patio door and strikes Emerson on the head, grazing his temple and causing him to fall down. Lady Baskerville stays at the patio door, claiming she saw the ghostly lady in white outside, and then she faints, leaning heavily on Cyrus. As Amelia examines the projectile, she realizes it is an artifact from one of the excavations.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

Amelia's penchant for telling Emerson how to conduct his leadership of the excavation is evident as she suggests he stop work on the dig and send the men out to find the missing Armadale, but Emerson refuses to be bullied and continues his work. Amelia is busy at the dig sifting through debris for potshards, while Mary is employed in a more traditionally feminine role of drawing the finds. There are few scenes in the novel which portray Amelia as being similar to other women of her time, and this is an example of her lack of adherence to social conventions of the time.

Lady Baskerville's manipulation of her house guests is evident as they all rush to respond to any request she makes for their presence, and her entrance into the room is engineered to give her maximum attention.



# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

Rather than go to bed after being wounded, Emerson chooses to rush to his men so they will not hear rumors about the incident. Emerson is a good leader and has earned his men's respect over the years. The next morning when Emerson and Amelia arrive at the tomb, there are a series of disturbances. The Imam has returned and must be pacified; then Milverton and Karl have an argument over Miss Mary. In the afternoon, Madame Berengeria arrives and causes a scene, then leaves with the intention of becoming an uninvited guest at Baskerville. It is soon revealed that Kevin O'Connell instigated this entire event, and Mary is vexed with him. The work of the day ends, and the excavation team trudges towards Baskerville House. Amelia chooses to walk with Milverton when she notices that Mary is spending her time with Karl on the walk. Milverton confesses his interest in Mary, and as Amelia is reassuring him of his chances with the young lady, Milverton asks Amelia if he can speak with her privately that evening. She agrees but wonders if she has made an error in her judgment of him. As she and Emerson are in their quarters, she tells Emerson that Milverton may have been the murderer. She had planned for Emerson to be hiding in the bushes nearby when she meets with Milverton, but he has plans to spend the night in the tomb. Karl and Emerson leave for the tomb. As Amelia tries to slip out of the window to make her midnight meeting with Milverton, she is stopped by Abdullah, who has been tasked by Emerson to keep an eye on her. Abdullah and Amelia go to the assigned meeting place, and Abdullah stands in the bushes. Milverton arrives and tells Amelia he is Lord Baskerville.

## Chapter 8 Analysis

Emerson's skills as a leader are evident here as he is injured but rushes to his men to show them in person he is not dead. He addresses them in their own language and treats them as men, not servants or inferiors. Emerson handles the angry Imam with aplomb and works like a fiend at the excavation site. Even such a man has his limits, though, and he is absolutely unable to handle an encounter with the formidable Madame Berengeria.

The author is foreshadowing danger for Amelia as she prepares for her clandestine midnight meeting with Milverton.



# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

Milverton explains he is not the Lord Baskerville who recently died but the heir to the title. His real name is Arthur, but he has been using the name Charles Milverton to pursue his lifelong ambition to become a famous photographer. He was ultimately hired by his uncle Lord Baskerville, who never knew Milverton's true identity. While Amelia and Milverton are talking, Milverton sees the Woman in White. Abdullah does not see the apparition. Amelia rises early the next morning anxious to get to the excavation site and tell Emerson of her suspicions that Arthur killed Lord Baskerville to gain his title. At breakfast, Lady Baskerville says she was kept awake by seeing the Woman In White as well.

When they reach the tomb, Emerson shows them the new finding of beautiful wall to ceiling paintings. Now the tomb is in much greater danger of being looted, and it is more likely the tomb has been booby-trapped to prevent theft. At lunch that day alone with Emerson, Amelia tells him of Milverton's revelation and of her suspicions that he killed Lord Baskerville. While Amelia is working on the dig that afternoon, Kevin O'Connell comes to her for help in regaining Miss Mary's good graces towards him. Amelia agrees to help, having an agenda of her own for using the young reporter. Just as the crew is preparing to close down for the day, a skeleton is discovered partially covered by a large stone in the tomb.

## Chapter 9 Analysis

Suspense is deflated when Milverton's confession is not one of murder but of identity, as he reveals he is the rightful heir to the Baskerville fortune. This chapter is dedicated to establishing the credentials of Emerson and Amelia as well respected archaeologists and to the subplot of the attractive Mary and her various suitors.



# Chapter 10

## Chapter 10 Summary

The skeleton is a tomb raider who was caught in a booby trap created by the tomb's designers. When the heavy stone is lifted and the skeleton examined, a large pendant is found under the thief's body. Emerson and Amelia examine it in their quarters; it has markings of Tutankhamen. They decide not to share this information with anyone else in the party. At dinner, everyone is talking about the long-dead thief whose body was found crushed by the stone. Milverton is not at dinner, and Emerson goes looking for him. Milverton is in his room, unconscious from a blow to the head. The local doctor is sent for, and afterward, Emerson and Amelia discuss the day's events in their room. They decide an investigation is in order, and Emerson believes only the criminal element of Luxor is equipped to handle it correctly. He will head to the town the next morning, leaving Amelia in charge of the dig.

## Chapter 10 Analysis

References to the ancient tomb raiders, whose descendants still plague the modern day excavations with clever thefts, heightens the sense of danger surrounding the tomb. The tomb cannot be left unguarded because there are untold treasures there; the women at Baskerville House cannot be left unguarded because now Milverton has been attacked in his sleep. Emerson realizes that work on the excavation site will grind to a halt if he does not participate in solving this mystery, so he uses his connections with the Luxor criminal element to track down Armadale's location.



# Chapter 11

## Chapter 11 Summary

Arthur, previously known as Milverton, is in a deep coma. Lady Baskerville and Mary have a heated argument regarding who should tend to the injured man, and Emerson announces he has secured a local nun to handle the duties. As Amelia and Emerson walk to the tomb, she proposes O'Connell be brought into their party to stay at the Baskerville House and watch over the women. Emerson agrees reluctantly. When Emerson returns from his meeting with the criminals, he tells Amelia he has offered them an award for finding Armadale. The work at the tomb reaches an impasse when a large hole is blocking the passageway, and efforts to cross it must wait until the next morning. Emerson and Amelia return to the Baskerville House and prepare to spend the night at the tomb, guarding it together. As Amelia is checking on all the other occupants of the house, she sees a furtive figure in the dark and follows the person through the trees. Another man meets with the first one near the storage shed and Amelia attacks, kicking one man in the leg. It turns out to be her husband, Emerson, who is meeting secretly with one of the criminals, Ali Hassan. Ali Hassan has come to collect the reward for finding Armadale, who has been dead for some time.

## Chapter 11 Analysis

Amelia considers herself in charge of the Baskerville House and of the murder investigation, and even as the best person to be lowered down into the crevasse to begin cleaning out the debris. It is obvious she is more than qualified to do all these things, but when she sets out after a suspect in the dark, she manages to injure her own husband. It is comforting to see the heroine make a mistake; otherwise, she would be an unbelievable character. The chapter ends, as most of them do, with a revelation; this revelation is that the missing Armadale is dead.



# Chapter 12

## Chapter 12 Summary

Emerson must return to the tomb, so he charges Ali Hassan with taking Amelia to the site of Armadale's body, a nearby cave. Amelia takes Abdullah and Kevin O'Connell with her. When Amelia views Armadale's body, she finds his forehead is painted with the symbol of a pharaoh. Amelia charges Abdullah and Hassan with removing the body and taking it to Baskerville House, and then she and Kevin walk to the excavation site so Amelia can tell Emerson of these events. As they approach the tomb at night, they hear a gunshot. Amelia rushes to her husband, firing shots from her own revolver as she runs. Emerson stops her and they are pleased to find out they are both okay, with the shots Emerson fired being to scare away robbers. As Emerson, Amelia and O'Connell sit and discuss the events of the evening, Amelia proclaims that Armadale must have been murdered by Madame Berengeria in order to prevent her daughter from marrying him.

## Chapter 12 Analysis

Amelia and Emerson are methodically going through the suspects, and Amelia chooses some unlikely scenarios that cause Emerson considerable amusement. O'Connell has been eliminated from the list of suspects as he is allowed to accompany Amelia on some of her adventures. Amelia's independence and abilities are again shown in this chapter as she rushes to her husband's side, firing her revolver into the air and wielding her dangerous parasol.



# Chapter 13

## Chapter 13 Summary

Amelia and Emerson leave O'Connell to guard the tomb the next morning and head to Baskerville House. When they arrive, they learn that the servants have all gone on strike because of Armadale's dead body in the house. Amelia speaks to the nun, the chef, and Abdullah, making sure all is well. As the group gathers for breakfast, Lady Baskerville rushes in and exclaims that the excavation must be closed. Emerson replies it will not and will fight it with legal means if necessary. Vandergelt says he has just asked Lady Baskerville to be his wife, and that Emerson should watch his words. Vandergelt and Lady Baskerville decide to marry at once, and Emerson and Amelia try to decide who is the person responsible for all the murders and incidents. Emerson goes into Luxor to continue the investigation while Amelia handles everything at the Baskerville House in her usual methodical and efficient manner. Arthur regains consciousness and Amelia goes to his side, hearing the young man speak of ancient Egyptology. Emerson tells Amelia he wants everyone at the tomb that evening for a performance he is arranging, but he refuses to tell her about the details.

## Chapter 13 Analysis

Amelia's abilities to calm troubled waters are put to use in this chapter as the house guests and servants are in an uproar over the news of Armadale's death. There is substantial evidence of a curse at work, and Emerson realizes he must use the superstition and mystery to lure out the murderer so he can get back to work on his site. The subplot of romance for Mary is expanded in this chapter, with Mary spending time caring for Milverton/Arthur. Lady Baskerville's prowess as a seducer is evident as she has charmed Cyrus into a marriage proposal. There are dramatic moments in this chapter as Lady Baskerville, who has heretofore ignored Amelia, now prostrates herself before Amelia for understanding about marrying so soon after her husband's death.



# Chapter 14

## Chapter 14 Summary

That evening, Amelia accompanies the rest of the party to the tomb, where they are met by Emerson dressed in a long crimson robe. Emerson begins the performance by pulling Habib out of the crowd and pronouncing him to be an evil doer. Emerson continues, speaking in Arabic and English, proclaiming to be receiving information from the ancient gods as he addresses the audience. Emerson employs magic, even using the unwilling cat Bestat as his partner in the show. Everyone seems to have enjoyed the show except for the eccentric Madame Berengeria, who berates Emerson, then accuses her daughter of sleeping with all her suitors and abandoning her mother. Madame then collapses, and they all return to Baskerville House. Mary tells Lady Baskerville she and her mother will leave the next morning, but Emerson insists Mary go to the excavation site instead to finish her work. O'Connell protests, but Mary agrees it is her duty. Emerson tells O'Connell that within 48 hours he will be able to announce the name of the murderer in O'Connell's newspaper.

## Chapter 14 Analysis

Emerson departs from his usual stern and no-nonsense character to put on an elaborate and sacrilegious performance for the house guests and servants, staged at the excavation site. He even involves a trick cat, endowing the cat with the spirit of a long dead pharaoh. Emerson causes Madame Berengeria to curse him. Emerson upsets Madame Berengeria so much she makes references to adultery concerning her daughter and others, and this creates a high tension amongst the house guests. Emerson suggests he knows the name of the murderer and sets the stage for someone to come to the tomb to attack him.





# Chapter 15

## Chapter 15 Summary

Amelia and Emerson return to the excavation site. Amelia is concerned about Emerson's obvious belief that he has discovered the identity of the murderer, while she herself is not as sure. She abandons her work and begins writing out the list of suspects and motives, so she can discover who it is. Before she can reach a conclusion, she is joined by Vandergelt and O'Connell. The three head to the tomb, where Emerson has unhappily found another room full of debris that must be cleaned out. Emerson and Karl stay at the tomb and Amelia goes back to Baskerville House. She is met by Lady Baskerville, who has returned from Luxor after making her wedding arrangements and has brought home many dresses she wants to show Amelia. When Mary arrives, Arthur regains consciousness fully and speaks to Mary and Amelia. He does not remember who struck him. As Mary and Amelia leave Arthur and go to Madame Berengeria's room, they find the older woman dead. Mary thinks it was a heart attack, but Amelia discovers it is the result of a narcotic overdose.

## Chapter 15 Analysis

Another death occurs while Amelia is making her tidy list of suspects and motives. Madame Berengeria departs the world as a result of a narcotic overdose, and Arthur returns to consciousness but is of no assistance to the investigation as he can't remember who hurt him. At this point, everyone appears to have motives to kill Lord Baskerville, Armadale and Madame Berengeria, and the mystery deepens.



# Chapter 16

## Chapter 16 Summary

The group tries to find meaning in the rantings of Madame Berengeria the previous night, and how it related to her death. Although it is clearly about an Egyptian tale of two brothers, the connection is not understood at this point. Emerson announces that he is spending the night in the tomb and that his messenger is arriving the next morning. He reiterates that the messenger's note will allow him to announce who murdered Lord Baskerville and committed the other crimes. Lady Baskerville is extremely flustered and it is at this moment that Emerson claims to see a flutter of white outside, insinuating it is the infamous Woman in White.

Emerson goes to the tomb, and Amelia waits until midnight to dress, blacken her face, and go to the tomb as well. She finds Emerson hidden in the hills and then they find O'Connell drugged and asleep. They realize Emerson had been drugged a little as well, at dinner that night. Emerson goes to check the tomb, and Amelia stays in the hills. Suddenly a figure wrapped in white comes by her, and she grabs the woman, wrestling her to the ground. It is Lady Baskerville, who is carrying a long hatpin.

## Chapter 16 Analysis

The mystery is even further muddled by the speculations of the group. Emerson and Amelia make it a game between them, writing down who they each think is the murderer and placing the notes in separate envelopes to be opened when the murderer is found. This casual approach to murder and death is reminiscent of the Miss Marple and other Agatha Christie type of murder mysteries that are attributed to British amateur sleuths.

There is a dramatic scene where Emerson, O'Connell and Amelia are all under some narcotic influence, but Amelia manages to tackle the Woman in White, revealing her to be Lady Baskerville. An interesting contrast in Amelia and her parasol to Lady Baskerville and her hat pin; both women have found unintended uses for every day items. In this way, Lady Baskerville is more similar to Amelia than previously thought.



# Chaper 17

## Chaper 17 Summary

Vandergelt takes Lady Baskerville to Luxor to turn her in to the authorities. Amelia and Emerson realize they both had suspected the same person and were correct, although for different reasons. Lady Baskerville killed her husband by inserting the hat pin into the base of his brain, and death was immediate, but not so detectable. Lady Baskerville then seduced Armadale and let him think it was Lord Baskerville's distress over the discovery of the affair that had killed him. Armadale fled to the hills but returned one night to see his love. She found out where he was living, went to the cave and killed him with the hat pin. Hassan, the servant, had blackmailed her, so she killed him as well. When Lady Baskerville was informed that Arthur was the new Lord Baskerville, she was about to kill him as well but only sent him into a coma because she was interrupted. Lady Baskerville was the Woman in White and created this apparition to allow her to come and go from Baskerville House. When Madame Berengeria drunkenly accused Lady Baskerville of adultery, Lady Baskerville supposed she knew everything and drugged the old woman to death.

Karl and Mary announce their engagement as O'Connell is writing down all the facts for his newspaper story. Vandergelt comes back and tells them all the wedding is off, and Lady Baskerville is headed to prison for a long time.

Amelia and Emerson return to their rooms, contemplating the future. It is decided that Bestat the cat will go to England with them, as a companion for Ramses. They discuss excavating the next winter and decide that there is nothing left to find in the Valley of Kings.

## Chaper 17 Analysis

Emerson and Amelia had both chosen Lady Baskerville as the murderer, which confirms they make a good sleuthing team, although their individual approaches are different. Amelia, while admiring her husband greatly, seems surprised that his deduction abilities are equal to hers.

The subplot of Mary's romance is closed when she marries Karl von Bork. Mr. O'Connell has exclusive rights to the entire story and is a great success. Vandergelt loses his fiance to prison but comes out well in his amateur archaeology pursuit.

In Chapter 17, the entire affair is explained and wrapped up, leaving the lovable Emersons to pursue their next adventure.



# Characters

## Amelia Peabody Emerson

Amelia is the narrator and heroine of the story. She is a woman in her twenties, perhaps early thirties, who is petite, attractive, and deeply in love with her husband, Emerson. Amelia and Emerson have been married five years, and this novel is the second in a long series of the Emerson family travels and travails as Egyptologists. Although their permanent home is in England, their hearts belong in Egypt where they pursue their vocation as archaeologists in the tombs of the ancient Egyptians.

Amelia is a strong, independent woman, who is methodical, analytical, and looks down on women who perpetuate the myth of a weaker sex. She does not downplay her intelligence or submit to any behavior which would present her as a frivolous, simpering female. She chose the field of archaeology when she was a teenager and did not allow the societal restrictions of her day to keep her from accomplishing her goals. Amelia found the perfect partner in Radcliffe Emerson, and their marriage is one of butting heads, grudging compromise and stubbornness on both their parts; however, it is obvious they love each other very much and take pleasure from their conversations, physical contact and bickering on many levels. Emerson affectionately calls her by her maiden name, Peabody.

Amelia carries a revolver, a knife and a parasol and dresses to match her activities, regardless of society rules. She draws her strength from her cunning, intelligence, constitution and belief that she is right and just. She is a splendid character who doggedly pursues her instincts, forgives herself and her husband when they are wrong, and springs to the assistance of someone in need of medical attention or someone wanting to confess their sins. Solving mysteries, aiding someone in distress, working harder than the laborers at an excavation site, and being a loving wife and mother: these are just a few of this remarkable woman's traits.

In *THE CURSE OF THE PHARAOHS*, Amelia accompanies her husband Radcliffe to his new assignment in Egypt. Here the Emersons become embroiled in the murder mystery of Lord Baskerville. Amelia is an amateur sleuth and explores the possibilities of murder and mayhem while she and Emerson work on the excavation that Lord Baskerville began before his untimely death. Amelia uncovers one clue after another, leading her finally to capturing the murderess Lady Baskerville. At the end of the novel, she and her husband are discussing their next adventures and planning to bring their son Ramses with them to Egypt for the next season.

## Radcliffe Emerson

Radcliffe Emerson is a professor and an archaeologist, specializing in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. He is married to Amelia, also an archaeologist, and they have a young



son, Ramses. Radcliffe is a strapping young man, bullish in voice and behavior, but very intelligent and charming. He is a born leader and fervently enjoys excavating. Radcliffe has a short temper and is prone to violent outbursts, but Amelia can always calm him down. Although Radcliffe believes, as other men of his day do, that women belong in the home raising children, Radcliffe adores and admires his brave and impulsive wife. In fact, when accepting the position at the Baskerville dig, he declined to take the job if Amelia could not accompany him.

Radcliffe claims to be more interested in archaeology than murder mystery solving but takes part in the investigations with vigor. Radcliffe is a tall, strong man, and women are attracted to him, which aggravates Amelia, but only amuses him. Radcliffe adores his son, Ramses, and takes considerable pride in the boy's accomplishments and daring misadventures.

In *THE CURSE OF THE PHARAOHS*, Emerson is employed by Lady Baskerville to take over her dead husband's dig, which Emerson does with enthusiasm. Returning to the Valley of the Kings as if himself a royal figure, Emerson uses his connections, authority and experience to put a team together and manage the dig successfully. Throughout the novel, his main goal and passion is his archaeology, but he participates in Amelia's search for the truth about the deaths and injuries surrounding the excavation of the tomb. Radcliffe is instrumental in bringing the miscreant to light and plans future trips to Egypt with his constant companion and the love of his life, Amelia.

## **Ramses Emerson**

At the time of this novel, Ramses is only five, too young to be taken on the journeys of his parents, but the author is setting the stage for his inclusion in future episodes by displaying the young child's interest in digging and in bones. Ramses is very intelligent, skipping over small steps in his education; i.e., he writes cursive without first printing. He communicates well and shows a remarkable cleverness for his age. In this novel, he is introduced and well sketched out as a member of the family, then only mentioned in passing or through correspondence for the remainder of the story.

## **Lady Baskerville**

The recently widowed young woman is beautiful, dresses immaculately, and flirts with every man she encounters. She has black eyes and speaks with a soft voice unless she wants something. Lady Baskerville murders her husband in such a way it appears to be an accidental death, then murders her ex-lover Armadale. Throughout the novel she presents herself as a grieving and fragile widow, while all the time she is causing death and injury to move her closer to inheriting her dead husband's considerable fortune



## Cyrus Vandergelt

Cyrus Vandergelt is a rich American who has a fascination with archaeology and Egypt. He has made the acquaintance of Lady Baskerville and submits to her charms. Cyrus is well dressed, handsome and in good shape for a man of his age, and Lady Baskerville sets her sights on him early in the novel. Cyrus is gallant, humorous and assists Radcliffe in the excavation as well as guarding over the ladies of the party. He falls for Lady Baskerville and is one day away from making her his bride when her murderous activities are brought to light. Instead, Cyrus continues the work begun by Emerson on the excavation, working for Arthur Baskerville.

## Kevin O'Connell

Kevin is a newspaper reporter for the English paper "Daily Yelp." He is a young Irish man who is brazen and crafty while searching for a good story. He is somewhat distracted by Miss Mary but continues to aggravate Emerson and Amelia with his persistence in searching for a shocking story for his readers. Amelia charms him into working with her to find the murderer, even though she at one time suspects him. Kevin assists in guarding the tomb and is always around the scene to cause a disturbance if he can, but he is basically a good young man. At the end of the novel he is rewarded for his cooperation and patience by getting exclusive rights to the truth about Lady Baskerville.

## Milverton/Arthur Baskerville

Arthur is known as Milverton at the beginning of the story. He is a very good looking young man who was hired as the excavation site photographer, and has vast experience in this field. Arthur chose the name Milverton to establish his credentials as a photographer without the Baskerville name. When his uncle Henry dies, Arthur's mother explains that he is the new heir to the Baskerville fortune. Arthur tells Lady Baskerville the truth, never suspecting he has now placed himself in the ambitious woman's way. Being somewhat sickly at the outset of the novel, Arthur is soon found attacked by an unknown person and rendered unconscious for most of the story. When he comes to, he is advised that Lady Baskerville was the murderer of his uncle and almost of him.

## Abdullah

Abdullah is an older Egyptian man who has worked for Emerson in the past and respects him greatly, calling him the Father of Curses. Abdullah is the team leader for the men who work at the excavation site, and although he is superstitious, he can be reasoned into keeping the other workers on the job. Emerson trusts Abdullah above all, as shown in the novel where Emerson must leave Amelia at the House, and charges Abdullah with her safety.



## Alan Armadale

Alan Armadale does not actively play a part in this novel, as he was dead before the Emersons even arrive in Egypt, but it is his disappearance that intrigues Amelia and keeps her persistently interested in solving the case. Armadale was the archaeologist on the Baskerville site before Emerson was called in; he was one of Lady Baskerville's lovers, and when his body is found in a nearby cave, it accelerates the action of others regarding the case. Alan had asked Miss Mary to become his wife but had grown increasingly distracted and nervous in the weeks before his disappearance. This was probably because he had started an affair with Lady Baskerville, and she allowed him to believe her husband had found out.

## Madame Berengeria

Madame Berengeria is an older woman who is drawn to the mystery and spirituality of the Egyptian archaeological society. She is a tall overweight woman who wears outlandish jewelry and dresses as if she were a queen of Egypt past. Madame Berengeria even wears a long black wig styled like Cleopatra. She is loud, given to incredible statements, and most of the other characters avoid being in her presence. The woman's role in the story is to provide drama, as the disgusting older woman who cannot control her emotions or her alcohol intake. She is ignored by everyone throughout the novel, but when she makes a veiled referral to adultery, she catches Lady Baskerville's attention, and dies as a result.

## Mary Berengeria

Mary is the daughter of the outrageous Madame Berengeria. She dresses modestly, in styles that are out of fashion, yet she has an exotic beauty that transcends the style of dress or her circumstances. She is slender, has olive skin and long eyelashes, and very feminine features. Several of the young men in the expedition are attracted to her. She is also an artist, and experienced in excavation procedures. Mary is courted by Kevin, Karl and Arthur, but it is Karl who wins her heart. At the end of the novel, she marries Karl, with Emerson and Amelia standing up for them.

## Lord Baskerville

Sir Henry is the Lord whose death initiates the hiring of Emerson and the trip by Amelia and Emerson back to Egypt. He is initially thought to have suffered a heart attack, but later it is revealed to be a murder by his wife.

## **Karl Von Bork**

A young German man who specializes in the ancient Egyptian languages, and becomes part of Emerson's team to protect and explore the Baskerville excavation site. Karl is a good fellow who assists Emerson and earns his respect. Karl falls in love with Mary and they are married at the end of the story.





## Objects/Places

### House in Kent, England

Located in England, this Georgian mansion is where the Emersons decide to live when Ramses is born and end up staying there far longer than they had planned. It is an old rambling house, surrounded by gardens and land where Ramses and the dogs roam and dig. The house is symbolic of the secure and somewhat boring life the Emersons lead when at home in England away from their Egypt activities. It represents their settling down time while Ramses is growing from an infant to the age where he can join Emerson and Amelia on their travels.

### Valley of the Kings

This is an area in Egypt where many Pharaohs have been buried and a few of the tombs have been revealed. It is a place of mystery and beauty to all archaeologists, especially the Emersons. The area about the tombs is desolate and riddled with caves, but some large homes have been built nearby. Also nearby are the villages of the generations of thieves who have plundered the tombs for antiquities. This area is symbolic of the dreams and aspirations of Emerson and Amelia, and it is where they originally met and fell in love.

### Amelia's parasol

Amelia carries the parasol to ward off the sun's rays, but being the resourceful woman she is, the simple umbrella also becomes a weapon, a prod and a means by which Amelia makes her point and her way through the crowds. The use of such a feminine accessory to smack unwanted overtures and get someone's attention in a hurry is symbolic of Amelia herself. She is feminine and small in stature but not afraid to enter a man's world and dominate it.

### Baskerville House

This is the home Lord Baskerville built to accommodate himself and his guests while he was pursuing his love of archaeology. It is a large house built around a courtyard with rooms on all four sides. There is a gate and gardens. The house was built to look like an ancient palace of the past. This is where most of the characters are housed during the novel and represents the great wealth of the Baskerville family.



## Excavation Site/Tomb

The site is surrounded by steep cliffs with some modern day huts and tents around it. The entryway is sealed, though Emerson and his team of helpers manage to open the entryway and go far into the tomb, finding beautiful treasures, paintings, and the skeleton of an unfortunate ancient robber. The site is symbolic of Emerson and Amelia's love for archaeology and of the mysteries of the land they have chosen to love. Much superstition and fear surrounds the opening of these grave sites, and the local people are expected to stand aside while scientists from other countries dig and remove treasures from the sites.

## Woman in White

This apparition contrived by Lady Baskerville serves as a way to heighten tension in the plot, create superstitious fears by the local people, and divert attention from the original plot of murder. Lady Baskerville creates this "ghost" as a way of allowing her to leave the premises without anyone seeing her, and it also causes some of the servants, who might be watching the Lady, to leave Baskerville House.

## Bestat, the cat

The cat is a large one, brindled in color, with great golden eyes, and a penchant for showing up wherever it likes. Bestat scares everyone but Emerson and Amelia. Alan Armadale originally brought the cat to Baskerville House, and Lady Baskerville detests it. The cat appears during the time Amelia and Abdullah follow Hassan to the body of Armadale and again assists Emerson in his special presentation at the tomb. The Emersons enjoy the cat so much they decide to take it home as a companion for Ramses. Bestat's role in the book is to enhance the superstition and mystery of the surroundings, and its loyalty is poignant with regards to its dead master.

## Hat Pin

Like its wielder, the hat pin seems innocent and a thing of beauty. However, it is a deadly length of sharpened steel that is used in this novel, not to secure a hat, but to be plunged into the base of the brain of two men, causing their death. The symbolism of beauty turning deadly represents the lovely Lady Baskerville turned murderer.

## Muddy Bone

Ramses interrupts the tea party in England by depositing a muddy bone in his mother's lap and claiming it was from a rhino. The intrusion ends any semblance of English high tea and causes Amelia to realize she was wrong to assume she could create a social event without interruption in their English home. The muddy bone is symbolic of truth, of

the fact that Amelia and her family are not traditional English country folk, but rough and tumble archaeologists who live and breathe for science and exploration.

## **The Daily Yelp**

This humorous name for a British newspaper is symbolic of the vast attention that was bestowed upon the English archaeologists who traveled far away to Egypt to explore. The Victorian readers were interested in the activities of their countrymen who were braving the superstitious natives and digging into dangerous tombs for the glory of England. Kevin O'Connell is the stereotypical, eager and slightly unethical reporter, so intent on getting a story he is willing to manufacture situations that will instigate a reaction.

# Themes

## Women in Roles Traditionally Occupied by Men

The story is set in the late 1890's or early 1900's, although the exact dates are never mentioned. Women of this period were not allowed or expected to be involved in archaeology or any of the "manly" sciences. The heroine and narrator of this novel is a woman who actively flaunts these beliefs and is an accomplished archaeologist partner of her husband, accompanying him to dangerous wildernesses and situations.

Amelila is resourceful, using her intelligence, her parasol, and her assertiveness to track down clues, rush to her husband's defense and set up midnight meetings with murder suspects in her search for the truth. She is clearly disdainful of other women, finding few of them worthy of her friendship or even conversation. At the beginning of the novel, Amelia is bored to tears at the idea of putting on a tea party for the local women, and is relieved when her unruly son causes everyone to go home early.

Amelia does indulge in some of the wiles attributed to women of that era, though, by allowing her husband to think some of her ideas were actually his and by manipulating him into activities of her design. However, she continues to take a nontraditional view of her role as a wife and mother, even referring to her son as "the child" rather than "my son.. Ramses is seldom mentioned in the remainder of the novel, only as a last minute addition by the author after the murder is solved.

On the whole, though, Amelia is smart, calculating, clever, and handy in an emergency. All these attributes are portrayed to be different from other women of her time, and the author enjoys pointing out Amelia's differences from the weaker, simpler women of her day.

Another example of a woman in a role usually assigned to men is the murderer, Lady Baskerville. While Amelia represents the good woman, forging ahead of her time in breaking glass ceilings, Lady Baskerville is not even allowed to have a first name in this novel. Where Amelia is presented as being brave and curious, Lady Baskerville is breaking ground in serial murder history but receiving no kudos in this area from the author.

Besides Amelia and Lady Baskerville, all other women in the novel are exaggerated women playing their traditional roles: an eccentric vain older woman and a young ingenue who is talented but prefers a husband. These characters are mentioned as a foil for the protagonist and antagonist, and serve that role well.

The character of Amelia drives the plot, continually surprising the reader who is expecting her to behave as a Victorian era British woman.



## Sense of Place

The theme of exceptional sense of place is strong in this novel, as every description of the Valley of Kings, Luxor, the Nile, Thebes and even the desolate area surrounding the excavation sites are replete with beauty and timelessness. The beauty of place is contrasted with the ugliness of the people who murder, steal and deceive while living on this land. Amelia is able to see past this part of human nature and still appreciate the loveliness of the land surrounding her. Amelia finds the sunsets and sunrises breathtaking, and a simple walk from the Baskerville House to the excavation site is described as invigorating because of the scenery and stark colors.

The author's descriptions of Egypt's beauty are in sharp contrast to the setting at the beginning of the novel in England. At the family home, everything is proper, sedate, and boring. Chapters 1 and 2 are set in Kent, yet the surroundings are not described in much detail at all, with the narrative focused on events and emotions. When the scenes move to Egypt, the author gives vivid accounts of sunrises and sunsets, the quality of the light on the sand dunes, and the faces of the natives.

The author's intent in the first two chapters is simply to relay information to the reader about her character's motivations and history. The action truly takes off when the Emersons leave their home and begin an adventure in their beloved Egypt, so the author wants the reader to feel the beauty and awe of this exotic land. Here in Chapter 3 and forward, the author begins to flesh out the characters, their love of Egypt and archaeology, and their expertise in these areas. Describing Amelia's reaction to a brisk walk to the excavation site, and what she is seeing along the way, is a device to move the plot, create tension and portray the character, but its primary purpose is to create a sense of place for the reader.

This sense of place is a vital component to a novel, especially when the scenes are set in an area in which the reader is not likely to be familiar. This prevents confusion, gives the characters more depth, and if done correctly, the place becomes like another character to be reckoned with in the story and plot.

## The Evil of Greed

The motive of Lady Baskerville's murder of her husband was greed - to obtain his fortune for herself. Lady Baskerville's actual name is never mentioned in the novel, making her more of a mystery and easier to portray as a selfish, evil woman who will stop at nothing to achieve her thirst for money.

Greed is also prevalent in the discussions of the Egyptians who live around the Valley of Kings—generations of families who have tunneled and broken into the tombs of the ancients to become wealthy on the antiquities black market. The tomb must be locked and guarded to prevent these infamous thieves from stealing the treasures inside.



Greed is a powerful motivator and is often used by authors as the reason for people to steal and murder, as in this novel. It is interesting to note that neither Amelia or Emerson have ever been at risk of being poverty stricken, and their attitude of the entitlement of the British explorer is evident in their reactions to the behavior of others in this novel. The Emersons are shocked about the Gurnawis, the robbers of tombs since the times of the Pharaohs, yet it is unclear how a group of foreign archaeologists who outwit the Egyptian ministry are different from the Gurnawis in their quest for treasure.

Amelia is shocked at Lady Baskerville's actions, but Amelia is firmly ensconced as a wealthy woman, partnered with a man of considerable means, and is blissfully happy in her marriage. Amelia has no sympathy for a woman locked in a loveless marriage who could potentially be left on the streets if she cannot hang on to her deceased husband's fortunes.

# Style

## Point of View

The entire novel is written in the first person, through Amelia Peabody Emerson's view and thoughts. This restricts the reader to only those events which are observed or experienced by Amelia. Other events or thoughts are outlined in the novel by Amelia being told what happened by another character, usually her husband.

Amelia sees the world as rather messy, awaiting her methodical and accurate hand to set it to rights. Her personality is outlined and her character sketched out in every sentence and action. She constantly speaks to the reader of the story, using "gentle" and "dear" to express her affection for the ones who chose to read her memoirs. Her stilted style of speaking makes it appear that everyone is behaving with extreme politeness and consideration for others, apologizing for errors and misunderstandings and behaving indignantly when a woman's honor is impugned. However, human nature reveals that even in polite society, there is greed and murder.

## Setting

The novel begins in Kent, England, at the home of the Emersons. It is a large comfortable home, but it is obvious the setting is not where the Emersons long to be. Although Amelia and Emerson love their son and are trying to provide a normal existence for him, they speak wistfully of their adventures in Egypt. Descriptions of their time in England are restricted to the family activities and not of any surrounding gardens or estates. When Amelia and Emerson go to Egypt, the author describes the landscape in detail, engaging the smells, sights and feelings of Amelia at every turn. Obviously, the Emersons only endure the time spent in England and come alive when in Egypt at an excavation.

## Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is predominantly that of Amelia, the narrator. Her voice is very prim and proper and her vocabulary extensive. Her descriptions of her husband's behavior are especially convoluted. The reader must prepare for this style of wording in order to fully enjoy the novel, because most descriptions of characters, of situations, or of place are not simply stated. It is only in dialogue that more clarity occurs. Even when Amelia is describing a romantic encounter with her husband, the reader must "read between the lines" in order to deduce what is happening.

Amelia's descriptions of the surrounding people are not, in modern terms, politically correct, as she attributes behavior to people according to their race or hair color, as in Kevin's mischievousness being attributed to the fact he is Irish and has red hair. The



Egyptian natives are considered simple and superstitious, just because they aren't British.

The purpose of the language is to transport the reader into a time and place when women spoke without directness, using the length and breadth of the English language to slowly but surely draw a picture of the situation at hand. It is formal and pedantic, but when the reader grows accustomed to the cadence and pace, it is easy to understand and follow.

## Structure

The Curse of the Pharaohs is 285 pages long, divided into seventeen chapters. The first two chapters deal with the introduction of the three Emersons: Amelia, Emerson and Ramses, and giving the reader a quick description of the background of the couple. By chapter three, the Emersons have left England and the remainder of the book describes their adventures in Egypt excavating a tomb.

Additional characters are introduced to form a normal sized excavation party: Lady Baskerville, the widowed financier of the excavation, her admirer Cyrus Vandergelt, also an amateur archaeologist, the photographer and heir Arthur/Milverton, a reporter named Kevin, a linguist named Karl, a pretty artist named Mary, and her disgusting mother, Madame Berengeria. These English characters are mixed in with colorful natives named Abdullah, Hassan, Ali Hassen, and Habib, to name a few.

The novel progresses in a typical mystery genre, with clues being discovered and tension increasing as multiple murders and murder attempts beset the group. The excavation and the discoveries drive the plot while Amelia attempts to solve the mysteries and eventually does.





## Quotes

Chapter 1, Page 8, Amelia Emerson:

"My own feelings? They are quite irrelevant. The decision was the only sensible solution, and I am always sensible."

Chapter 2, Page 31, Amelia Emerson:

"Emerson's response had taken her completely by surprise; and the astonishment with which she regarded me, as she tried to find some trace of the charms that made a man unwilling to be parted from me, was indeed delightful to behold."

Chapter 4, Page 63, Emerson:

"'For heaven's sake, Amelia, restrain yourself,' Emerson grumbled. 'I had hoped that on this expedition you would not succumb to your delusion that you are a qualified physician.'"

Chapter 5, Page 79, Madame Berengeria:

"'I came,' Madame Berengeria announced dramatically. 'The messages were favorable. I was given the strength to endure a meeting devoid of spiritual comfort.'"

Chapter 6, Page 91, Amelia Emerson:

"For a moment the two confronted one another in silence. I confess I had seldom seen two more impressive men. They seemed to transcend individuality and become symbols of two ways of life: the past and the future, the old superstition and the new rationalism."

Chapter 8, Page 123, Emerson:

"'You are not guilty men, or children,' Emerson replied. 'You are my friends. I came at once to you, to tell you what happened.'"

Chapter 8, Page 126, Amelia:

"'Mr. O'Connell has no desire to avoid a scene,' I said. 'He promotes them.'"

Chapter 8, Page 131, Amelia:

"I do not scruple to employ mendacity and a fictitious appearance of female incompetence when the occasion demands it."

Chapter 10, Page 172, Amelia:

"Of course I knew quite well what ought to be done, but I had decided it would be more



tactful to let Emerson work it out for himself, assisted by occasional comments and questions from me."

Chapter 16, Page 268, Amelia:

"It is no use, Lady Baskerville,' I said. 'You are fairly caught. You should have known when we first met that you were no match for me.'"

Chapter 17, Page 280, Emerson:

"Has it occurred to you' Emerson inquired, 'that you have quite a number of acquaintances in prisons around the world?'"

Chapter 17, Page 283, Emerson:

"If you would stay peacefully at home, like a sensible woman, when you are told to -"

## Topics for Discussion

Discuss greed as it relates to Lady Baskerville and how it relates to the tomb raiders. Why is greed such a strong motivating force?

The marriage of Amelia and Emerson is strong and multi-layered. Why? What role does Emerson play, and what role does Amelia play in its success? Why?

Why does Amelia believe Evelyn is better suited as a mother than she is? Do you think Amelia will make a good mother?

Is Amelia a spiritual woman? Explain your response.

What is it about archaeology that so enchants Emerson, Amelia and Cyrus?

Is Emerson really a gruff bully?

Discuss Alan Armadale. Why would he have an affair with Lady Baskerville while proposing marriage to Mary?

How does Mary adapt to the embarrassment and loss of dignity of her mother's behavior?

Which of Mary's suitors would have been the best choice for her: Karl, Kevin, or Arthur. What were the pros and cons for each of these selections?

Who was the most interesting character in this story: Lady Baskerville or Amelia Emerson?