

Circle of Dreams - Starweaver

Author: Linda McNabb

Synopsis

Zaine is a talented runeweaver. He has just finished rebuilding Willow Castle with the help of his father Davyn and Princess Maata. Now the trio are going to Land's End to visit Summer Castle to attend a meeting called by Prince Theodane to try and decide the rightful ruler of the country. There Zaine and Maata reunite with their friend Princess Guyan. Guyan is in mourning. It is a year since her sister Jelena was sent home to Zhan, and as Guyan has been banished because of fears that she will be a danger to her world, she worries that she will never see her again.

In addition to this, Guyan senses that there is something wrong in her world. She has seen too many shooting stars streaking across the sky lately. Each represents a world that the timeweavers and starweavers are looking after. When they shoot across the sky, it means that the world has reached a point where it no longer needs the timeweavers to manage time for it. However, with so many breaking free in such a short period of time, Guyan fears that the starweavers and timeweavers in her world are not tending to their tasks and the worlds are breaking free before they are ready. Soon, time in these worlds will slow down until it stops forever. It will not be long before Zaine's own world will be cast into the sky and time will cease to have any meaning.

The only way to try and solve this problem is to find the link to Zhan and travel there to see what is going on. Unwittingly, Maata comes to the rescue when she uncovers the hidden dream circle in the courtyard of the palace. When Maata and Tercel, another runeweaver, accidentally fall into the circle, Guyan and Zaine leap in after them. When they arrive in Zhan they immediately set out to find Guyan's father – the King – to find out what is going on. Jelena arrives soon after to greet the visitors and informs them that Guyan's father is very ill and his brother Eldric has taken over the throne.

Eldric is responsible for the catastrophe that is occurring. He has banned the timeweavers from tending the circles. He believes that the dragons should be doing it and that they are treating his people badly. The timeweavers are working on a personal project for him. When Zaine examines Guyan's father, it becomes clear that he has been poisoned and Eldric, who stands to gain the most from his brother's death, is clearly responsible. Eldric is furious that Guyan has come back

to Zhan after being banished and orders her to go back with her friends. Before they are able to return, Zaine's father Davyn, his mother Trianna, and Tercel's master Calard arrive in Zhan.

Eldric announces to the people of Zhan that he is planning to stop the sands so that they can travel above land and have room to live comfortably. At a meeting called by the dragons, Eldric is informed that each world that has broken free has damaged Zhan and now time is unstable. Determined to carry on with his plan, Eldric freezes the storm dragons, Jelena, Queen Mya and King Reko in a rune circle. He then has the timeweavers create a circle of dreams in which to imprison Guyan and the others. Eldric's plan goes awry when he falls into the starlink himself, along with Trianna. Left behind with the weakened runeweavers, Guyan and Zaine are faced with the challenge of fixing time in Zhan. If they fail, they will not only be responsible for the death of Zhan but many other worlds as well...

Text Type

Circle of Dreams, Starweaver is a fast-paced adventure fantasy novel. It is the third in a series and it continues the story of Zaine, a young boy who has powers as a timeweaver. In this instalment Zaine discovers that he is a starweaver, which means that his powers far exceed those of an ordinary runeweaver. Although the novel is part of a series, the story stands alone. All pertinent information from the first books is provided early on in the book for readers unfamiliar with the story.

The story has broad appeal and features strong male and female protagonists in Zaine and Guyan. It contains elements of the supernatural, which the reader learns as Zaine and Guyan overcome obstacles to try and fix time and restore power to the rightful leader in Zhan. The story allows the reader to escape into a fantasy world where characters have magical powers and anything is possible. The story leaves the reader wondering what further adventures Zaine will have now that he is discovering the true extent of his powers.

Themes include leadership, magic, bravery, friendship, destiny and the triumph of good over evil.

Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapters 1 (pp. 5-19), Chapters 2-9 (pp. 20-116) and Chapters 10-16 (pp. 117-195).

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of words and ideas presented in the novel. Have them describe the setting of the story and identify elements that help categorise the novel as a fantasy. Encourage students to study the main characters and track their development throughout the story. Students should make predictions about the story and be able to identify important themes and conflicts.

Introducing the Novel

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

- Who do you think the boy on the front cover of the novel is?
- This novel is a fantasy. What do you expect from books like this?
- What do you think a “Circle of Dreams” is? What is a “starweaver”?
- Why is the first part of the blurb in italics?
- What news does Guyan give about time? Who is the only person who can fix it?

Teacher reads Chapter 1 (pp. 5–19) aloud to the class. Students follow along in their books.

Comprehension Chapter 1 (pp. 5–19)

- What have Zaine, Davyn and Maata just finished doing?
- What are runes? What are they used for?
- Why is the trio travelling to Land’s End?
- Who is Trianna? How does she react when the group arrives?
- Why does Davyn suggest that Zaine stay away during the meeting?
- Who has called the meeting? What does Maata think that he will want to do?
- What present does Zaine make for Guyan?
- Who greets Maata and Zaine when they arrive at Guyan’s house? What does he tell them about the Princess?
- How long has Guyan been living in Zaine’s world? Why can’t she return to her home?

Discussion

- What do we learn about Maata in chapter one? How is she different from other princesses?

- How does Trianna treat Zaine? Why do you think she treats him like this?
- Why do you think Guyan is so upset?
- Predict what will happen next in the story.

Students read Chapters 2-9 (pp. 20-116) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 2-9 (pp. 20-116)

- How does Guyan react when Zaine gives her the present? What does she see when she looks into it?
- What does Guyan tell the others about the shooting stars? Why does she think that something is going wrong in her world? What is going to happen to time in their world?
- What does Guyan tell Zaine about the link to her world? Why does she hold little hope of being able to find it?
- What does Trianna want to do in the morning? Do you think she has grasped the seriousness of the situation? Why/why not?
- Why doesn't Guyan think that Zaine can fix the problem with time? Why can't she use her own runes?
- What will happen if Zaine tries the runes and gets them wrong?
- Why is Theodane adamant that the only way to choose a ruler is to have a contest? Who arrives at the Summer Castle with Theodane?
- Who arrives in the second carriage?
- How do the runeweavers react to Zaine and Guyan's appearance at the meeting? Why do the runeweavers assume that Zaine is responsible for time slowing down? Who comes to his defence?
- What feats has Zaine achieved?
- Why does Trianna think that crowning Maata might solve the problem with time?
- Why does Theodane claim the throne? Why are Zaine and Guyan so confused when they hear the song of the dragons?
- What happens to stop Theodane from taking over the castle? How does Zaine fix the problem? How does he feel afterwards?
- Where do Tercel, Zaine and Guyan find Maata? What does she uncover when he pulls on the vines?
- Why couldn't the storm dragons find the circle? Why isn't the circle working? How does Guyan fix it?
- Why is Zaine shocked when he looks into the circle? What is a dreamlink?

- How do Maata and Tercel end up in the circle? Why is it important that Guyan and Zaine follow them immediately?
- How does Zaine feel as he travels through the dreamlink? Why is he jealous of Guyan? Why is it important that Zaine remain calm and not show any fear? What materialises because of Zaine's fear? How does Guyan frighten them away?
- What does Guyan tell the group to think about as they try to reach Zhan? Why do they have so much trouble getting there?
- Who does Guyan tell the group that they need to find when they reach Zhan? Who comes to greet them? What news does she bring?
- How does Jelena travel safely through the sands?
- How is time different in Zhan to Zaine's world?
- Why is the dragon grateful to Zaine? What does he do to repay him?
- Why is it significant that the leader of the dragons dies?
- How do Guyan, Zaine and the others make their way to see the King? Why does Guyan warn them that they have to be careful? Who meets the group?
- What is a finder?
- Who is Dom's father? Who is Sy? Why did Sy convince his father not to let Dom learn any more runes?
- Why has Eldric banned the weavers from tending the circles?
- What does Guyan tell Zaine about where her people originally came from? Who rescued them? What did her people promise to do in return? What do Guyan's people hope to find?
- What problem do Guyan's people face in Zhan?
- Why do Zaine and the others let Jelena and Guyan go and see their father alone? Who is the only healer in Zhan? What does Zaine suspect has happened to the King? Who does he think is responsible?
- Where do Zaine and the others find Eldric and his sons? How does he react when Guyan tells him that her father is feeling better?
- What does Zaine overhear the runeweaver telling Eldric?
- What does Eldric want to do with Guyan? Why is he convinced that Sy can handle Guyan and her friends? Why does Sy become uneasy as he tries to find a starlink to send Guyan and the others into?
- Who does Zaine see in the last circle?
- How does Guyan distract Sy? How does Dom help them escape?
- What do the group use to protect themselves from the sand when they go to check on Davyn? How did Calard and Davyn end up in the circle of dreams? Who came through with them? What happened to her?
- How does Zaine feel when he enters the starlink? How does he find his mother? What are Trianna's fears? What does Zaine imagine when he

wants to return to Zhan? Why do Zaine and Trianna need to reach the door urgently?

- Why is Guyan so angry with Zaine?

Discussion

- Zaine is solely responsible for saving his entire world. How does this make him feel? What qualities and attributes do you think he will have to possess if he is to succeed? What might stop him from being successful?
- Zaine received a life-reading when he was a newborn that he believes was a sentence to a life of misery and rejection. Why is it often dangerous to believe prophecies? What effect can prophecies have on someone's life?
- If you were in a dreamlink, what would your greatest fear be? What is the best way to try and overcome a fear?
- Why do you think that Eldric poisoned his brother? What project do you think he has the runeweavers working on? What qualities should a good leader possess that Eldric does not?
- Describe Trianna's treatment of Zaine. How do you think this makes Zaine feel? What does the fact that he goes to rescue her from the starlink suggest about his character?
- What do you think is significant about the door that Zaine creates?
- Predict what will happen next in the story.

Students read Chapters 10-16 (pp. 117-195) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 10-16 (pp. 117-195)

- What does Zaine realise is happening when he looks up at the door? How does Zaine fix the problem? Why does he think that his life prophecy has come true?
- What does Sy do that makes Guyan say that "not all of his runes are drawn on"?
- Who makes the potion for the king?
- How do the people of Zhan react when Guyan, Zaine and Davyn turn up at the meeting? Why do they react like this? What announcement does Eldric make at the meeting? How does the crowd respond to him?
- What do Mya and Eldric argue about? Why is Eldric so angry when he sees Guyan and Zaine? How does he react when Sy comes back with the others?
- Why do you think Eldric is interested in talking to Trianna?

- What explanation does Eldric give King Reko for why the weavers haven't been attending the circles? What special job have they been working on for Eldric?
- Why is Guyan considered a danger to her world?
- What does the storm dragon invite the group to do? Why is this so unusual? How does the dragon treat Eldric? How does it treat Guyan?
- Why are the storm dragons so angry with Eldric? What shocking announcement does the dragon make about time in Zhan? What realisation does Zaine come to when he hears this message? How does Eldric react to the news?
- What does Eldric do to ensure that the dragons don't cause him any trouble?
- How does Guyan know that time is slowing down? What do the runeweavers do to try and solve the problem?
- Who saves Guyan from falling into the circle?
- How does Zaine know that the runeweaver's powers are fading?
- Where does Eldric plan to send the storm dragons?
- Why does Zaine get runes on his skin? Why doesn't he think they will be much good to him?
- Why is Eldric convinced that he must send Guyan and the others away? Where does he plan to send them? How does Trianna react when she realises that he means to send her too?
- How do Trianna and Eldric end up in the starlink? What does Zaine hope has happened to his mother?
- Why is Guyan convinced that they need to stop time? How does she plan to do this? Why is her plan risky?
- Why does Guyan insist that Zaine put a crown on too? What happens when they put the crowns on?
- What does Zaine see when he looks at the cross on Guyan's palm? What is he able to do with them?
- What solution does Zaine come up with to fix time? Why does he decide that they must fix the circles? Why is Guyan so daunted by this task? How do Guyan and Zaine fix the circles?
- Why is it impossible to know which world the circle will link to? Why do Zaine and Guyan decide to create as many as they can?
- How does Zaine feel when he realises that his mother made it through the starlink?
- Which circle do Zaine and Guyan complete to find Zaine's world?
- What idea does Zaine come up with to restart time? How do they feel when they realise that they have been successful?

- How does Calard react when he learns that Zhan no longer has a king or queen?
- Why is Zaine surprised when he passes through the dreamlink so quickly? What does he find when he reaches the world? What does his mother tell him has happened to Eldric?
- Why is Zaine convinced that the only way to free Guyan's family and the dragons is to destroy the circle? How does he free the prisoners? Who destroys the circle? How does the group get back to Zhan?
- What discovery does Zaine come to about the world that the group were sent to?
- How does time change when Zaine and Guyan fix the circles?
- Why doesn't Zaine want to tell the dragons who poisoned Reko? How do they react when they realise that it was Eldric? Why do they want to seek revenge?
- Where do some of the people of Zhan decide to return to? How does this solve a problem for the remaining people?
- Why does Zaine want to stay in Zhan? What skills does he have that will benefit the community?
- Where will Dom be living now that his brother has gone back to the old homeland?
- Why will Zhan need more starweavers?
- Why does Reko ask Zaine to stay in Zhan? How does Zaine feel about his offer? What does Reko tell Zaine the drawback is? Why doesn't Zaine see this as a problem?

Discussion

- Find examples in the story that suggest Trianna's attitude towards her son might be softening.
- What do you think might have happened in the story if Zaine hadn't been able to use his runes?
- What do you think will happen when Maata, Theodane and the others arrive home?
- I identify the climax of the story and explain why this event is important.
- How does Zaine's character develop and change as the story progresses?
- What is the main idea of the novel? How is this theme developed by the author?

Activities

Board Game – Design a board game for *Starweaver*. For every positive event reward the player. For every negative event penalise the player. Illustrate your board with symbols, pictures and images from the story.

Static Image – Design an alternative book cover for *Starweaver*. Write a paragraph explaining why your book cover is effective at encouraging people to read the book.

Static Image – Choose a main theme from the story and design a static image that conveys this idea. Include a quote from the text that helps to reinforce the theme.

Writing – Write an alternative ending for the story.

Writing – Write the first chapter for the next book in the series.

Character – Complete a character profile for Zaine. Include his name, age, family, personal qualities and characteristics, motivations, important actions and quotes that illustrate interesting aspects of his character.

Drama – Choose an important event from the story. Write a script that depicts the event. Remember to include a cast of characters and stage directions in your script. Practise your play and present it to the class.

Writing – Write your own life-reading and present it attractively.

Plot – Design a storyboard that illustrates 10 important events from the novel in the order that they occur. Under each picture write a brief summary of what is happening.

Plot – Choose an important event from the story and explain how this event affected the outcome of the story. If this event hadn't happened how might things have turned out differently?

Notes written by Vicki Williams