Part of the Mamur Zapt mystery series set in Cairo 1914.

Reviews of the THE FACE IN THE CEMETERY : A Mamur Zapt Mystery by Michael Pearce

Alianyau

I love this series. It is a light mystery, but it also gives you some feel for what the British occupation of Egypt might have been like.

mIni-Like

After serving a tour of duty in Egypt, Gareth Owen became the Mamur Zapt, the official who deals with political factions in a land where much of the population comes from other lands. While he is in the province of Minya, he finds the body of a dead woman wrapped up in bandages surrounded by
cats that were mummified ages ago. The dead woman was a German who was married to an Egyptian. Owen was supposed to take her to an internment camp based on orders from England that stated that all Germans must be placed in speciously set up camps to prevent their giving any information to the German government.

While in Minya he notices that the ghaffirs (watchmen) at each village are being armed to fight the bandits. When Owen returns to Cairo, he learns that two hundred unaccounted rifles were sent to Minya; in a country where British rule is hated, that is very dangerous. Owen has to find out where the rifles went and how they are linked to the ghaffirs. While he is investigating that, he also tries to learn who killed the German and nearly gets killed for his work ethics.

Egypt at the beginning of World War I is a country that prefers to ignore the actions of the superpowers only caring about how the war will affect them. The protagonist is working harder than ever but wonders if he should enlist in the British Army. His Egyptian lover, the pasha's daughter Zeinab is giving him a hard time about his possible enlistment which puts their relationship on shaky ground. Michael Pearce has written another exciting historical mystery that brings to life a bygone era.

Harriet Klausner

Jaberini

The first dozen Mamur Zapt books by Michael Pearce all seemed to be stuck around the year 1910. Set in Egypt under British rule, they are wonderful tongue-in-cheek mysteries featuring the head of the British security police in Cairo.

In "The Face in the Cemetery" it is 1914 and World War I has finally arrived. But aside from Gareth Owen, the Mamur Zapt, having responsibility for the internment of German citizens, the war seems far from Egypt.

The puzzle behind 200 missing rifles is intriguing, and this book is as good as any other in the series.

Malara

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The Mamur Zapt stories parallel Elizabeth Peters' wonderful Amelia Peabody books. But in those stories, when the war arrives, the younger generation are very involved, some in the trenches, others fighting enemy agents and their plots to expel the British. Gareth Owen's 1914 Cairo ought to filled with enemy spies, but you wouldn't know it from this book. What it does take up is the very real difficulty of trying to put together a relationship across ethnic and cultural lines.
The puzzle behind 200 missing rifles is intriguing, and this book is as good as any other in the series. You'll never walk alone

This is number 13 in the series featuring the Mamur Zapt, starting with A COLD TOUCH OF ICE, THE SNAKE CATCHER'S DAUGHTER, THE GIRL IN THE NILE, and THE NIGHT OF THE DOG. These mysteries written by an academic in Sudan, Michael Pearce, are simplified Elizabeth Peters sagas with murder and mayhem involved.

In a cat cemetery (where cats are interred after being mumified), the body of a blonde German woman is found with the wrappings of a mummy covering her completely. She is married to an Egyptian and it is WWI where Germans are feared, even the blonde ones.

Owen tells Zeinab that it was the "war" which killed the victim. "It was a marriage built on love but based on fear. As the world pressed in, fear took over. The outside world was too much for them, and the obstacles, difficulties became obsessive, so they turned inwards. In the end they couldn't face the world." My, how things have changed. Of course, this is America and not the Sudan with the camels, tombs and pet cemeteries. Here, we bury the family pet out in the back yard.

It was fascinating, but written for younger readers, I think. He certainly has a full slate of these books for anyone interested in Egypt told in a fictional sense, not many facts.

Ariseym

The whole series of Mamur Zapt books are great. We have enjoyed all of the ones we read.

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