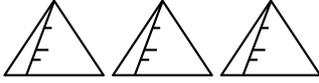


## The Embalmer



### **Level Three**

The Nile shimmers a muddy blue, and the bulrushes move like swaying dancers in the breeze that runs its lazy fingers through my hair. I feel blessed every time I walk by this life-giving source, this gift of water that moves through my land. I pause to watch an Ibis stalking the shallows, and silently thank this sacred bird. Another gift for us – the Ibis god of wisdom, Thoth, wife of Maat, preserves us all from plagues that could ravage us and bring nothing but death or famine.

A group of women are washing their clothes in the river, and they stop their labours to watch me respectfully as I pass. They know who I am.

They know where I am going. I head inland and join a flow of people - labourers who are heading to prepare the tomb, their skin roasted by the sun as they lead donkeys and their burdens onward. All are solemn.

Someone, somewhere, is wailing – a cry of grief.

The tent, the beautiful house, is set up and waiting for me. Inside it is cool and quiet, sheltered from the desert dust and the beating sun. Two men are standing watch inside, and I motion for them to leave, my gaze falling upon the body laid out upon the raised platform in the centre of the floor. The Pharaoh's son. I look at his strong features, his thick, dark hair, his youthful skin. A peace has fallen upon him, and now my work

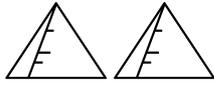
begins. A sacred journey awaits this young prince, and I must ensure he is ready.

I make a swift check of my equipment. Strips of linen are piled in a basket next to the body. I will not need these bandages for another forty days - the prince's body must be readied before this step. For now, I will need my oils, my natron salts, my tools for removing the vital organs. A hook for the brain. I carefully arrange the decorative canopic jars, the hawk for the intestines, the jackal for the stomach, baboon for the lungs, and human for the liver.

The bowl of sacred water stands untouched nearby, with which I will soon carefully wash the body. A collection of sacred amulets, scarabs and charms and the prince's finest jewellery are laid out on a mat of soft fabric. These will travel with the prince when his mummification is complete. He will need these objects in the afterlife. He was a good man, I think, as I look at his face. The gods will know this. He will pass Anubis' test, his heart will be as light as Maat's feather, and he will be welcomed into the afterlife by Osiris, and we will all rejoice.

I am comforted by this belief. My work is sacred, vital. I must help this prince on his final path, I must ensure his journey is smooth, that he has all he needs. This is my task, my calling, my obligation. The most important job of all. I place a kiss on the prince's forehead.

I am ready to begin.



## **The Embalmer**

### **Level Two**

The Nile River shimmers a muddy blue, and the bulrushes move like dancers in the breeze. I feel blessed every time I walk by this life-giving gift of water that moves through my land.

I pause to watch an Ibis bird in the shallow water, and silently thank it. It is a gift for us. The ibis god of wisdom, Thoth, wife of Maat, keeps us safe from illness and plague that could make us unwell or stop our crops growing.

A group of women are washing their clothes in the river, and they stop to watch me as I pass. They know who I am. They know where I am going.

I head inland and join a flow of people - workers who are heading to prepare the tomb, their skin roasted by the sun as they lead donkeys carrying their materials onward. All are sad. Someone, somewhere, is crying out – a cry of grief.

The tent, called the beautiful house, is set up and waiting for me. Inside it is cool and quiet, sheltered from the desert dust and the beating sun. Two men are standing watch inside, and I ask them to leave, my eyes falling upon the body laid out upon the table in the centre of the

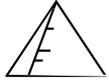
floor. It is the Pharaoh's son. I look at his strong face, his thick, dark hair, his young skin. He is peaceful, and now my work begins. A sacred journey awaits this young prince, and I have to get him ready.

I check the items I will need. Strips of linen are piled in a basket next to the body. I will not need these bandages for another forty days – other things have to be done before this step. For now, I will need my oils, my natron salts, my tools for removing the vital organs. A hook for the brain. I carefully move the painted canopic jars, the hawk for the intestines, the jackal for the stomach, baboon for the lungs, and human for the liver.

The bowl of sacred water is next to me, and I will use this to carefully wash the body. Sacred amulets, scarab beetles and charms and the prince's special jewellery are laid out on some soft fabric. These will travel with the prince when his mummification is finished. He will need these objects in the afterlife. He was a good man, I think, as I look at his face. The gods will know this. He will pass Anubis' test, his heart will be as light as Maat's feather, and he will be welcomed into the Afterlife by Osiris, and we will all be happy

This belief helps me. My work is sacred and important. I must help this prince. I must make sure his journey is smooth, that he has all he needs. This is my task. The most important job of all. I place a kiss on the prince's forehead.

I am ready to begin.



## **The Embalmer**

### **Level One**

The Nile River is blue with brown mud at the bottom, and the bulrush plants move in the wind. I feel lucky every time I see this gift of water that moves through my country.

I stop to watch an Ibis bird in the shallow water and thank it. It is a thin, white bird with a long beak. The Ibis god of wisdom is called Thoth and makes sure our food grows and stops us from getting ill.

Some women are washing their clothes in the river, and they stop to watch me as I go past. They know who I am. They know where I am going.

I walk away from the river and join lots of people – they are workers who are heading to get the tomb ready, and they have donkeys carrying their tools. They look sad. Someone I can't see is crying.

The tent, called the beautiful house, is set up and waiting for me. Inside it is cool and quiet, away from the desert dust and the hot sun. Two men are inside, and I ask them to leave, and I look at the body laid

on the table in the centre of the floor. It is the Pharaoh's son. I look at his strong face, his thick, dark hair, his young skin. He is very peaceful. The prince has to go on a special journey now, and I have to get him ready.

I check the objects I need. Lots of bandages are piled in a basket next to the body. I won't need these for another forty days – I have to do other things first. I will need my oils, my natron salts, my tools for removing the organs and a hook for the brain.

I carefully move the painted canopic jars, the hawk for the intestines, the jackal for the stomach, baboon for the lungs, and man for the liver.

The bowl of sacred water is next to me, and I will use this to carefully wash the body. Sacred amulets, scarab beetles and charms and the prince's special jewellery have been put on some soft fabric. These will travel with the prince when his mummification is finished. He will need these objects in the afterlife.



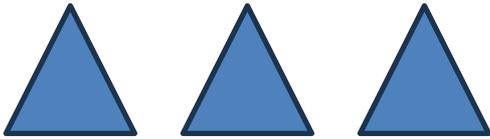
He was a good person, I think. The gods will know this. He will pass Anubis' test, his heart will be as light as Maat's feather, and he will be welcomed into the Afterlife by Osiris, and we will all be happy.

Thinking of that helps me. My work is very important. I must help. I must make sure his journey is easy, and that he has all he needs. This is the most important job of all. I kiss the prince's head.

I am ready to begin.

## Comprehension Questions – The Embalmer

### Level Three:



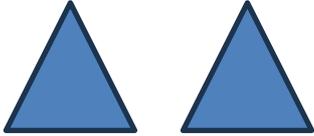
1. What does the Embalmer's job involve and why is it so special?
2. Why is the Embalmer grateful to see the ibis?
3. Why do you think the women washing their clothes watch the Embalmer "respectfully?"
4. Why do you think the labourers are headed to the tomb? What are they going to do there?
5. The Embalmer uses the word "sacred," several times. What do you think they mean by this word?
6. Why do you think it is important for the Embalmer to include charms and amulets, and the pharaoh's son's most valuable jewellery in the process?
7. The Embalmer mentions three Ancient Egyptian gods. What are they?
8. What do you think is meant by the donkey's "burdens?"

9. Canopic jars are where certain internal organs are placed after removal. Which organs are placed in which jars?

10. The Embalmer says the water of the Nile is “life-giving.” Why do you think this is?

## Comprehension Questions – The Embalmer

### Level Two:



1. What type of bird does the Embalmer see in the river?
2. Where are the workers going and why?
3. Can you list three items or tools the Embalmer needs to do their job?
4. What is the Embalmer going to use to wash the pharaoh's son's body?
5. What are the women doing in the river?
6. Fill in the blank. The Embalmer uses \_\_\_\_\_ salts.
7. Whose test must the pharaoh's son pass to enter the afterlife?
8. What is piled in a basket next to the body?
9. What is the tent called?
10. Who does the feather belong to?

## Comprehension Questions – The Embalmer

### Level One:



1. What colour is the Nile River?
2. How does the Embalmer describe the ibis bird?
3. What do the men in the tent do after the Embalmer arrives?
4. Who will welcome the pharaoh's son into the afterlife?
5. How many canopic jars are there?
6. Fill in the blank. The organs are placed in \_\_\_\_\_ jars.
7. How many days will it be until the Embalmer needs the bandages?
8. What organ will be placed into the baboon jar?
9. What type of beetle does the Embalmer talk about?
10. What is in the bowl?