

# A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

## THE BOY WITH THE BRONZE AXE by Kathleen Fidler



www.florisbooks.co.uk

### Themes/issues addressed in this book

Stone Age, family, Skara Brae, Orkney, friendship, jealousy, knowledge and learning, community, conflict, resolving conflict, wisdom

### Book Summary

Tenko, the strange boy in the strange boat appears one day just in time to save Kali and her little brother, Brockan, from drowning. Kali's family are indebted to him and accept him into their family and the Stone Age settlement of Skara Brae in Orkney. Not everybody is pleased, however. Tenko has a mysterious and precious bronze axe that some people covet, and they conspire against him. However, Tenko has brought new skills and knowledge to the community and he also has many friends, not least Lokar, the elder. Lokar tells the people to put their trust in Tenko, because he has foreseen that the settlement is doomed, and they will need Tenko to guide them in the future. Kathleen Fidler brings the Stone Age to life in a way that few children's writers have managed.

## BEFORE READING

### Group Activities

- Discussion: what do you know about the Stone Age? Why was it called the Stone Age? When was it, approximately?
- Discussion: where is Orkney? Have you ever been to Orkney or any of the Scottish islands? What is Skara Brae?
- Discussion: what is a community? Do you live in a community?

## AFTER READING (note, contains spoilers!)

### Individual Work

- Write a paragraph on the thoughts and feelings you had when:
  - a) Korwen tries to steal the bronze axe (chapter 2)
  - b) The whale is attacked (chapter 6)
  - c) Tresko wants to sacrifice Tenko (chapter 7)
  - d) The sandbanks destroy the settlement (chapter 10)
- Tenko has a valuable bronze axe. What is bronze? Using the Internet and your library try to find out what bronze is composed of. Write a list of ten things that you might make out of bronze.
- Think about Lokar the elder and how he settled the conflict in chapter 2. Do you think he was a wise man? Why? Try to find another example of his wisdom in the book that you can write about. Write at least four paragraphs on Lokar's wisdom.

### Group Activities

- Group activity: write the 'next after last' chapter. The book ends after the settlement is destroyed and the family decide to head north in the boats. What happens next, however? Where do they go? Divide the class into groups of about four. The groups should decide between them how their story is eventually going to end, and each person in the group should write about two hundred words, in sequence, on what happens next. They should take it in turns to read their chapters out.
- Group activity: think about how the people of Skara Brae had the most basic things to make useful and decorative objects. Using the following resources: wood, stone, shell, antler, sheepskin, and bone, decide how you would furnish a modern-day house with them. Can it be done? Think of all the things you would need, and all the things you would have to go without. Write a report on how easy/difficult it was.

(continued overleaf)

## KELPIES

### Series Summary

The award-winning Kelpies series is Scotland's favourite collection of children's fiction. Floris Books took over the list in 2001, republishing classic works by authors such as Kathleen Fidler and Allan Campbell McLean. Since then, we have continued to add to the series with a range of highly successful new Scottish novels for children. Of these, *Chill* by Alex Nye won a Royal Mail Award in 2007 and *Hox* by Annemarie Allan was nominated for a Royal Mail Award in 2008.

## CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS COVERED

### 5-14 Curriculum (Scotland)

Years: P4-P7

**Listening:**

Listening in Groups

Listening for Information, including instructions and directions

**Reading:**

Reading for Information

Reading to Reflect

Awareness of Genre

**Talking:**

Talking in Groups

Talking about Texts

Talking about Experiences, including feelings and opinions

**Writing:**

Functional

Imaginative

### National Curriculum (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)

Key Stage 2

**English: Reading**

Reading Strategies

Response to Texts, including analysing and evaluating

Reading for Information

**National Literacy Strategy:**

Text-Level Reading

Text-Level Writing

Vocabulary

- Class activity: visit your local museum to see whether they have any artefacts from the Stone Age. If you are fortunate enough to live in Orkney, you could visit Skara Brae and the Ring of Brodgar, or in Lewis, you could visit the Callanish Stones. Write a report on what you have seen and learned from your visit.
- Class discussion: Kali was chastised in chapter 2 for speaking in defence of Tenko because she is a 'woman-child' yet the male children are allowed to speak freely. Do you think this is fair? Why, or why not?

## Vocabulary

- Check you know what the following words mean (page numbers of example words in brackets):

beguiled (26)	catamaran (126)	comparative (162)	cringe (69)	dune (41)
earthenware (27)	falter (66)	flint (73)	gesture (110)	gully (14)
haft (35)	hesitate (45)	hospitality (138)	impede (144)	instinct (154)
kindling (170)	leverage (114)	pandemonium (99)	pigment (106)	placid (111)
pinnacle (132)	reef (132)	salutation (152)	shoal (91)	sinew (104)
smoulder (11)	tempest (158)	transfixed (53)	uncanny (153)	