

Chronicles of Stone: Set In Stone

Author: Vincent Ford

Synopsis

After a long journey marred by tragedy, Trei and his twin sister Souk finally arrive at the camp of the Northmen, also known as "Manhunters". Each has felt a calling to the tribe. Trei is convinced that it is his destiny to learn the secrets of the Northmen's weapons and teach them to his own tribe - The People of the Canyons. Souk is unsure of her calling but knows that she must accompany her brother.

The twins are received with suspicion at the camp of the Northmen. They narrowly avoid being executed upon arrival and gradually settle into camp life, ever aware of the mistrust that is cast upon them. Once Trei and Souk are amongst them they are surprised to find out that the Northmen are just like any other tribe. It is their lethal weapons that set them apart. The tribe is ruthlessly determined to keep their weapons a secret from their neighbours and will kill cold-bloodedly to protect their knowledge.

Accused as spies, the twins must struggle to gain the trust of a people who regard them with hate and suspicion. Trei manages to earn the right to hunt when he brings down a Mastodont that threatens the safety of a hunting party. Soon he is learning how to create the weapons that are so effective at killing - the weapons that will mean his own tribe will never die of starvation again. Trei soon becomes restless and starts to question Souk about when they will return home.

But Souk is unsure of what her future holds. She has fallen in love with a man named Dresh and feels unable to leave her lover. When tragedy strikes it becomes clear to Souk that her destiny lies with the Northmen. She is meant to negotiate a peace between her lover's people and the neighbouring tribes. Will Trei be able to make it home to the People of The Canyons with the Northmen's secrets or will he be killed as a traitor? How will he be able to leave his beloved twin behind?

Text Type

Set in Stone is the second novel in New Zealand author Vincent Ford's trilogy *Chronicles of Stone*. The novel is Ford's second for an older audience and with

strong male and female protagonists it will appeal to teenagers and adults of both genders. While the novel is a sequel, it easily stands alone.

The story is set in ancient times and was researched in the United States, while Ford was taking part in the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa. The story is extremely fast-paced and action-packed. Students will be motivated to read the next story in the trilogy because Ford leaves a number of questions unanswered at the end of *Set in Stone*.

Set in Stone is based on a North American Indian tribe called the Northmen. The story deals with a tribe that feels it needs to kill anyone that it sees as a threat to their way of life - anyone who learns the secret of their lethal weapons. Trei needs to use all of his considerable cunning and skill to infiltrate the tribe, gain their trust and learn the secret of their technology.

Souk's destiny is not so clear, however. She begins to make friends in the tribe and falls in love with a stranger to whom she becomes pregnant. When Souk's lover dies it becomes clear to her that she must remain with his people and help them achieve peace with their neighbours. She is a shaman with special abilities and is therefore important to the tribe.

The story is told in third person point of view but the reader is given clear insights into both of the main character's thoughts, feelings and motivations. Trei and Souk both face adversity and terrible loss in the story and must be resilient if they are to survive.

The reader learns about the skills needed to survive in this harsh environment as well as the weapons and traps used in ancient times. Themes include survival, rivalry between tribes as they fight for resources, ancient customs and traditions, family, love and loss, destiny and the pursuit of peace.

Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 5- 17), Chapters 3-13 (pp. 18-120), Chapters 14-25 (pp. 121-216) and Chapters 26-30 (pp. 217-275).

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of words and ideas presented in the novel. Discuss the setting of the story with students and consider how the time, place and

social situation of the story affects the action. Students should have a thorough understanding of the society created in the story; its customs, history, myths and positions within the tribe.

Have students make inferences and predict what will happen next in the story. They should examine the main characters, particularly Souk and Trei and discuss their actions, behaviour and motivations. Have them track the development of these characters as the story progresses. Encourage students to identify main themes and ideas.

Introducing the Novel

Have students study the front cover of the novel and read the blurb.

- What is a chronicle?
- How does the illustration on the front cover match the title of the story?
- When is the story set?
- What is the name of the tribe that the novel is based upon?
- Who are the main characters in the story?
- Why are members of the Northmen suspicious of them?
- What secrets are the Northmen trying to keep hidden from the neighbouring tribes?
- Why is Trei's dream of returning to his own people threatened?

Teacher reads Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 5-17) aloud. Students follow along in their books.

Comprehension Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 5-17)

- How do the tribesmen react when they find Souk and Trei? How does Souk convince them to take them back to the village so that their leader can determine their fate?
- What do we learn about Souk and Trei's reasons for wanting to join the Northmen in these chapters? What has happened to them during their long journey?
- Why is Trei so afraid when he sees the bear? What does Trei realise about the Northmen when he sees them kill the bear? What does the leader of the group mean when he tells Souk and Trei that "no one has lived" to betray their weapons?
- Describe the Northmen's village.

- Who is the leader of the patrol?
- Why do you think Souk wants Trei to “let her do the talking”?
- How is Souk able to overcome her physical and emotional pain?

Discussion

- How does Marko treat Souk and Trei? What does this suggest about his character?
- What do we learn about the twins from these chapters? What challenges have they faced? How have they overcome them?
- Make a prediction about what is going to happen next.

Students read Chapters 3-13 (pp. 18-120) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 3-13 (p. 18-120)

- Describe the Northmen’s main camp. How do the villagers react to the returning patrol? How are the villagers dressed? What features do the villagers have that distinguish them slightly from the People of the Canyons?
- How do the villagers greet Souk and Trei?
- Who does Marko take the twins to see when they arrive in the village? What reasons does Souk give him for wanting to join his tribe? What do Trei and Souk have to offer the tribe?
- Who is Sacha? What test does she devise for Trei? Why are the villagers so excited about the test?
- What is Sacha trying to make Trei confess to during the trial of truth? Describe the trial. How does the poison affect Trei? How does Souk help Trei overcome the effects of the poison?
- How does Trei pass the test? Why does Rajahn tell Souk that she has made a powerful enemy of Sacha?
- Who is Souk assigned to work with? How is she treated by the other women? What does she learn about the camp from listening to the women gossip? Why do the Northmen no longer attend meetings with other tribes?
- What work does Trei get sent to do? Who does he work with? Describe the two men. Who ordered the two men to keep an eye on Trei? What are they supposed to do if he tries to escape?
- What are the boys doing when Trei comes across them in the meadow? Why does Trei feel so embarrassed when he tries to join in with them?

- Who storms up to the group and orders them to stop? Why does he do this? What game is Trei forced to play with the men?
- What does Marko threaten to do to Trei if he touches their weapons again?
 - Why do the young men of the tribe avoid Trei? How is he treated by some of the older men? How does this treatment change Trei's personality?
 - What do Inung and Torm tell Trei about Raman?
 - What does Trei begin to do for Torm and Inung that makes him popular with the men? Why does Torm give him a knife to keep?
 - What qualities does Souk possess that make it easy for the women in the tribe to accept her?
 - Why does Souk feel so uneasy about being with the Northmen?
 - What skill does Souk have that the shaman doesn't? Why does her talent mean that she is increasingly in demand around camp?
 - Why does Souk believe that the Northmen are responsible for the death of Grala's husband and child? How does Shayen react when Souk tells her that her people are known as the Manhunters?
 - Why do you think Shayen approaches Souk and asks her more about their earlier conversation?
 - Describe Sacha's hut. What does it suggest about her as a person? What does Sacha tell Souk that she wants her to do? What do you think would happen if Souk refused this offer?
 - What part do Inung and Torm play in the buffalo drive? How does the village prepare for the hunt? How does Rajahn generate excitement for the hunt?
 - How do the hunters ensure that the bison head into the canyon? Why aren't they able to escape? Describe what happens when the hunters kill the bison. How does Trei feel about what he sees?
 - Why does the hard work begin after the animals have been killed? What parts of the bison does the village have use for? How does Trei help the villagers with their work?
 - Who does Trei meet at the hunt? What does he learn about him? Why is the man so likeable? What does he invite Trei to?
 - Why does Souk argue with Sacha when the shaman wants to give the dying man poison? Why is their little ceremony for his death?
 - Describe Souk's first meeting with Dresh.
 - How does Torm teach Trei to sharpen his knife? Why does Inung interrupt Torm when he starts telling Trei how to make a blade?
 - Why do the post-hunt festivities make Trei feel sad? Why does he wish they Souk stayed on the outer like him?

- Why is the march across the plains back to camp so difficult?
- What does Dresh have to agree to before Rajahn will allow Trei to accompany him on the bear hunt?
- Describe the vision that Souk has before the group leaves for the bear hunt. How does Sacha react when Souk tells her about the vision? Why do you think she reacts like this? How does the shaman prevent Souk from being able to warn Trei and Dresh?
- What does Dresh say to Trei when he approaches him on the second night of the hunt? Why does Trei feel unable to let his guard down around the young hunters?
- How does the hunting party catch the bear? What do they remove from the bear?
- Why are the hunters so excited about the prospect of bringing down a Mastodont? How do they go about killing their prey? Who is attacked during the hunt? Why is Trei such a hero? How is he injured? How do the other hunters react to Trei's actions?
- Why is Dresh adamant that the hunting party must return to the village as soon as possible?

Discussion

- Describe the twins' relationship. In what ways do they share a special bond? Describe their similarities and differences. What special talents does each one possess?
- Describe the Northmen. How are they similar to Souk and Trei's own people? How are they different? Why are they so suspicious of strangers? What do you think they would do if they knew that Trei wanted to steal the secrets of their weapons?
- How do the majority of the Northmen treat Souk and Trei? Who treats them differently? Why do you think this is?
- There are clearly defined roles for men and women in the village. Explain these.
- What interesting discovery do Souk and Trei make about the Northmen as they begin to live among them?
- Do you agree with Marta when she says that "knowledge can lead to change"? Explain your answer.
- Describe Sacha. Why do you think that she is so unpopular with many members of the tribe?
- Why do you think that Souk has been called to the tribe?

Students read Chapters 14-25 (pp. 121-216) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 14-25 (pp. 121-216)

- How does Trei try and comfort Strom? How do the hunters honour his death?
- Why is Trei so worried about the journey back to the village? How do Trei and Dresh ensure that the men will easily be able to build a fire at their next camp?
- Why does Trei offer to carry Strom's quiver despite his pain? What do his actions suggest about his character? How does Trei become separated from the rest of the group? Why is Trei so determined to stay alive?
- Where does Trei find himself after he falls down the slope? Why is this so fortunate?
- How does Trei manage to kill the bear?
- How does Souk feel when she sees Dresh return to camp? Why is she so interested in hearing Dresh's conversation with Rajahn? What does she overhear? What does Sacha accuse Souk of being when she catches her eavesdropping?
- Why is Rajahn so upset when he learns that Trei was carrying Strom's quiver?
- What is Souk's punishment? Where does Rajahn order her to live and what will her new job be? What does Rajahn need to find before he will decide if she is allowed to live?
- What is Dresh's punishment?
- How do the villagers stare at Souk when she is led to the whipping post? How does Souk feel about her punishment? Describe the epiphany that Souk has while she is getting whipped. Why is she so certain that Trei isn't dead?
- Why is Souk so shocked when she hears about Dresh's punishment?
- What difficulties does Trei face while he is staying in the den?
- Who patches up Souk's hut for her? Why is this such a meaningful gesture?
- Why does Dresh blame himself for what has happened to both Souk and Trei? What does Souk say to try and console him?
- How do Dresh and Souk bring comfort to each other? Why doesn't anyone in the village care that Dresh is visiting Souk at night?
- Describe Trei's reunion with Souk. Why does Rajahn ask the patrol so many questions about him? What does he learn?
- What responsibility does Rajahn give Dresh when Trei returns?

- Why is Trei's return a blow to Sacha's power?
- What does Trei tell Souk about his journey home? Why does Trei believe that the snowstorm was a blessing?
- Why are Dresh and Trei so uneasy in each other's company? Why does Dresh believe that Trei is behaving arrogantly? Do you agree with him? Why/why not? How does Dresh put him in his place?
- Describe the confrontation that Dresh and Trei have after practice. What do Trei and Souk discuss after Souk reveals where she was the night before the bear hunt? Why is Trei so concerned about his sister's relationship with Dresh?
- How does Trei repair his relationship with Dresh?
- How does Souk's relationship with Dresh change when Trei returns?
- What does Shayen reveal to Souk when she visits her at her hut? What advice does Souk give her?
- Why do you think Dresh chose not to join the patrols?
- Why is Trei frustrated even though he is learning how to use the weapons?
- Describe the stone-working shelter. What does Roap want Dresh and Trei to do in return for his services? Describe Roap. Why is he such a good teacher?
- What qualities does Trei exhibit as he learns how to fashion the tools? What aspects of his training does he find the most difficult? Why does he make himself as silent and inconspicuous as possible while he is learning?
- Why is Trei so unhappy about the return of the third patrol?
- How does Trei react when Roap asks him if he wants to learn to make the blanks? Why is Roap pleased by his enthusiasm? When does Trei realise that he has seen the whole process of making the weapons? What does he believe is the "real secret of the Northmen"?
- What does Marko insist that Roap give him? How does Roap respond to his demands? How does Marko react when he sees Trei working with the stone?
- Why does Souk feel nervous about being left alone while the third patrol is in the village?
- What does Souk learn when she again questions Dresh about his failure to join the patrol?
- Why does Shayen believe that she is responsible for losing her baby?
- How does Souk react when she sees that her hut is on fire? What effect does Dresh's death have on her?
- What shelter does Roap offer Trei? Why is Trei so worried about Souk?

- How does Taruth react when Trei and Roap try and trade with him for spear shafts? How does Roap convince Taruth to make a deal?
- What special gift does Roap give Trei when he completes his spears?

Discussion

- In what ways is life challenging for the Northmen? What challenges and dangers do they face? How do they overcome them?
- Identify examples in the story where Trei displays courage. What other attributes does he possess?
- Describe Dresh. What does Souk find so appealing about him? Why do you think he treats Souk and Trei differently from some of the other men in the village? How would Trei's life have been different if Dresh hadn't shown faith in him?
- Describe how Souk's relationship with Dresh changes her.
- Who do you think set fire to Souk's hut? What was their motivation?
- Why do you think Marko is so hostile towards Souk and Trei?
- At the end of this section Roap predicts that there will soon be trouble in the village. What do you think is going to happen?

Students read Chapters 26-30 (pp. 217-275) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension 26-30 (pp. 217-275)

- What helps Souk get through her depression? Who insists that she join in with the other women? How is this helpful for Souk? What does Souk mean when she says "it was as if loss was both a burden of women and a rite of passage"? What is significant about the way that Souk chooses the leather for Trei's quiver?
- Why does Trei leave the village and go into the plains surrounding the village?
- Why does Rajahn bring Souk to the meeting in the middle of the night? What advice does Souk give him? What does Souk believe is happening in camp?
- Why does Trei believe that it is time for them to return home? How does Souk respond to his remarks? Why do you think she seems so reluctant to return to her own people?
- Who interrupts Souk's conversation with Trei? Why is she so upset?

- How does Sacha react when Souk tells her that Grala means to poison Rajahn? Why do you think she reacts like this?
- Why does Marko want to see Rajahn dead? Why do you think Marko commits suicide?
- How does Rajahn test Sacha's loyalty? What reasons does she give him for her betrayal? Why does she continue to eat the poisoned food? What prediction does Sacha make about Souk?
- How does Rajahn use the corpses of the three dead to act as a deterrent to others who may want to betray him?
- What lesson does Rajahn's close brush with death teach him? What changes does he plan to make in the future?
- Why does Rajahn break up the third patrol?
- How does Trei prepare himself for his journey home?
- Why do you think Souk consults with Marta before she agrees to bless the site of Dresh's death?
- How does Souk convince Rajahn that her ideas about trying to make peace with their neighbours will be a positive thing for the Northmen?
- How does Trei act when he returns to the village to talk to Souk? Why is Trei so worried about leaving?
- What does Rajahn want Souk to do with the heads on the markers? Is this a good idea? Why/why not? What misgivings does Rajahn have?
- In what ways do Souk and Trei feel like they have changed since they began living with the Northmen?
- Describe Souk's journey towards the Mountain tribe. Why does Trei accompany her? How does Souk honour the skulls?
- Why does Souk refuse to leave before she returns the heads? Why is the patrol so cautious as they near Mountain tribe territory? How do they know when they are near a village? What do they do to let the villagers know that they come in peace? How does Souk draw the villagers out?
- Who does Souk recognise when she speaks to the Mountain Tribe? Why is she so worried that he will recognise her? How does Souk convince the tribe that they want only to establish a peaceful relationship?
- Who stops the patrol on the way back to their own village? Why does he want to talk to Souk and Trei? What offer does he make them?
- What startling announcement does Souk make to Trei? Why does she insist that her brother returns home? What deal does Souk make with Thrang to ensure Trei's safety? Why does Souk feel some anxiety about her brother's return home?
- How does Durin react when Souk tells him that Trei will remain with the Mountain Tribe? How does Souk stop them from killing her brother?

Discussion

- Identify the climax of the novel. Why is this event important?
- Identify a main theme in the novel and explain how it is developed by the author.
- Make a prediction about what will happen in the third novel in the trilogy.

Activities

Letter - Imagine that you are Trei or Souk and are living with the Northmen. Write a letter home to the People of the Canyons describing what has happened since your arrival, what you have seen and done; people that you have meet and your thoughts and feelings about being away from home.

Storyboard - Choose 10 important events that occur in the novel and illustrate them in a storyboard. Under each picture write a brief description about what is happening.

Oral Book Report - Write a review for *Scorched Bone* and present it to your class orally. In your review include information such as what type of book it is, a brief story outline, an analysis of the setting and characters and your personal opinion about the book.

Static Image - Design a static image that depicts one of the important themes presented in the story. You may wish to do a collage, use the computer or design a poster. Use words and images from the story to convey your idea.

Character - Describe Trei's actions and behaviour in a particular situation that occurs in the story. Justify or criticise his motives in this situation.

Poem - Write a love poem from Dresh to Souk.

Questions - Write 10 discussion questions for the novel.

Drama - Choose an exciting event from the story and write a script for it. Include a list of characters and stage directions. Practise your play and present it to your class.

Soundtrack - Imagine that this novel is being made into a film. Choose 5 songs for the soundtrack. Explain why you chose the songs and where in the film they will go.

Character - Complete a character report for a main character in the story. Include information about their attributes, important decisions that they make and how they develop and change as the story develops. Include 5 important quotes from the novel that back up your ideas.

Board game - Design a board game based on the novel. For every positive event that occurs, reward the player. For every negative one, penalise the player. Decorate the board with images and scenes from the story.

Writing - Explain how the novel would have been different if a certain event had occurred.

Writing - Write the first Chapter for the last novel in the *Chronicles of Stone* trilogy.

Notes written by Vicki Williams