



## Book club 14: Myths & legends

*Tales of Ancient Egypt*  
by Roger Lancelyn Green



### Rules

In this book club you will discuss *Tales of Ancient Egypt* by Roger Lancelyn Green in a group of 4-6 readers. The book club opens with a brief introduction that one of you reads out loud. The book club then continues in four rounds:

- 1 Round 1 consists of 5 questions about the plot. One of the group members acts as the quiz master who reads each question out loud, after which everyone (including the quiz master) writes down their answer. The correct answers will appear on the screen after you have turned over the final question card. You may then check your answers and calculate your scores.
- 2 Round 2 consists of asking and answering questions each of you have about the book/story. Each group member consults the group about elements of the text that they thought was unclear. Together, you try to find answers to the questions that are raised. After everything has been cleared up, your group is ready to proceed to the next round.
- 3 Round 3 consists of discussion questions. The person with the most correct answers to the quiz questions from round 1 gets to be the first to turn over a card and respond to the question. The other members of the group may then add to the discussion by responding and sharing their ideas. Take turns until all cards are flipped.
- 4 Round 4 is where you get to review the text. How many stars would you give the text and why? Discuss this together until you have reached a shared verdict. Use the text box to explain your choice.

This book club was developed by the editors of LitLab, a digital laboratory for high school literature research. For more teaching materials, visit [www.litlab.nl](http://www.litlab.nl). A teacher's guide and a didactic justification of this teaching method are available at [www.litlab.nl/docenten](http://www.litlab.nl/docenten).



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### Introduction

*'Osiris was a good ruler, and he taught the people of Egypt well. They learned to become good farmers, and they grew barley and made bread. They grew fruit, and they made wine. They made music, and they became artists. They learned to live in peace, and they built temples for their gods and worshipped them.'*

Egypt is a country located in North Africa and it is famous for its ancient history and amazing monuments. In *Tales of Ancient Egypt*, you will learn the stories behind the pyramids in Giza, the myths of the god Ra, the importance of the river Nile, and many other things.

Around 5000 years ago, the civilisation of Ancient Egypt started to thrive. The Egyptians believed in many gods and goddesses and told incredible (*ongelooflijk*) stories about them. Among these gods you will find Ra, who was said to have created the land and all living things, and Isis, who searched the waters for her lost brother-husband, as well as Zoser, a king who upset the gods and goddesses. This book club will help you dive deeper into the lives and beliefs of the Ancient Egyptians.

### Round 1: Understanding the plot

Take turns turning over a card and answering the question. After the person whose turn it is has answered, the rest may add to that answer or share their own views.

### Round 2: Initial questions

Take turns selecting one of the excerpts (*fragmenten/stukjes*) from the book listed below. Think of a question you would like to ask one of the characters, and work together to find an answer to that question.

1. Ra was bitten by something in the grass: "Something bit... until morning." (p. 26)
2. Set wants to get rid of Osiris: 'When Osiris... any more.' (p. 29)
3. Isis learns that Osiris is dead and wants to find him: 'Back in... it out.' (p. 31-32)

### Round 3: Discussion

Take turns turning over a card from a pile of your choice and answer the discussion question. The other members of the group may then add to the discussion by responding and sharing their ideas.

### Round 4: Opinion

Review *Tales of Ancient Egypt* by rating the novel on a scale of one to five stars, and then provide an explanation for your choice. Discuss what aspects you enjoyed and what aspects you didn't, and provide reasons for your opinions. Reflect on whether the discussion influenced your individual perspective, and if so, how. Incorporate examples and arguments from your responses to the discussion questions to support your review.



**Question 1**

Who is the god of the sun?

**Question 2**

Who is the god of the moon?

**Question 3**

Who is the god of the earth?

**Question 4**

How many children did Nut have?

**Question 5**

What animal did Isis create to trick Ra?

**Answers**

1. Ra
2. Khonsu
3. Geb
4. Five children in total, two daughters and three sons
5. A cobra



Question

3

Question

2

Question

1

Answers

Question

5

Question

4



### Personal connections? 1

If you lived in the time of the Ancient Egyptians, how would you feel about the gods and goddesses and how they behave? Would you be afraid of them or would you admire them, and why?

### Personal connections? 2

The gods and goddesses are almost all family. Do you know any other families of gods and goddesses from other parts of the world? If so, which ones and from which part of the world?

### Personal connections? 3

According to the book the kings of Egypt often married their sisters because the gods did it first: 'When they were older, Isis and Osiris married, and Nephtys married her brother, Set. After that, when people were Pharaohs, they also married their sisters. The Pharaohs often had many wives, but their sister-wife was always the Queen'. What do you think about this reason for marrying your sister?

### Personal connections? 4

The gods and goddesses have a lot of family issues, but rather than talking about their problems they resort to backstabbing (*verraad*) and trickery (*bedrog*). How might they have resolved (*oplossen*) their issues if they had talked to each other instead? Can you apply this to your own life?

### Personal connections? 5

Isis worked really hard to get her brother-husband Osiris on the throne as king, but it is Osiris who was said to be 'The God of All'. Their brother Set wants to get rid of Osiris so he can be the king, but he thinks 'Isis is too clever' to be tricked. How would you feel if you were in Isis' position?

### Personal connections? 6

When an Egyptian died, they went to the Judgement Hall of Osiris in Duat. There, they told the gods if they had been good or evil (*kwaad*) in life. The gods then weighed (*wogen*) their hearts to see if they were honest. Some people lied to the gods and said they were good, even though they knew that the gods would find out the truth. Why do you think they did that? Would you take that risk?



Personal connections?

3

Personal connections?

2

Personal connections?

1

Personal connections?

6

Personal connections?

5

Personal connections?

4



### Food for thought? 1

Ra did not want to use his eye to get rid of the evil people in the south, as it would burn all the land. Instead he created Sekhmet to kill the evil people in the south, but Sekhmet did not want to stop killing once she had started. What are your thoughts on this? Do you think Ra considered (*gedacht hebben aan*) the consequences of creating Sekhmet?

### Food for thought? 2

In *Tales of Ancient Egypt* a lot is said about 'good' and 'evil' when it comes to people, but not about the gods and goddesses. How would you describe the relationship between the gods and the people? What do you think it means to be a good ruler?

### Food for thought? 3

King Zoser is described as being 'a good ruler', but 'he did not build any temples to worship the gods'. To punish king Zoser, the gods withheld (*achterhouden*) food from all of Egypt for seven years. What does this say about Zoser and what does it say about the gods?

### Food for thought? 4

In the story, Set's son Anubis helps Isis look for the pieces of Osiris's body. Set doesn't want him to do this, but Anubis does it anyway. Why do you think he helps Isis?

### Food for thought? 5

The book gives a few endings to the story of Osiris in terms of what Isis does. In your opinion, which one fits better and why?

### Food for thought? 6

The story of Rhodopis (the girl with the red slippers) has been compared to Cinderella (*Assepoester*), because both stories include slippers that are lost. Do you think this is a fair comparison? How are the stories different?



Food for thought?

3

Food for thought?

2

Food for thought?

1

Food for thought?

6

Food for thought?

5

Food for thought?

4