

Literature Guide – The Golden Goblet by Eloise McGraw

Chapter 1

1. Where does this story take place? Thebes
2. What did Ranofer do for a living? He worked in the goldsmith shop of Rekh (running errands, washing gold)
3. What was the conflict the shop was having? The gold weights were not tallying properly. Someone was stealing the gold.
4. What kind of worker was Ranofer? Worked hard, precise, conscientious
5. Whom did Ranofer consider the greatest goldsmith in Thebes? Zau the Master
6. What was Ranofer not working for Zau? His father died and he had to live with his half brother Gebu?
7. How did Ranofer feel about Gebu? Hated him. Why? He was physically abusive and did everything he could to make Ranofer's life miserable.
8. Who was Ibni? A Babylonian that worked in the shop as a gold washer. He brought wine to Ranofer to take to Gebu.
9. What was odd about the wine? Gebu never drank any of it. Just dumped it out. Ibni always gave it to Ranofer at the end of the day in the courtyard.
10. What did Ranofer think of Rekh? Kindly, honest, not a master craftsman but good.
11. Who did Ranofer think was stealing? Ibni. How? He was using wineskins and giving it to Gebu (Ranofer's ½ brother) via Ranofer
12. Why did it bother Ranofer so much that Ibni was stealing? Because Ranofer was an accessory to the crime. He was taking the wineskin.
13. Who was Heqet? The new apprentice, 12 or 13, bigger than Ranofer, very inexperienced but friendly
14. Why did Ranofer suspect that Gebu employed him in Rekh's shop? So that he could steal the gold.
15. What kept Ranofer from telling Rekh about Ibni? His own involvement, fear about what Gebu would do to him, he had no proof only a suspicion

Chapter 2

1. Why was Thebes called the City of the Dead? Most of the objects the artisans fashioned were for the tombs of Egypt and therefore possessions of the dead
2. What kinds of things were put into Egyptian tombs? Food, furniture, weapons, tools, gold and treasure for the wealthy
3. Who did Ranofer run into before going home? Ancient. What did Ancient notice about Ranofer? That he was burdened with trouble
4. How did Gebu treat Ranofer? Horribly – hit him, gave him little food, called him names, made him steal
5. What kept Ranofer's mind off his hungry stomach? Thoughts of owning his own goldsmith shop and no Gebu

6. Who came to visit Gebu? Setma, the Nile-boat captain and Wenamon, a mason
7. Why was Ranofer afraid to defy Gebu? Beatings, hunger, and being turned out on the street
8. Describe the day of Ranofer's father's funeral? Gebu showed up with papers saying that he is first born. Then sells everything and takes Ranofer. Given the dishonest character of Gebu, do you think it is possible he made this relationship up?
9. Why was Gebu not concerned when Ranofer accused him of stealing? Because Ranofer was the one who was bringing the wineskins home from the shop
10. Do you think this shows that Gebu is guilty?
11. What did Ranofer vow after his fight with Gebu? That he would not steal (or bring the wine skins home) no matter what Gebu did to him

Chapter 3

1. What did Ranofer resolve the next morning? No more cringing puppy, no more shame, don't carry home the wineskins
2. What are hieroglyphs? Pictures that stand for words or letters
3. What kind of person is Heqet? Kind, forgiving, attentive
4. What task did Rekh assign to Ranofer? Making charcoal. Whom did Ranofer teach to make charcoal? Heqet
5. What did Ranofer notice about Meryra the apprentice's work? The sound of the hammer on the metal was not right. What advice did Ranofer give to him? Use a different hammer, raise the elbow higher, hit harder. Did it work? Yes
6. What was Ranofer's reward? Making golden leaves. How many did Rekh ask him to make? 50
7. For what purpose were the leaves? A grand lady's necklace
8. What did Ranofer's joy cause? The entire shop was full of laughter and joking. What does this tell us about our own attitude?
9. What did Ranofer tell Ibni about the wine? Gebu doesn't want it
10. Did Ranofer take home the wineskins? No
11. What was Ranofer's punishment for not bringing the wine skin? A beating and no dinner. What did Gebu threaten him with? Becoming an apprentice to him

Chapter 4

1. How was Ranofer able to form a plan when the night before he was so devastated? He felt like his father talked to him and gave him an idea
2. How did Ranofer thank his Father for the idea? Went to his father's tomb and left half of the breakfast Gebu had left for him. A sacrifice if you will.
3. What was the plan? He told Heqet the story and asked him to be the one to watch Ibni and then tell Rekh
4. What was Ranofer's task? Show Heqet how to make hard solder – 4 days supply
5. What did Ranofer find out about Heqet? He has 7 younger siblings, lives in a small house; therefore, he had to move to the apprentice quarters. He was taught to be honest and trustful by his father.

6. How was Ibni stealing the gold? By using the big washing vats and hiding his wineskin, dropping in the gold bit by bit
7. Did Ranofer take the wineskin? Yes, Why? For fear of what Gebu would do
8. What did Gebu give Ranofer for bringing the wineskin? A copper coin to buy food
9. What suspicious remark did Gebu make about the wineskin? That it was of small importance now
10. What other suspicious thing did Gebu do? He first wanted Ranofer to take the wineskin to his room then Gebu changed his mind

Chapter 5

1. What happened after Heqet told Rekh? Nothing. Several days went by and he did nothing.
2. What was the crowd going to see? An execution. Who stopped Ranofer from going to see it? Ancient.
3. What were they being punished for? Tomb robbing
4. How did Ancient survive? Selling papyrus to the sail maker. He has a little house made out of bricks.
5. What happened to Ibni? He was fired from the gold shop and thereafter Gebu no longer needed him
6. Where did Rekh send Ranofer? On errands to the potter's shop. Who did Ranofer see? Ibni.
7. What happened when Ranofer returned home? Ibni and Gebu were talking. Gebu dismissed Ibni since he could be of no further help.
8. What happened to Ranofer? He was apprenticed to Gebu at the stone cutter's shop
9. How did Rekh find out Ranofer would no return? Gebu sent word an hour previous
10. What did Ranofer propose to Gebu? That he could live on his own making papyrus and selling it, if only Gebu would buy him a donkey
11. What was Gebu's response to his plan to sell papyrus? He laughed and did no respond

Chapter 6

1. What did they mainly build in the shop? Sarcophagi and blocks of stone for sculptors. What are these? Mummy cases
2. Who is Pai? The foreman at the shop. Describe him? Skinny, little, short temper, cruel
3. Who is Zahotep? Under craftsman. Describe him. Mutilated hands from stone cutting, kind, talkative, nervous about upsetting the master
4. What was Ranofer's task? Putting a pinch of sand into the holes Zahotep was drilling. Then waiting while Zahotep drilled.
5. Who was Nebre? An apprentice slightly older than Ranofer.
6. How did Ranofer like his work at the stonecutter's shop? He hated it
7. What was the odd thing that he noticed at night? Gebu was leaving and coming back very, very silently

8. What superstitions did he have about the dark of night? The bas of the dead fluttered out of the tombs, spirits roamed about causing mischief, the woman with her head on backward snatched away children who didn't have amulets on their wrists
9. What did all the superstitions about the night keep the Egyptians from doing? Going out into the dark. What purpose would this serve?

Chapter 7

1. What do we learn about the Nile River in this chapter? Every fall it overflowed and flooded the fields. Also bringing rich nutrients to the soil. So that in the winter when the waters receded, a new layer of mud was left behind.
2. What did Ranofer do to get away from the noise of the shop? He went to the gold shop and ran into Heqet
3. How were things going for Heqet in the gold shop? Good, but he was not a natural goldsmith like Ranofer
4. What did Heqet and Ranofer do every day thereafter? Meet for lunch with Ancient and share food and company
5. What did Heqet offer to do when they met? Tell Ranofer everything he learned so that Ranofer still could keep learning
6. What made Ranofer ashamed about meeting Heqet? He had so little food to bring.
7. What did Heqet try to do to make Ranofer feel better? Gave him his cheese and traded it for the lotus root.
8. Why did Ranofer get so angry? He didn't want pity. He was too prideful.
9. Who joined them that helped diffuse the situation? Ancient. How? By joking and sharing his food with the boys as well.

Chapter 8

1. How many ways did Heqet describe making gold beads? Two. Which did Heqet prefer? The second, make links and pack them with charcoal.
2. Why was Ranofer frustrated by Heqet's descriptions of how to do things? He felt he couldn't learn how to make things just by listening. He had to practice.
3. What was the Ancient's advice to Ranofer about learning stonecutting? That it was a trade and having a trade was more helpful than not having one
4. What did Ranofer think of the Ancient's advice? That he was right, but Ranofer had no heart for stonecutting.
5. What errand was Heqet going on that he wanted Ranofer to accompany him? Go to Zau the master goldsmith's shop to get a stake
6. What caught Ranofer's eye at Zau's shop? A gold collar Zau was working on for Queen Tiy
7. Which Pharaoh is in power now? Queen Tiy is his wife
8. What did Zau say about Ranofer's previous gold work? One of his arm bands was over ambitious but his other pieces were creditable

9. What did Zau propose to Ranofer? That we would train him for free if Ranofer could leave his apprenticeship at the stonecutters
10. What did Ranofer think would happen if he dissolved his apprenticeship to Gebu? Gebu would kill him or sell him as a slave
11. What did Ranofer propose back? He could work for Zau at night
12. How did Zau respond? He did not work all the time. He could not help Ranofer until he dissolved his apprenticeship
13. What did Ranofer realize he had forgotten at the stonecutter's shop? His coppers

Chapter 9

1. What happened to Ranofer when Gebu asked for his coppers? A beating because Gebu did not believe him
2. What did Pai order Ranofer to bring to him? A scroll with tomb plans on it
3. What made Ranofer suspicious of Gebu? His new clothes, sandals and expensive food
4. Where did Ranofer think Gebu was getting the money from? Stealing. What remark made him think so? "There are bigger birds in the air than Rekh the goldsmith."
5. What did Ranofer, Heqet, and the Ancient plan to do? Spy on Gebu and his friends trying to figure out what they were doing. Heqet would follow Wenamon. Ancient would follow Setma, the river boat captain.
6. What role did they think Setma played in the scheme? Taking goods out of town.
7. What did Ancient think of the plan? Too dangerous
8. What did the Ancient do for Ranofer? Made him a salve to help his shoulders. What did he warn him? Not to follow Gebu in full darkness
9. Where did Ranofer follow Gebu to? Mutra's wine shop. Any clues? No

Chapter 10

1. What news did Heqet have? He found a good place to watch Wenamon.
2. What about Ancient? The boat was stranded until the Nile floods
3. What happened when Ranofer followed Gebu to Wenamon's house? He stumbled into someone's courtyard trying to avoid Gebu and was almost attacked by a dog. Who saved him? Heqet
4. Where did they go? To the stone cutter's shop
5. On the night that Ranofer heard Gebu leave the courtyard, what did he realize? Gebu was thieving after dark
6. What happened when Ranofer decided to follow Gebu? 1) He was terrified of the dark 2) a cat attacked him and scared him back home
7. What interesting thing did Ranofer find in the scrolls? A small room in a senseless location. Why was this suspicious? Because of the way Gebu acted when Ranofer told him of it. And Ranofer saw Gebu give the scroll to Wenamon.
8. What made Gebu go into the upper room despite being warned not to? 1) Anger, Gebu had hit him again 2) hunger, hoping to find food

9. What did he find? A golden goblet. What clues on the goblet told him where it came from? Hieroglyphics enclosed in an oval line (sign of royalty). The name of Thutmose Nefer-Kheperu (Pharaoh of Egypt over 100 years ago)
10. What did Ranofer realize once he found the goblet? That Gebu had stolen it from a tomb
11. What did he realize as he left the room? Gebu had seal it with clay as a trap to see if anyone went into it.

Chapter 11

1. Why didn't Ranofer want to go outside? He was afraid of the Khefts (evil spirits) would get him
2. How did he patch Gebu's seal? Picked up all the spare clay, spit on it, made a patch, used a palm fiber from his torch to scratch off the scarab mark.
3. What happened when Gebu returned? Gebu was drunk, he crashed down the stairs and got a drink in the storeroom. He did not seem to notice the seal
4. What was Ranofer's plan regarding the Goblet? Tell someone about it so that Gebu would hang. What stopped Ranofer from telling? He didn't think anyone would believe him over Gebu and Ranofer would be the one to hang.
5. What did Ranofer do at midday? Raced home to get the goblet and take it to Zau whom he hoped would help him. What did he find? No goblet
6. Whom did Ranofer meet on the way back to the shop? Ancient. What news did he have? He had witnessed a quarrel between Setma and Gebu
7. What was Gebu doing with the goblet when talking to Setma? Trying to get rid of it
8. Why did Setma not take it? Too Dangerous, he wanted more money from Gebu
9. What seemed to be the result of the quarrel? Setma would no longer sell Gebu's goods
10. When did Ranofer finally see Gebu? At the end of the day at home. How was Gebu? Very distracted. How do you know? He didn't take Ranofer's money, gave him fish, left out three loaves of bread
11. What happened through the night? Gebu didn't leave but left the next morning with the goblet under his arm
12. Where was the goblet at the end of the chapter? Maybe in the scroll room at the stonecutter's shop but Ranofer wasn't for sure. Why? As soon as Ranofer had the chance he searched the room twice without finding it

Chapter 12

1. Why was Ranofer avoiding Heqet? He thought Heqet would get too excited and overdo it. Did his plan work? No, Heqet found Ranofer outside the shop one morning
2. What was the High Nile Festival? The greatest feast day of the year. Water of the great river would rise. Holiday in the streets. No work. Feasting for all.
3. What did Heqet notice about Ranofer? He seemed more quiet than usual, more like he was when they first met
4. From Heqet's spying what did Ranofer learn? That Gebu was going to move the goblet. Gebu was going to the Valley of the Tombs and Ranofer must follow

5. Where is the broken tree that Gebu spoke of? By the stonecutter's shop
6. Where did Ranofer think Gebu would be during the Festival? In the Valley of the Tombs, looting
7. How did Ancient say the Tomb Robbers were discovered? Someone followed them

Chapter 13

1. What day was it when Ranofer awoke? The High Nile Festival
2. Where was Gebu headed? The high western cliffs into the hills
3. Who was Gebu meeting? Wenamon
4. What things did Ranofer worry about as he followed Gebu? Getting caught, never returning, getting lost, disturbing the "ba's" of the dead, noises
5. What did Ranofer find by following Gebu and Wenamon? A secret entrance to the tomb
6. How was the secret entrance disguised? By rocks in the hillside
7. What greater realization did he come to? That as a mason and stonecutter, Gebu had planned this and the drawing Ranofer pointed to would reveal the secret passage
8. What happened to Ranofer as he was following Gebu? He was startled by a vulture and fell into a crevice
9. What did Ancient and Heqet think happened to Ranofer? 1) Overslept 2) Something happened between him and Gebu
10. What did they finally decide? Gebu was a tomb robber and Ranofer went after him into the Valley of the Tombs

Chapter 14

1. What was Gebu doing in the secret passage? Breaking through the plastered walls of the tomb
2. What happened after that? Ranofer looked into someone's eye and made a small noise
3. What did Ancient and Heqet think happened to Ranofer? He never came to the Valley in the first place. He went into a tomb
4. Why were they bothered about being in the valley? They were afraid of the khefts
5. What did they decide? Go back and look for Ranofer in the city
6. What did Gebu think the noise that Ranofer made was? Nothing
7. What were the eyes? Inlaid glass eyes of a life-sized wooden state, an "ushabti" – a servant and guardian of the dead
8. What else was in the tomb? Lots of gold, flowers, wine
9. Whose tomb were they in? Queen Tiy's parents. How did Ranofer know this? He saw the personal seal of Haaa, Tiy's Father
10. What happened to alert Gebu that someone was in the tomb? Ranofer knocked over a vase
11. How did Ranofer escape? He threw a jewel box and the thieves, extinguished their light; randed down the passage
12. What happened to the last step as Ranofer was leaving the tomb? It crumbled beneath him
13. How did Ranofer prevent Gebu from getting out of the tomb? He pushed a boulder in front of it
14. Did Gebu know it was Ranofer? Yes

Chapter 15

1. Who did Ancient and Heqet see as they were leaving the Valley? Ranofer
2. How did Heqet and the Ancient help Ranofer? By securing the secret entrance to the tomb and guarding it
3. What did Ranofer worry about as he went for help? Who would help him, could Heqet and Ancient keep Gebu and Wenamon in the tomb
4. Where did Ranofer go to first? Zau. Was he home? No
5. Where did he go next? The palace
6. How did he get in? He climbed a tree, jumped down on the other side of a wall and burst in through the kitchen
7. Who captured him? A gardener and slave
8. Who did Ranofer finally get help from? A Dwarf. Why do you think the dwarf helped him? He didn't like the soldier.
9. What made the dwarf believe Ranofer's story? Ranofer told him who the tomb robbers were

Chapter 16

1. What proof did the Queen ask for to see if Ranofer was telling the truth? What object was leaning against the north wall of her parent's chamber? What did Ranofer remember to help him figure out the object? Coffins faced West. What was the object on the North Wall? The queen's father's oaken staff
2. Who was Count Zobek? Chief cup bearer to the queen. What did he want to know? Specifics about the Goblet
3. What did the Count do? Sent soldiers to Gebu's shop to recover the goblet
4. What was Ranofer treated to? Food, bandages, rest on cushions, bath, new clothes and sandals
5. What did Ranofer notice about the Queen? She was wearing the necklace Zau was making and the Golden Goblet was next to her
6. What happened to the tomb raiders? They were captured
7. What did Ranofer ask of Queen Tiy? A donkey
8. Think about this request. Of all he could have asked for, why was the donkey his greatest wish? So he could be independent
9. What did Ranofer plan long term? To work with Zau and become a goldsmith
10. What gift did the Queen send Heqet and Ancient? Rings

Final Questions

1. Did you like this book? Why or why not?
2. Favorite character? Favorite scene?