

Welcome!



Thank you for downloading this Reflective Reading resource pack to accompany the novel *The Chessmen Thief* by Barbara Henderson.

We really hope you enjoy reading and sharing Kylan's adventures in Viking Scotland!

Here are some useful links:

Book Trailer of The Chessmen Thief

<https://youtu.be/-RPYhufskCY>

Look Inside Ch1-3 The Chessmen Thief

<https://b2l.bz/Cykt3T>

Barbara Henderson is also available for author visits and school events.

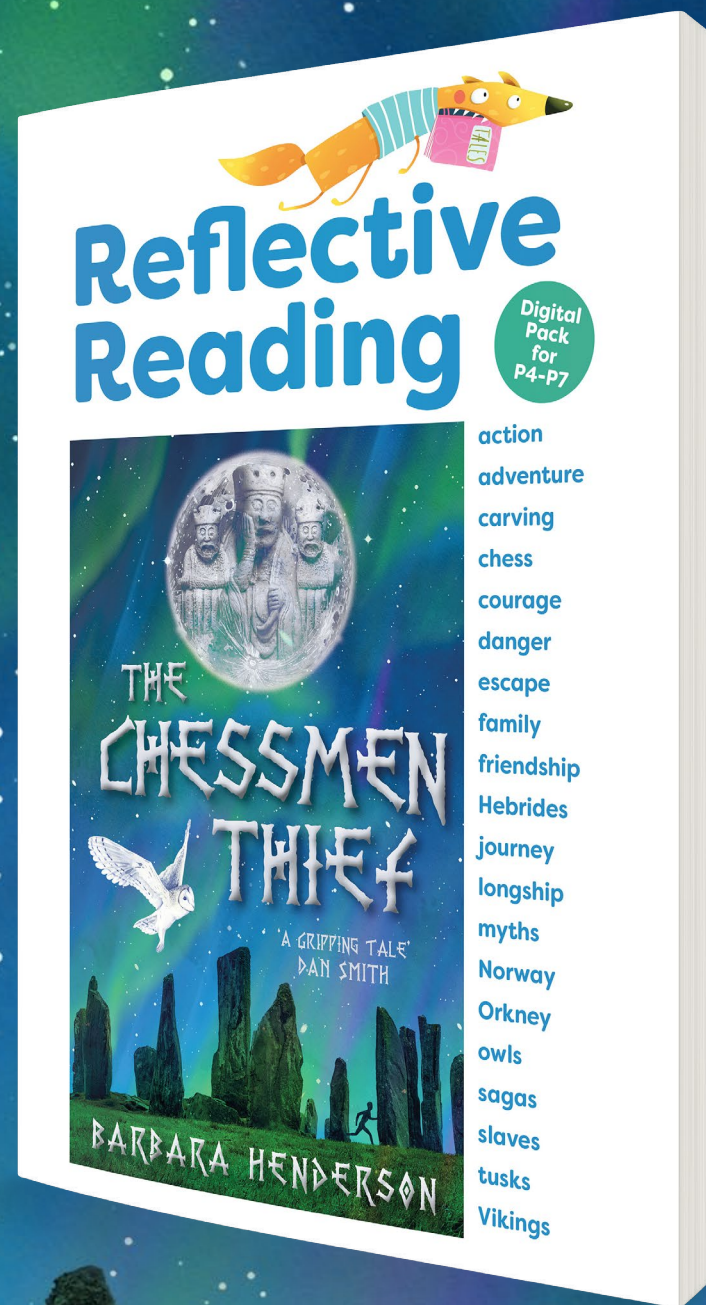
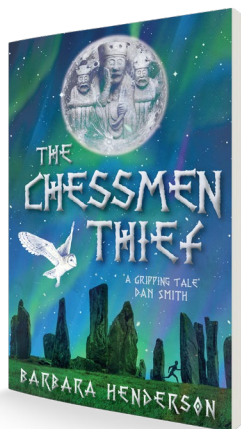
Email: scattyscribbler@gmail.com

Web: barbarahenderson.co.uk

Twitter @scattyscribbler

Instagram: @scattyscribbler

FB: @barbarahendersonwriter



READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch1: Begin a **Character List** in your jotter with a one line description or fact about each one. (Leave a few lines between each one so that you can add further info as you read.)

Ch2-4: Update your **Character List** to include the new characters throughout the book. Match them to the following traits: **nervous, aggressive, interfering, confident, powerful, powerless, deceitful.**



CONNECT 4

Ch1: The carvers use walrus ivory. Nowadays, the ivory trade is strictly regulated. In what ways do humans today still use/exploit/hunt animals?

GROUP
CHAT

Ch1: Kylan is a thrall. This means he is a slave. Do slaves still exist today? Take a look at <https://tinyurl.com/4tyn276u> and discuss your findings.

EXPLORE SOME MORE

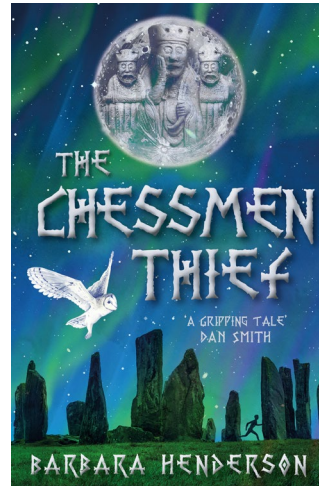
Ch2: Page 5 includes the phrase '**Gunnar's voice drips with honey now**'. What type of **literary device** is this? What does it suggest about the way the master carver is speaking? What does it tell us about the importance of the visitor?

Ch2: Page 9 '**Both our waters are muddied**'. What type of **literary device** is this? What do you think Kylan means by this? Explain your answers.

READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch1-4: In your group, discuss and write a short and snappy summary of chapters 1-3. Use the question headings **Who? What? Where? When?** and **Why?** to help you make notes under each one.

Now use your notes to write a paragraph about each chapter.



Reflective
Reading

CHAPTERS 1-4



INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch2: The opening pages introduce the **first-person narrator**, Kylan. On page 7 Kylan solves a problem—how does he do this?

Ch1-3: These early chapters make reference to Kylan's 'plan'. What do you think he is planning? Discuss in your group and give reasons for your choice. What would you do if you were in Kylan's shoes?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Who is your favourite character so far? Explain your answer.

Who is the most powerful character? Who is at the bottom of the heap and has least power? Does this change how you as a reader feel about the characters? Are you drawn to powerful or less powerful characters?

INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch4: On p17 Kylan '**scrambles**' after the man. What does this suggest about the way he is moving and how he is feeling?

Can you think of other words or **synonyms** the author could have used instead? Use a **thesaurus** if you need help.

CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

On A3 paper, research and draw a detailed MAP of Norway, Shetland, Orkney and the Hebrides including Lewis and Harris. Use an atlas and the internet to help you.

This way you can plot and follow Kylan's journey (& the chess pieces) as you read.

READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch5-8: Update your **Character List** to include any new characters in these chapters.

Ch7: (p38) The woman refers to Kylan as a '**raw talent**'. Explain in your own words what this means.



INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch5: '**Old Erik nods, satisfied, if not wholly**' (p20) Why do you think Erik is not fully satisfied? Explain your answer.

Ch6: Look at the last sentence of Chapter 6. How do you think each character in the workshop is feeling at this precise point? Give reasons for your answer.

EXPLORE SOME MORE

Ch5: The Vikings loved telling tales about warriors. A particularly fierce warrior was called a **berserker** (p24). Find out what the word means.

Nowadays, we value people who can keep their temper in check. Now, with a partner, list three strategies for staying calm when you feel angry.

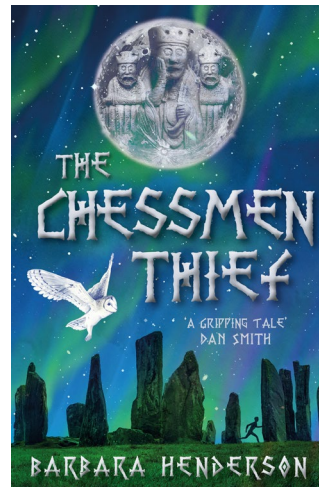
CONNECT 4

Ch6: Kylan is surprised to see women in the workshop.

Are there jobs today where women are unusual? Or jobs where men are unusual? Are you okay with this, or do things need to change?



Discuss in your group and/or as a class.



CHAPTERS 5-8



REFLECT AND RESPOND

Ch5-6: Do you feel sympathy for anyone in these chapters? For whom? What are the reasons why we may feel sorry for them?

Ch6: Why is it so unusual to have women in the workshop? Explain your answer.

Ch7: Does Margret's reaction on p36 surprise you? Why/why not?

EXPLORE SOME MORE

Ch8: '**Hope has clawed its way into my heart and made its home in it.**' (p40)

What **figure of speech/literary device** is this? Is it effective? Why?

Ch8: The word '**clatter**' in on p42 is an example of **onomatopoeia**. In your group, make a list of other words which imitate the sound of what they are describing.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Ch8: How do you think Jarl Magnus is feeling when he asks for forgiveness in the Cathedral. What do you think he has done?

Ch5-8: What do you like/dislike about this book so far? Give reasons for your answer.

CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

In Ch6, Margret calls Gunnar 'Gunnar the Knife'. Vikings LOVE nicknames. Some famous ones are Erik Bloodaxe, Harald Bluetooth, and Ivar the Boneless! Choose something about yourself that you like, or perhaps something that you are good at, and make yourself a nickname. You could be Sam Swift-swimmer! Or Izzy Raven-Hair! Or perhaps Ellie the Chatterbox. Now write your nickname in RUNES. (see additional RUNIC ALPHABET sheet)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ
M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ
Y	Z	TH	EE	NG	EA	ST					
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ					

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ
M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ
Y	Z	TH	EE	NG	EA	ST					
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ					

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ
M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ
Y	Z	TH	EE	NG	EA	ST					
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ					

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ
M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ
Y	Z	TH	EE	NG	EA	ST					
Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ					

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Ch9: Do you think Kylan's answer to Jarl Magnus on p45 is a good comeback? Why/why not?

Ch9: *'His dark, unfathomable eyes have found me, like a key finds its lock'* (p48)

Is this an effective ending? What type of *figure of speech/literary device* is this?



READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch9&10 Treasure Hunt!

Find 3 ways the author shows us that Jarl Magnus is angry? What techniques are used? (p43 & p45)

Find a simile on p48.

What colour is Kylan's hair? (p49)

READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch10: The Jarl *'bellows'* his words into the workshop. What does this mean? Can you think of *synonyms* (other words which mean the same thing)? Make a list in your group.

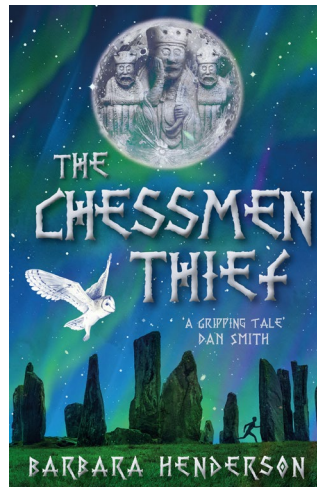
Ch10: Kylan gives Eric *'a watery smile'*. Is Kylan happy or sad? Discuss in your group before writing your answer in your jotter.

EXPLORE SOME MORE

Ch11: Using information from the text, draw a picture of the *skald* and/or his story *or* make a *sketchnote* of a Viking feast and what it includes.

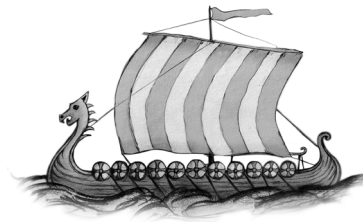
Add labels, words and quotes to support your illustration.

(Google images of sketchnotes if you've never done one before.)




Reflective
Reading

CHAPTERS 9-12



CONNECT 4

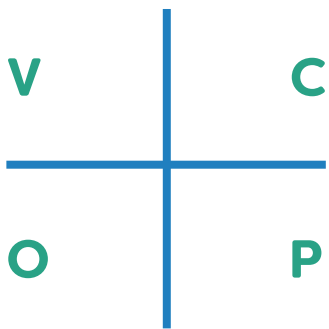
Kylan is about to go on an unknown journey. Can you describe a time you went on a similar trip—perhaps on holiday or a school trip? How did you feel?

GROUP
CHAT

How do you think Kylan will be feeling about joining the crew on the longship?

EXPLORE SOME MORE

VCOP Hunt



INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch11: (p53) Margret insists that Kylan comes along to present their work. What does this say about her attitude to Kylan?

Ch12: This chapter's title is *The Eternal Farewell*. Why is it eternal?

Ch12: How is Old Erik feeling at the end of this chapter? Give reasons for your answer.

CREATE SOMETHING GREAT


Create an application to join the Archbishop's Crew.

Viking Sailor Job Application: please include:

1. Name (Make it a Viking-sounding one!)
2. Age
3. Current job
4. Your skills and experience—why would you make a good member of the Archbishop's crew?
5. Personal statement—why do you want to join the Archbishop's crew?

CONNECT 4

Ch13: 'Countless times, I give thanks for God's gift of the journey—for seeing, feeling, hearing and tasting things I have never done before.' (p68)

What things would you like to see, feel, or taste in your lifetime? Write a short paragraph about your hopes. 

READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch13: 'and at a comely price too.' (p66) Sum up what Jarl Magnus is saying about the sails.

Ch14: What good will it do the raiders to throw 'weighted hooks' across or to ram Kylan's ship? (p72)

REFLECT AND RESPOND

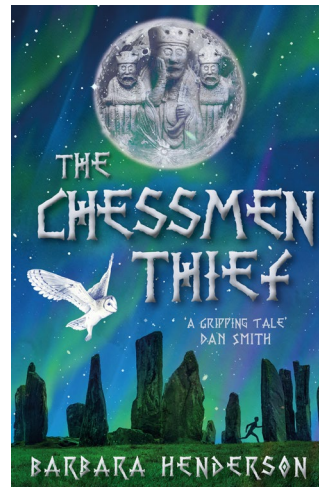
Ch13: The word 'raiders' is repeated three times on pages 68 and 69 (Ch 13). Why does the author do this? Is the **repetition** effective?

Ch14 & Ch15: Do you find chapters 14 and 15 exciting? Why/why not? Discuss with your group and explain your answer.

INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch13: Look at the title of Ch14. Based on this, can you **predict** what may happen in this chapter?

Ch14 ends on a **cliffhanger**. What do you think will happen next? Do you like **cliffhangers** in books, films or TV?



CHAPTERS 13-16



CONNECT 4

There is a lot of **tension** in these chapters.

Can you think of other stories, films or TV programmes where a lot of **tension** is created and you couldn't bear to watch or find out what was going to happen next?

GROUP CHAT

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Ch15: On the bottom half of page 76 find: 2 **similes**, a **metaphor**, effective use of **repetition**

Ch15: Why does the author use **CAPITALISATION** and **italics** in this chapter? What effect do they have?

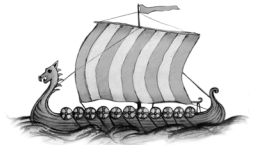
EXPLORE SOME MORE

'Bishops,' I mumble under my breath.
'What?'
'Nothing,' I hurriedly add.'
Why is Kylan so secretive here? (Ch16 p84)

'She drops the fashionable French word into the Norse language like a stone into soup' (Ch16 p85) type of **figure of speech/literary device** is this? What does it tell us about Ingirid?

CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Viking ships and shields are described in these chapters. Design, draw or make your own Viking shield or design, draw or make a model of a Viking longship with all the shields lining its side.



<https://www.hobbycraft.co.uk/ideas/kids/how-to-make-a-viking-longboat>

EXPLORE SOME MORE

Ch17: Sensory Search! Good writers use all the senses to describe scenes and bring them to life. In your group, make a list of all the important things that Kylan:

- sees
- hears
- smells/tastes
- feels



CONNECT 4

At the end of Chapter 17, Kylan has to pretend to be confident even though he is not. Can you think of a time when you had to do that? What strategies can help to look and sound confident? Upright stance? A clear audible voice? Eye contact? What are your ideas?

GROUP
CHAT

EXPLORE SOME MORE

Ch18: Choose five **adjectives** to describe Sven Asleifsson from this chapter.

Ch18: Find an example of **alliteration** in the last paragraph on p98. Is this effective?

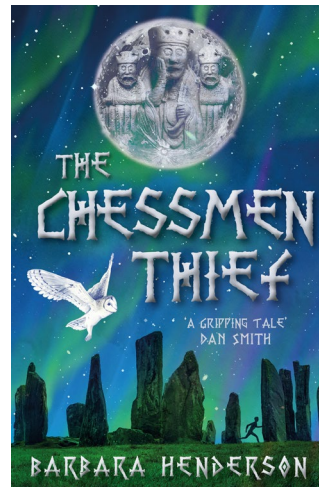
Look at Ch18 p97. Do you believe in hunches and gut feelings? Should we pay attention to these things?

READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch19: Describe the atmosphere at the beginning of this chapter.

Ch19: '**silent as a cat**': Can you think of three alternative **similes** to describe Jarl Magnus's quiet movements?

Silent as a... Quiet as... Stealthy as...



CHAPTERS 17-20



REFLECT AND RESPOND

Write a 'postcard review' for *The Chessmen Thief*, like the ones you see in bookshops. Give three reasons to read it, or your opinions about the book. Use the brief plan below:

Intro sentence

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Conclusion



READ AND UNDERSTAND

Choose one of this week's chapters.

Come up with a new chapter title for your chapter.

Using **Who, What, Where, When*, Why, How** write a short summary of it.

INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch20: '**There is no time. Don't even think about it. Delay will mean certain death.**'

Kylan is talking to himself in this interior monologue (p104). Can you explain why he is tempted to stop and speak with Ingirid before he leaves?

Ch20: Why does Kylan disobey the order (p103)?

CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Watch the short Viking Saga films. Choose one in your group; download the scripts and prepare a short performance.

- Odin creates the world
- Freya and the Goblins
- Thor and the Giants
- The Apples of Iduna



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/20stJyBvh9mv7kpSVgDfKPw/viking-sagas-age-7-11>

READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch21: Explain in your own words why *'all the sleeping bags are out on the deck'* (p107).

Ch21: Write definitions for *'stealth'* and *'brutality'*, both words are used to describe Sven Asleifsson (p107).



INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

How do you feel when reading the last sentence of Chapter 21?

When Ingirid calls the hero *'Kylan No-one's Son'* do you think she is disrespectful? Do you think you respect certain people more because of their name or title? Give examples in your group.

READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch22: Jarl Magnus is amazed that Kylan risked his life to save the chess pieces.

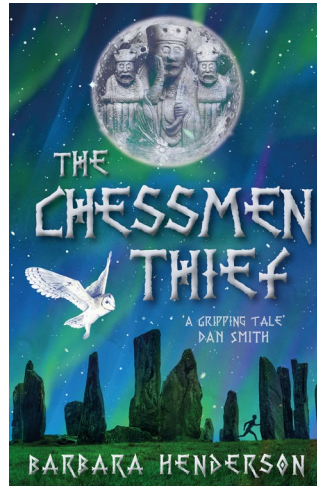
Kylan made it back to the ship. But what could have happened to him instead? Make a list.

Do you think Kylan was brave or foolish to go back for the chessmen? Explain.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Ch23: *'The Swallower'* and *'The Sea Witch's Wheel'* (p119) Which one of the names do you find the most powerful? Why? Can you think of any whirlpool names of your own?

Ch24: We meet Lord Ljotolf here. Do you like him? Give reasons for your answer.



CHAPTERS 21-24



CONNECT 4

Kylan is thinking of 'sinister' creatures in the water. Why do you think that people are so terrified of creatures lurking in the sea? Discuss in your group.

GROUP CHAT

Thinking of books & films, make a list of fictional creatures or characters that live under the sea.

INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch22: *'The sky lightens with promise.'* (p113) Explain what this phrase may tell us about how Kylan is feeling.

Ch23: What does Kylan mean in the section about *'St Peter's Gate in Heaven'* (p117) Sum up in your own words.

Ch24: p. 125: *'I see the brief flash of silver pass from the Archbishop's hand into that of the leader.'* What is happening and why?

EXPLORE SOME MORE

Ch23: TENSION: Find ten words or phrases in this chapter which make the story tense.

Ch23: 'Minds wander; eyelids droop.' Are these short sentences effective? Why/why not? Write 2 pairs of sentences in your jotter to describe what's happening in your class now.

CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

You have now seen all the black and white chapter heading illustrations by artist Sandra McGowan. What other images would you have liked to be featured in the book?

Choose an item/place/animal/character—and sketch it carefully in pencil then outline in black pen. Create a class gallery of your work.

READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch25: *'I eye the copper box.'* (p133)
How do you feel about this? Is it a good ending to the chapter? What is Kylan going to do?

Ch25: The author uses a technique called **dramatic irony**, where the reader knows more than one of the characters.
Find where this is used.



INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch26: Why does Kylan decide he needs to steal the chesspieces? What reasons does he give?

Ch26: *'They are as much mine as the Archbishop's.'* (p134) Do you think this is true? Explain your answer.

CONNECT 4

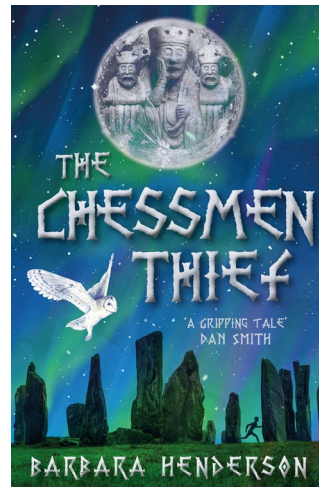
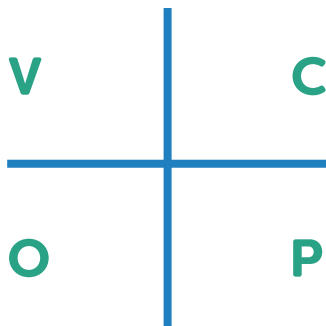
'Do not steal' is one of the Ten Commandments in the Bible.

Why might someone be tempted to steal something? Can stealing ever be justified or is it always wrong? Discuss your thoughts in your group, then as a class.

GROUP CHAT

EXPLORE SOME MORE

VCOP Hunt



CHAPTERS 25-28



CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Kylan is chased by the Vikings in these chapters.

Imagine you are being chased by something terrifying. Write a short paragraph describing how you run and move to get away. Use all your senses to bring the scene to life. How do you feel? What can you see? What does fear feel like to your body?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

When Kylan is kidnapped to be a slave, he is told: *'No seven-year-old should need his mother anymore.'*

Is this true? Why/why not?

What do parents or carers provide for their children? Do we ever stop needing them?

INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

Ch28: What is the atmosphere in the feasting hall before Kylan gets there? How can we tell? (p145)

Ch28: Does Ljotolf think Kylan can win the game of chess on p145? Give reasons for your answer.

CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

'I have made my bed. Now I must lie in it.' This saying ends Ch26. Decide what it really means (you may find it helpful to use the word **consequences**).

Research and make a list of other **proverbs** and sayings. You could even research some from other countries! Make a poster of your favourite **proverb** for a class display.

INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

There are only a few chapters left. What do you think will happen? Will it be a happy ending for Kylan? Why/why not?

Ch29: What word on p151 means *laughing loudly*. Can you find it? Using a *thesaurus*, list other *synonyms* for *laugh*.



READ AND UNDERSTAND

Ch30: Kylan says: '*I can't abandon my mother, sir.*' (p160) What does the word *abandon* mean? Explain in your own words.

Ch30: '*Blade meets blade. Fist meets skin, blood meets bone.*' (p159) Is this better than simply writing '*There is a fight*'? What *techniques* are used?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Ch30: Do you think Kylan should let Ljotolf win? Why/why not? (p156)

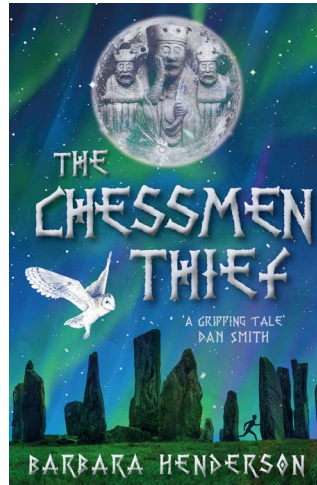
Ch 31: '*We approach the doorway like a stag approaches a stream, hearing the wolves howl.*' (p163) Can you tell how Kylan is feeling from this *simile*?

INFER WHAT'S NOT THERE

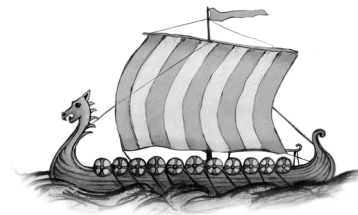
Ch32: '*Here!*' (p169) Why does Kylan throw the wood?

Ch32: Find an example of *alliteration* on p 169.

Ch32: Why is Sven Asleifsson so dangerous in this chapter? Remind yourself of what a *berserker* is by looking it up, if you can't remember.



CHAPTERS 29-END



CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Imagine you are the cover designer. Design a new cover for the book.

Imagine you are the author, write a new *blurb* for the back of the book.

Imagine you are the publisher, come up with a new *title* for the book.

EXPLORE SOME MORE

Ch33: This chapter opening contains two *similes*. Re-write the first three sentences on p171 replacing the *similes* with your own original ones. Share as a class.

Ch33: The barn owl appears again. Do you think this is a good or a bad sign?

Ch33: Write a definition of *redemption*.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

Do you think the *epilogue* is a fitting end for the story? Are you satisfied by the ending? Why/why not?



Find and note *definitions* for the following:

- *epilogue*
- *prologue*
- *dialogue*

CREATE SOMETHING GREAT

Write a letter or an email to the author (scattyscribbler@gmail.com) to tell them what you enjoyed about the book and/or to ask any questions you have about the story or about being a writer. **OR**

Compose a short tweet review for the book and share it with the author if you can on Twitter @scattyscribbler.