



MICHELLE PAVER

WOLF BANE

Teaching
Resources

FIRST LOOK

Before reading the book, look at the design of the front cover, and the blurb on the back.

DISCUSS: What sort of book is this? What does the phrase 'creator of legends' imply? As this is the last in the *Wolf Brother* series, what expectations do you have for the novel?

OPENING

Look at the maps of Forest, Seal and Kelp Islands. What draws the eye? Think about boundaries and natural landscapes.

DISCUSS: Where do you think the story might be set? Which territory looks most dangerous? From assessing the maps, what was most important to the clans in where they chose to settle?

Read the first part of Chapter One until '*The Demon settles to wait.*' (Page 2)

DISCUSS: Why is it printed in italics? Why does Paver choose to start with the Demon? How does Paver build tension in this piece? How does the piece make the Demon seem menacing and powerful?

ACTIVITY: Sketch your impressions of the Demon. What do you know about him so far?

Read the rest of Chapter One:

DISCUSS: What is your first impression of the novel. When is it set?

DISCUSS: How does Paver set up the premise of the novel? What dangers and conflicts do you envisage? What do you notice about the language used? Why has Paver used the word 'earthshake'?



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ACTIVITY: Make a list of any new vocabulary you come across. Find definitions for the words.

WRITING STYLE

Read Chapter Two.

DISCUSS: How does Paver keep the tension rising in the chapter? How does she end the chapter?

ACTIVITY: Continue the story from the end of the chapter. You may wish to continue writing in Wolf's point of view, or you can switch to Torak and Renn and imagine what they might do next.

'Cold rasped Torak's lungs as he crawled outside. The sky was still dark and the First Tree was shimmering, its luminous boughs turning the snow faintly green. The drift ice in the bay had congealed to a patchwork of pale floes seamed with dark new ice.' (Page 31)

ACTIVITY: Paver uses powerful imagery, interesting vocabulary and figurative language to set the tone or mood of her narrative. Take three pages from the book, and give examples of each, explaining which mood she is setting.

'This wasn't *land* he was standing on, it was a lump of Bright Hard Cold –'
(Page 17)

Reread pages 16-17.

DISCUSS: How do the passages written from Wolf's point of view differ from the text written from human point of view? One way is to use a large number of 'sensory' descriptive names for things, such as 'Bright Soft Cold,' 'Fast Wet' etc. Can you find more in the book?

ACTIVITY: Can you make up your own wolf-speak for natural objects? Try and



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describe the following in wolf-speak – sunrise, oak tree, rose, field, ocean, stars, wind? Now try modern objects, such as tap, teacup, phone, car.

DISCUSS: Which is easier to do – the natural worlds, or the modern objects? The narrative of *Wolf Bane* is in three narrative strands: that of Torak and Renn, Wolf, and Dark.

DISCUSS: How does this affect how you read the book? How easy is it to navigate the different strands?

ACTIVITY: Compare two of the POV (point of view) narratives. This may be Torak and Renn, Dark, or Wolf. What makes each distinctive? You may wish to lay out your findings in a table. There are also parts written from the Demon's point of view. These are in italics. (Page 1, Page 189, Page 206)

DISCUSS: Why does Paver choose to do this at these moments in the novel? What is the meaning of having the Demon connected with 'ice'? And why does the Demon 'hate trees'?

The action in *Wolf Bane* is fast and pacy. 'The Forest had disappeared. And the wind was still blowing him further and further over the Great Wet.' (Page 17)

ACTIVITY: Sum up the main action in each chapter. Can you weave the narrative using the game, 'fortunately, unfortunately?' Eg. Fortunately, Wolf was rescued by a Tailless, unfortunately he was trapped by her clan.

DISCUSS: Why does Paver create these ups and downs? What effect does it have on the reader?

SETTING AND ENVIRONMENT

'reindeer-hide parka,' (Page 3)

'Slipping off her mittens, Renn wrapped Naiginn's coiled hairs in a scrap of bast from the murdered birch and stowed them in her medicine pouch.' (Page 5)



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DISCUSS: How does Paver make what's prehistoric and remote from our time more accessible and relatable?

'The world of Torak and Renn is that of six thousand years ago.' (Page 255)

'Nine days into the Moon of Roaring Rivers' (Page 3)

'Three moons since the disaster,' (Page 3)

DISCUSS: How did people of 6,000 years ago distinguish different time periods?

ACTIVITY: Six thousand years ago is hard to grasp as a concept. Taking a long piece of paper, make a timeline of history. How many significant events can you add? Are these all recent? When would your great-great grandparents have been alive? Insert natural world events too, such as the rising sea levels of 6500 BC.

DISCUSS: Why don't we keep time by the moon anymore?

ACTIVITY: See if you can work out how many moons old you are? Take note of the moon each night for a month. Can you see it every night? How does it change shape? Why?

'Egg Dawn, when the World Spirit turns from a woman with red willow-branch hair to a man with the antlers of a stag. Renn liked Egg Dawn. The clans had feasts, and Mages collected crossbill eggs and –' (Page 79)

'A dangerous time when darkness and light are evenly matched.' (Page 178)

DISCUSS: Why did Torak and his peers have festivals such as Egg Dawn? What is the role of festivals today?

ACTIVITY: If you could create a new festival or celebration day, what would it be and when? How would it be celebrated? Does it have anything to do with nature? Create a presentation explaining your ideas.



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NAMES OF PLACES

Without written language, names of places were oral only. Look at some of the names of places in the novel, such as Elk Valley.

DISCUSS: Why were they given those names?

ACTIVITY: Examine the names of places in your local geography. What are the houses or streets named after? Does local nature play a part?

WEATHER AND LANDSCAPE

'eerily still beneath a heavy slate sky' (Page 9)

'their snowshoes nightmarishly slow.' (Page 10)

'the breath of the World Spirit closed in around them, its freezing whiteness so thick that Torak couldn't see his outstretched hand.' (Page 12)

'And now with the frost-fog came snow, softly and inexorably obliterating the trail.' (Page 12)

DISCUSS: Why would weather have been so important to everyday life 6,000 years ago?

ACTIVITY: Write your own story in which the weather and environment dictates the action. For example, pace may be slower in extreme heat.

'In summer they would have been able to hear the roar of the rapids at the Neck, but now Elk Valley was sunk in the hush of winter.' (Page 12)

DISCUSS: Why were the seasons so important to Torak and his contemporaries?

ACTIVITY: Take a seasonal soundscape. Step outside and listen carefully. Make a note of the sounds you can hear in your environment. Which are natural and which man-made? Will any of these sounds change in a different season?



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ACTIVITY: Pick a natural landscape outside and take a photo of it every month at the same time of day. What seasonal changes can you observe over a year?

DISCUSS: Do the seasons affect modern-day life?

ACTIVITY: Make a calendar of foods grown in your country by season. Now compare to food available at your local shops. How many more varieties are available?

Read through the description of the sea seen by Torak as he spirit walks on page 57-58. Now read Chapter Thirty on page 242.

DISCUSS: How does Paver make descriptions of the natural world feel sensual?

ACTIVITY: Write a poem inspired by her descriptions of the forest or the sea.

CHARACTERS

Wolf

Read Chapter One.

DISCUSS: How is Wolf first introduced? What characteristics can you discern? How does Paver make Wolf human-like and relatable but also an authentic animal? Is Wolf predator or prey? What contradictions are there in his character?

'Wolves talk with their ears, tails and bodies as much as with their voices,'
(Page 14)

'His tail was up, his muzzle relaxed. This told Torak Naiginn couldn't be anywhere close.' (Page 142)

DISCUSS: When do humans talk with their bodies rather than with their voices?

ACTIVITY: Communicate your emotions to a friend or classmate without using your



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voice. Which gestures or body language will you use?

RESEARCH: Read about wolves' behaviour and body language here <https://wolfwatch.uk/our-wolves/wolf-facts/> and find a video to watch them.

'Wolf smelt pine trees and moss and deer, wolverine and squirrel – but the scents were subtly different from those he knew, and with a pang he realized that this was not *his* Forest.' (Page 72)

DISCUSS: How does Paver show Wolf's vulnerability in a new environment? Which dangers does this present for Wolf?

ACTIVITY: Have you ever entered a new environment and not known how to behave or fit in? This might be a new school or new club. How did it make you feel? Create a mind-map of your emotions. How did you overcome initial feelings of vulnerability?

Torak

"This horn – and the spirit of she who made it – keeps you steady." (Page 32)

DISCUSS: Do elements of Torak's personality become unsteady as the novel progresses?

ACTIVITY: Is there an object that keeps you 'steady'? What is it? Why do young children in particular attach themselves to a blanket or soft toy. Identify an object that helps to ground you and explain how in a paragraph of writing.

'No human feeling, no sense of right or wrong.' (Page 4)

"He's a demon, Torak. You're human." (Page 48)

'Because despite Naiginn's demon souls, he was still a man.' (Page 149)

'Torak found that he simply didn't care. Was it because he didn't have his medicine horn? Or had he always had this ruthlessness inside him, a dark seed



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waiting to grow.' (Page 148)

"Evil exists in us all," Fin-Kedinn had told Torak once. "Some fight it, some feed it. That's how it's always been." (Page 149)

'He blew out a long breath, and looked suddenly more like himself. Not some bare-chested, wild-eyed madman she barely recognised.' (Page 165-166)

'She thought about the different Toraks she'd seen over the past few days; the wild-eyed killer who'd attacked Naiginn with alarming savagery, and the boy she loved, who'd just been kind to an unhappy little girl.' (Page 187)

DISCUSS: Does Torak ever behave more 'demonic' than 'human'? What makes us human rather than demonic? Is it the sense of right and wrong?

ACTIVITY: Draw a silhouette of Torak and fold the page down the middle of his body. Now separate his words and actions into 'right' and 'wrong', or 'good' and 'bad', and feature them on the two sides.

DISCUSS: Does everyone sometimes behave a bit 'good' and a bit 'bad'?

"Only a demon kills without reason," growled Torak.' (Page 4)

DISCUSS: Why do you think Paver describes Torak as 'growling'? What else in the text makes Torak seem a fitting companion for Wolf as well as for Renn?

Read the passage on page 49.

DISCUSS: What causes Torak to resort to violence? And what stops him? Now read page 57, and then pages 69-70.

DISCUSS: How does Paver explore the vulnerability of her characters? When does Torak feel vulnerable, when Wolf, when Renn? Do they help each other?

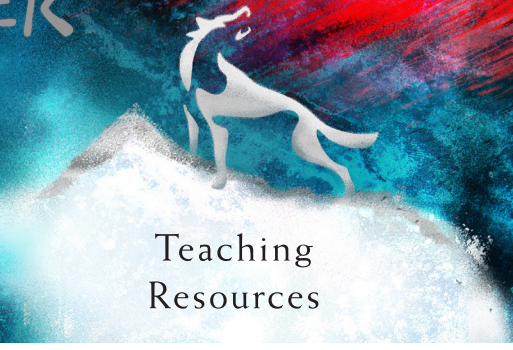
Torak has the ability to spirit walk. Re-read pages 57-59

ACTIVITY: Create a film director's package of this scene. Include camera directions and soundtrack.



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ACTIVITY: If you could spirit walk, which animal would you choose and why? Write a descriptive passage, exploring the world through that animal's eyes. Remember to utilise all the heightened animal senses you would have: 'He was a wolf – hunting Wolf, and his thunderous heart was ablaze with the ruthless urge to kill.' (Page 61)

DISCUSS: Which animals is Paver referring to as 'wolves of the wet'? Why does Paver particularly use the word ruthless here? How does it link to her descriptions of Torak when he isn't spirit-walking?

Re-read Chapter Twenty starting on page 160. How does Paver depict the fight between Torak and Naiginn?

DISCUSS: What do their actions say about their personalities?

ACTIVITY: Re-create a moment from the fight in a freeze frame. What does the moment you have chosen tell your classmates about the fight?

'Torak knew what he had to do. He would put in at the north bank just long enough to let Wolf and Renn ashore, then head back across the river and go after Naiginn.' (Page 192)

DISCUSS: At the climax, Wolf, Renn and Torak have big decisions on what to do to conquer Naiginn. Debate what you think each character should do.

ACTIVITY: Create a conscience alley by separating into two teams to voice your opinions on Torak's options.

Renn

'In the next valley to the south, Renn, studying the tracks Torak had found, caught a shiver of malice on the wind and lifted her head.' (Page 2)

ACTIVITY: Write a character description of Renn using evidence from the first two chapters. You may wish to illustrate your description.

"You left me to save Wolf." (Page 71)



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'If he kills Wolf, Torak will never forgive me.' (Page 167)

DISCUSS: Does Renn think Wolf is more important to Torak than her? Do you? What are each character's priorities?

ACTIVITY: Write a charm as if you are Renn to express your wishes for the future.

"Keep it safe," said Torak. "And don't tell Renn!" (Page 32)

'He spreads discord between us like a stain.' (Page 152)

DISCUSS: How fragile is the relationship between Renn and Torak? Identify moments of tension or teamwork in the text. How does Paver make the reader root for them as a couple?

'Putting a fist to his breast, he raised his staff to her in blessing. "You be careful up there. And, Renn...May the guardian fly with you."' (Page 202)

ACTIVITY: What does Fin-Kedinn mean by this? Tracing details of their relationship, write a letter to Renn from Fin-Kedinn before he dies. What would he say to her/wish for her future?

Dark

'He wondered how it was possible that in less than half a moon this Sea-eagle boy should have become so familiar to him – and so necessary.' (Page 100)

Read pages 28-30 and 51-54.

DISCUSS: How does Paver portray the growing relationship between Dark and Kujai? Does it develop how you would have predicted?

ACTIVITY: Using evidence from the text, create diary entries for Dark in key moments in *Wolf Bane*. What does he confess about his feelings to a diary and when?

ACTIVITY: Using evidence from the text, create Top Trumps for the main characters, including Wolf, Torak, Renn, Dark, Kujai, Fin-Kedinn, and the Demon.



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You may choose more. Rate their power, skills, kindness, stability. What other attributes could you use to rank them?

THEMES

Natural World as Resource

Food

ACTIVITY: Which types of food can you find in the text? Do any of these sound like anything we eat today?

'They had a swift yet strengthening daymeal of giant scallops, bashing them open with rocks and munching the sweet, tender flesh raw.' (Page 77)

'The sea-wrack was crunchy and popped saltily on Dark's tongue.' (Page 100)

'Besides, the food was delicious. There were clams steamed in their own juices, stone-fried turbot and tender crabmeat slathered in hot seal oil; sweet black cakes of crisp dried rockweed; and a wonderfully refreshing orange mash of sea buckthorn berries.' (Page 123).

DISCUSS: Although most of these foods may sound alien, how does Paver make them sound delicious?

ACTIVITY: Create a restaurant review of made-up food. Use language to make your imaginary food sound delicious. In her Author's Note on page 255, Paver explains how she too has eaten kelp, dulse, ulva, sugar kelp and more.

ACTIVITY: What's the most unusual food you have eaten? Can you describe what it was, where you ate it, and what it tasted like?



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Shelter

'Like all forest people, Torak and Renn always carried what they needed for hunting, fire-making and sleep.' (Page 12)

DISCUSS: How does this differ from life today? What would you need to carry with you today in order to survive?

"Over there." Torak pointed at a line of low, turf-covered mounds near the Forest. "They live underground. Climb in through the roof." (Page 118-9)

Paver explores many different shelters for the characters in *Wolfbane*, from a cave to a nest in a tree, underground shelters, overhanging rocks, or 'man-made' canoe or reindeer-hide shelters. This is indicative of 'people on the move'.

DISCUSS: Which people are 'on the move' today? What do they use for shelter?

ACTIVITY: Which type of shelter in *Wolfbane* appeals to you most? Write a persuasive paragraph, using evidence from the text, on the best shelter.

ACTIVITY: Make your own natural shelter outdoors. You may want to use this guide to help you https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-06/SURVIVAL-SHELTER_0.jpg

Tools and tool making

In *Wolfbane*, Paver makes reference to many tools that the characters craft from organic materials, such as animal skin and bones, plant fibres and wood products.

'Picking up Fin-Kedinn's knife, he turned it in his fingers. It was made of red deer antler, the haft wound with sinew for a sure grip, the blade fitted with sharp flakes of dark-grey flint. Like everything the Raven Leader made, it was simple yet highly effective.' (Page 96)

'Elk bone is hard and splinters to very sharp points, he split a couple of ribs with a rock and they settled down to make knives.' (Page 142)



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'Good for gouging, he thought grimly.' (Page 142)

DISCUSS: Are the tools in the novel good representations of their owners?

ACTIVITY: Make a list of the different products the characters make in *Wolfbane*, such as arrowheads, nets, and knives, and the materials they are made from. Can you draw what they might have looked like? Compare the materials used today to craft knives. Is anything the same or similar?

DISCUSS: In Torak's time, crafting tools from organic materials was a life skill. What are considered life skills today? How do they differ depending on where you live in the world?

"I learnt by watching Fa. He's the best canoe-maker in the clans." (Page 26)

Read pages 26 to 29 on crafting a canoe.

ACTIVITY: Following the information in the text, write step-by-step instructions for building a canoe. Remember to use the imperative. You may want to illustrate your instructions.

ACTIVITY: Research which trees are used today for different wood products. Which trees make paper, which furniture? What other uses do we have for wood?

Medicine and Poison

The hunter/gatherers relied on the natural world for food and shelter, but it also provided medicine and poison. 'The plant's sinister hooded flowers.' (Page 13)

DISCUSS: What is wolfbane? Why does Paver use it as her title?

ACTIVITY: Make a poster or leaflet showing various poisonous plants. What does wolfbane look like? What are the uses for these plants today? Find pictures, name and label your plants with their historic and modern uses.

'She'd tried willow bark and pounded juniper berries...but nothing had



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worked...Hurriedly she applied a poultice of crushed sorrel root, then a soft pad of horsehoof mushroom tied on with buckskin.' (Page 32-3)

"I've *heard* of purple earthblood but I've never seen any." (Page 30)

DISCUSS: What is earthblood? Without modern medicine, how did Renn know which plants might help her?

ACTIVITY: Research natural remedies that are still used for medicinal purposes today. Write a prescription, explaining how to use your natural remedy.

Respect for the Natural World

'Pines marched down to the white snake of the Elk River far below.' (Page 9)

'She was so powerful that her breathing in and out made the tides. If she was pleased, she sent whales and seals to be hunted. If not, she sent storms that ravaged camps and dragged fishing boats to their doom.' (Page 36)

DISCUSS: Why does Paver use personification and zoomorphism in her depiction of the natural world?

'Branches snagged their gear and tugged at their hair, making every step a struggle.' (Page 78)

"I think the Forest brought us here for a reason." (Page 154)

'Nanuak: the raw power that pulses through all living things.' (Page 153)

DISCUSS: What do we call The Nanuak? Does the natural world have the ability to communicate?

"Only a demon kills without reason," growled Torak.' (Page 4)

"He'd killed a porpoise. He'd eaten the head and left the rest to rot!" "Now do you understand?" Renn said to Chinoot. "Only a demon would violate the Pact." (Page 134)



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DISCUSS: Why would killing have been a natural thing at this time in prehistory? What reasons would Torak have for killing? What is 'The Pact' that is referred to on page 4 and page 134?

ACTIVITY: Devise a modern day 'pact' between humans and the natural world. You may wish to design it onto a poster or placard.

'All along the frozen rivers the clans had planted spears on the ice in readiness: when a spear tilted, they would know the river was beginning to wake. And if a storm in the Mountains sent a surge of meltwater that risked a flood, they had hollow logs ready for drumming the alarm.' (Page 177-8)

DISCUSS: Did the people of Torak's time work with the natural world more than we do today? How do ecologists and meteorologists predict weather patterns today?

ACTIVITY: Create a project around a natural disaster. What do we understand of how and when natural disasters might occur before they happen? Eg. Tsunami warnings, predictions of volcanic eruptions. You may wish to do this on Powerpoint using photographic evidence and expert opinion.

Adaptation to Environment

'They'd been given over-parkas and leggings of light waterproof gutskin, fish-skin gauntlets lined with reindeer hide, and thigh-length seal-hide boots. To shut out the glare, Torak wore his eyeshield of pale polished antler...' (Page 45)

DISCUSS: How do Torak and Renn learn from animals and adapt to the different environments they encounter?

ACTIVITY: Choose an animal or plant that lives in an extreme environment. Which tactics/functions have they evolved to survive in that environment? Make a poster to illustrate your chosen living thing. Even today, humans wear different materials to survive in hostile environments.

ACTIVITY: Draw a person prepared for one such environment – high altitude, deep sea, extreme heat or cold, space landscape. Label the modern equipment they would



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need. How much of this comes from natural resources, or is learned from animal behaviours?

ANIMALS IN THE NATURAL WORLD

'The shore was busy with oystercatchers pecking clams, eagles and gulls squabbling over crabs, and agile little turnstones racing up and down to avoid the waves.' (Page 103)

'he smelt badger and hare, elk, marten, deer.' (Page 138)

Whether on land or sea, Paver highlights the sheer abundance of wildlife in *Wolfbane*.

ACTIVITY: Choose an animal that Paver mentions and create a charcoal artwork representing the animal. Is it a solitary animal or one that travels in a group? Make a fact sheet about one of the animals mentioned in the text. Are any extinct?

"'best tracker in the Forest.'" (Page 13)

'a neat pile of droppings,'

'claw-marks on a tree trunk,'

'a single paw-print.' (Page 79)

DISCUSS: Why was it so important for hunter/gatherers to recognise signs of animals? How do we track animals today?

ACTIVITY: Make your own footprint trap in the playground or garden <https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/Footprint%20trap.jpg>

'And a small half-grown tailless was sprawled on her belly, trying to dig him out.' (Page 80)

Wolf is rescued from the quicksand by a female Tailless.

ACTIVITY: Research your local animal rescue. Which animals need rescuing in your neighbourhood and from what? What techniques does the rescue centre have for saving the animals?



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Animal behaviour

'The Sea wolves were astonished: whales never attacked *them!*' (Page 62)

'*The demon is hunting you,*' Torak said urgently. *You must not attack!*' Wolf glanced at him, his amber eyes puzzled. Doubtfully he swung his tail. *But hunting demons is what Wolf is for.*' (Page 140)

Under certain circumstances, the animals in *Wolfbane* change their natural behaviour.

DISCUSS: How likely is this? What do you think makes animals change their behaviour?

RESEARCH: Find an example of a pack of animals behaving differently from normal. What precipitates this change?

KINSHIP AND CLANS

Clans

Groups of people in *Wolfbane* are organised into clans, such as Willow Clan, Sea-eagles, Ravens, Whale Clan.

DISCUSS: What can you tell by their names? Examine again where on the maps they can be found. Why do you think this is? How do people group themselves today?

ACTIVITY: The clans in *Wolfbane* have their own leaders, rules and communities. To which clan would you prefer to belong? Create a guide to your chosen clan. Include style of dress, type of shelter and activities, community rules, etc.

'All had the sharpened fangs and narrow red features of the Kelp Clan,' (Page 112)

"These people are *weird.*" (Page 117)

"Our ways are not your ways." (Page 123)



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DISCUSS: How important is it to listen to stories from other cultures/ways of life?

ACTIVITY: Find a modern example of people who live in a different way from you. Write an information sheet explaining to them how you are different from them. This could include the way you dress, what you eat, what you believe etc.

Tribe Rules

“That killing your bone kin is forbidden by clan law?” (Page 34)
'even if it meant killing him without warning, which would be breaking clan law.'
(Page 148)

DISCUSS: Why is it important to have rules and laws in society, even if it is clan-based rather than society-wide?

ACTIVITY: Imagine you have your own tribe. You could base this on your family or friends. Write five rules for your tribe that represent your value system. You may wish to draw a map of your territory, based on the maps at the beginning of the book.

Kinship/Outcasts

'What mattered most to the Kelps was kinship.' (Page 172)

Renn's recognition of this fact allows her to think the Kelps might feel empathy for Wolf missing his pack/his kin.

DISCUSS: What is meant by kinship? Why would it have been so important then? Paver contrasts this sense of kinship with being 'outcast' or 'lonely' in the novel, both Dark's feeling of loneliness and Renn and Torak's wanting to save the other from the fate of being outcast.

'They knew he was worried but they couldn't understand why. For that he needed a human friend.' (Page 86)

DISCUSS: How important is it to have human companionship?



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ACTIVITY: Write a story about friendship.

"If Kujai's father had been born a Swan like me, they'd have abandoned him in the Mountains just because he doesn't look like everyone else."

"That's what people did in the old times. Some clans haven't changed since then, some have." (Page 97)

DISCUSS: Is it important to look like everyone else? Is it important to evolve ideas and rituals? Can you think of a society-wide idea that has changed in your lifetime?

"No one's ever had a Mage from a different clan. I'm proud of that."

"Have you ever regretted it?" "Not for a heartbeat." He paused. "You'd make a good Leader too." (Page 97-98)

Read the whole of Chapter Twelve, starting on page 94.

DISCUSS: How does it show Fin-Kedinn's leadership qualities? Do you think Dark would be a good leader?

ACTIVITY: Create a list of leadership qualities. Can you think of any modern-day leaders who possess these qualities?

'When he killed Naiginn he would be outcast for ever, and if he tried to see her she would be outcast too, cut off from Fin-Kedinn for the rest of her life. He couldn't do that to her.' (Page 192)

DISCUSS: As Torak faces the possibilities of the consequences of his actions, what would you do? Should the rules on outcasts be changed in certain circumstances? Do we have modern-day outcasts?

Intuition/Magecraft

'While Torak laid his palm on the tree-trunk and quietly asked the Forest to help its souls find a new home, she stroked the otter's rich fur and bade its spirit be at peace.' (Page 5)



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'White elks are rare, and to see one is a bad sign.' (Page 35)

DISCUSS: Paver makes superstition commonplace in the novel. Why do you think she does this? Why do Torak and his contemporaries believe in spirits and demons?

'Squinting in the sun, Torak spotted Renn and their friend Dark, the Raven Mage. They were high on the headland overlooking the bay, helping Watash the Sea-eagle Mage do yet another finding charm.' (Page 19)

DISCUSS: What is a Mage? What would be a modern equivalent?

Read pages 236 to 241, which includes the procession for Fin-Kedinn's death.

"He knew we'd want something of his when he was gone, and he made sure that we got it." (Page 240)

DISCUSS: Why are rituals at life transitions important? How important is it to have an object from the person who has died?

DISCUSS: Today, people make 'wills' to leave behind the things they treasure for family or friends. What is your most treasured possession and who would you leave it to?

ACTIVITY: Think about the rituals we have today for births, weddings and deaths. Create a ritual to celebrate a birth or wedding in Torak's time. What materials would you need? Perhaps you could write a poem or song?

ENDING

'*Wolfbane* is the ninth and final book in the classic series that began with *Wolf Brother*.' (Page 253)

DISCUSS: How does Paver end the novel? Is it befitting as the ending to an entire series? How does it make you feel? Compare with other series endings, either from books or television.

Lastly, read the Author's Note on page 255.



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DISCUSS: How important is it for an author to experience some of the events she writes about?

FURTHER READING

The Chronicles of Ancient Darkness 1-8, by Michelle Paver

The Snow-Walker's Son, by Catherine Fisher

The Lost Words or *The Lost Spells*, by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris

When We Became Humans: Our Incredible Evolutionary Journey, by Michael Bright and Hannah Bailey

Utterly Dark and the Face of the Deep, by Philip Reeve

A Wolf Called Wander, by Rosanne Parry

The Last Bear, by Hannah Gold

Stig of the Dump, by Clive King