

THE GOLDEN GOBLET STUDY GUIDE

by **Carol Clark**

For the novel by
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Synopsis

Ranofer, a young Egyptian orphan, has his heart set on becoming a master goldsmith like his father, but when his father dies, Ranofer's older half-brother, Gebu, refuses to apprentice him. Gebu only allows Ranofer to work as a hireling in a gold shop, doing unskilled labor and only able to look on as apprentices learn the skills he dreams of. Fortunately Ranofer finds a good friend in Heqet, a new apprentice. However, when Ranofer discovers he has been duped by Gebu into transporting stolen gold from the shop, he rebels and is punished by Gebu, who removes him from the gold shop and apprentices him in Gebu's stone-cutting shop. Ranofer despises the rough, dangerous work in Gebu's shop, and his dreams for the future seem crushed.

While working for Gebu, Ranofer begins to realize that something is going on; Gebu is involved in something illegal and dangerous, but Ranofer just can't figure out what it is. His friends Heqet and the Ancient try to help Ranofer figure things out, but it is not until Ranofer finds a very old golden goblet hidden in Gebu's sleeping quarters that the full extent of Gebu's crimes slowly come clear.

However, *knowing* what Gebu is doing and *proving* what Gebu is doing are two totally different things. Ranofer and his friends set about the dangerous business of gathering evidence and trying to bring Gebu to justice, without being discovered and killed for their troubles. Ranofer is certain that only by exposing Gebu's crimes and being finally rid of him will Ranofer ever be able to start realizing his dream of becoming a goldsmith. But first he has to survive.

The Golden Goblet is an exciting adventure set in ancient Egypt, full of intrigue, danger, character, hard work, and the precious gift of true friends.

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8. How does Ranofer's acceptance of the wineskin from Ibni change the plan to tell Rekh?

Thinking About the Story:

9. When Rekh tells Ranofer he is glad his shoulder is better and calls him "small one," how does Ranofer respond? Why? How does Ranofer actually feel about Rekh?
10. On his way to work one morning, Ranofer stops to draw hieroglyphics in the dust and smiles because it gives him a sense of power. Why would being able to read and write give him a sense of power, particularly in the culture in which he lives?
11. What does Ranofer do when he catches himself daydreaming about making the 50 gold leaves and how the Queen and Pharaoh would notice his workmanship? Why?
12. Why does Ranofer decide to defy Gebu by refusing to transport the wineskin?
13. *Foreshadowing* is a technique authors use to prepare us for a change or coming event in the book or lives of the characters. It creates a sense of warning or expectancy. Near the end of Chapter III, as Ranofer returns home after refusing Ibni's wine, "all eager hopes of the day vanished beneath a torrent of blackest

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fear. He had come home empty-handed. He had defied Gebu. . . . Behind him the gate swung shut with a click like the jaws of a crocodile closing.” What is the author foreshadowing? What words or phrases does she use to create this feeling?

14. Near the end of Chapter IV, Ranofer receives a very different, almost happy, reception from Gebu as Ranofer returns home with the wineskin:

“*Hai!* It is the little messenger!” bellowed Gebu, as his eyes went to the wineskin. To Wenamon he added in an undertone, “Though it is of small importance now, eh?” and burst into a roar of laughter. Before Ranofer had time to wonder what he meant he beckoned peremptorily. “Well, well, come here, messenger, make your delivery and receive your reward.”

Foreshadowing also may be thought of as the author giving readers clues about what will happen later in the story. What clue do you see in the above passage that might be important later?

Dig Deeper:

15. At the beginning of Chapter IV, Ranofer awakens with a plan fully formed in his mind. From where does he think the plan came?

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16. Read the following verses about making plans. Then match each reference with its main idea below, by placing the correct letter on the line.

___ Psalm 40:5 ___ Proverbs 16:9 ___ Proverbs 19:21
___ Proverbs 20:18 ___ Jeremiah 29:11–13

- a. God has planned so many things for us that we cannot count them.
 - b. Make plans by seeking advice.
 - c. God plans for our prosperity and hope, not our harm; when we seek him.
 - d. Man makes plans, but God directs us.
 - e. Men may plan, but it is God's purposes that succeed.
17. How could following the advice in Proverbs 20:18 have helped Ranofer plan?
18. After Ranofer makes the golden leaves, how does his attitude affect those around him? Why? Read Proverbs 15:30, 17:22. What do these verses teach us?
19. Read Proverbs 20:11 and copy it here. How does Ranofer make his character known by his actions? Look at his decision at the end of Chapter III to no longer steal, and the way he behaves the day he makes the gold leaves. What does this tell you about Ranofer and his character?

Optional Activity:

The witty jokes that Heqet thinks up are now called Wellerisms. Look up Wellerisms and Tom Swifties, a related type of joke, and explain what they are and how they are created. After you have learned about them, try making up some of your own. You may even want to try a Tom Swifty contest! (A good place to start your research might be http://www.fun-with-words.com/tom_swifties_history.html.)

Egyptian Notebook Projects:

1. *Egyptian Hieroglyphics*: In the beginning of Chapter III, Ranofer notices a flock of pintail ducks, which reminds him of his previous reading lessons. The hieroglyphs for “son” (sah) and “daughter” (saht), as well as other alphabetic symbols, are described. In your Egyptian Notebook, draw the hieroglyphs described by Ranofer. For further information on Egyptian writing, you might consult books or online sites. For a list of hieroglyphic symbols, you might consult www.ancient-egypt.org/language. This site also contains directions for reading hieroglyphs.
2. *Egyptian gods and goddesses*: Add to your list in your notebook the new Egyptian gods introduced in Chapters III–IV. Draw pictures of each one if you wish. You might want to consult an online site for information about the many gods that were worshiped in Egypt. One starting place is www.egyptartsite.com/list.

Nuit Great Ptah Anubis Pharaoh

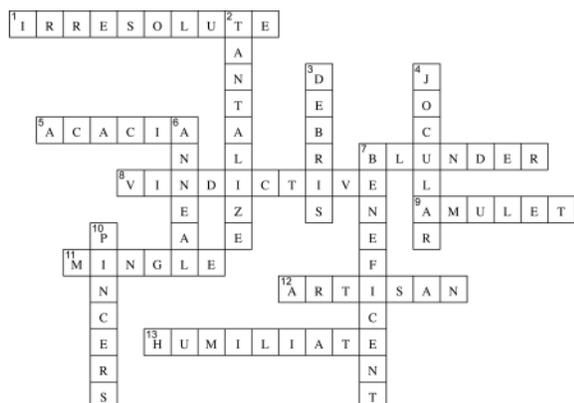
See if you can discover why the Pharaoh was considered a god.

Answer Key

Chapters I–II

Vocabulary:

1. container for melting metals; 2. block of gold; 3. a charm to wear; 4. mix or blend; 5. kindly; doing good; 6. famous;
7. untrustworthy; 8. embarrass; 9. mocking; 10. toughen, temper; 11. remainder; 12. mistake; 13. gripping tool;
14. craftsman; 15. fragrant thorny tree; 16. employee; 17. remains, ruins; 18. playful; 19. vacillating; 20. torment, tease;
21. vengeful; 22. hissing



Questions:

1. Ranofer dreams his ingot could become a collar, the inlay of a dagger for a nobleman's tomb, or a cup for Pharaoh. However, the ingot was too small to become a cup, nobody in the shop had skill enough to create an object for Pharaoh, and Pharaoh's craftsman of choice was Zau, who was the only one skilled enough to make the beautiful objects the Pharaoh desired.
2. Answers will vary but may include four of the following: glassmakers, papermakers, weavers, carpenters, potters, sculptors, painters, embalmers, masons, coffin-builders, goldsmiths, stonemasons.
3. That section is called The Valley of the Dead because most of the objects that are made by the craftsmen end up in the tombs to become possessions of the dead.
4. Answers may vary slightly. Ranofer suspects that Ibni is stealing the gold and hiding it in a wineskin that Ranofer has been delivering to his half-brother Gebu. Ranofer goes to the river because he fears going home and trying to conceal what he suspects from Gebu. He also wonders how to make Gebu stop.
5. When Ranofer's father dies, leaving him alone, an unknown half-brother from a previous marriage shows up and Gebu presents papers attesting to the fact that he is the firstborn and therefore entitled to the inheritance. Gebu takes in Ranofer who was orphaned upon the death of his father, but he beats Ranofer, and refuses to apprentice him to anyone. Ranofer suspects he has been placed in Rekh's shop to help Gebu steal.
6. Zau had said Ranofer "shows skill. Perhaps when he is older. . . ." Ranofer is motivated by these comments to dream of a day when he will approach Zau and beg to become his pupil.

Thinking About the Story:

7. Gebu warns Ranofer that telling will put his own head (Ranofer's) in a noose. Knowing Gebu and Ibni would deny any knowledge of the thievery, Ranofer would be marked as a thieving boy.
8. At the end of Chapter I, Ranofer decides not to tell Rekh who is stealing the gold. At the end of Chapter II he decides he will defy Gebu and leave forever; he will no longer be a thief.
9. Answers will vary. Students should list eight of the following choices. the clang of tools, O; mud-walled courtyard, S; sharp, hot odor of metal, M; soft afternoon breeze off the Nile, H; the air was cool, H; heat from the hooded furnaces, H; lined the courtyard, S; the sun, did not scorch and burn, H; radiant light, S; brown backs, S; men bent to their work,