

FOR VISUAL READERS
TOON BOOKS®

The Secret of the Stone Frog

by David Nytra

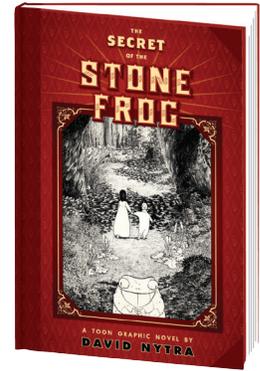
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Guided Reading Level =K

Lexile Level = GN 220

by Julia Phillips,

TOON Books' Deputy Editor



ELA COMMON CORE STANDARDS

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Ask the students to describe the characters that Alan and Leah meet. Who was the nicest? Scariest? Funniest? Have the class support their opinions with specific visual and textual examples. Then have students pick their favorite sequence of events. What can we tell from the words and images? Talk about the difference in gathering information from text versus from an illustration.

**RL.3.1,
RL.4.1**

Ask students if the book reminds them of any stories they have previously read. Bring up stories like “Hansel and Gretel”, “Alice in Wonderland” or the comic “Little Nemo”. Have students discuss the relationship between Alan and Leah.

**RL.3.2,
RL.4.2**

Describe the different personalities of Alan and Leah. How do they react to things that scare them? What happens because of their different personalities?

**RL.3.3,
RL.4.3**

Look at the buildings on pages 70-71. What are they thinking about the chase that is occurring?

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

Ask students what in the story is larger than normal. Explain how these images contribute to the strange setting of the story, and the sense that Alan and Leah do not know where they are.

**RL.3.7,
RL.4.7**

This book ends with a three-page wordless sequence, the last panel of which is a stone frog fountain. What relationship do students think the stone frog at the end has to the ones that give directions? Which does the title refer to?

Have your students investigate myths, stories and other graphic novels with similar themes. Look especially closely at the classic comic “Little Nemo” by Winsor McCay. Throughout the novel, Alan and Leah both express the desire to return home. What other novels or myths also address the theme of “returning home”? How are these different or similar?

**RL.3.9,
RL.4.9**

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Have students look at page 22. Alan is literally “eating his words”. Then have the students look at page 33, where one character describes Alan’s speech as a “mighty roar”. Explain that the description is nonliteral, but evocative of a lion.

**RL.3.4,
RL.4.4**

Have the class find a small story within the novel. Ask students to paraphrase the story. Call attention to how each panel shows one event or action in the story, and together these panels create the story. Show how the smaller sections of the stories add up to the novel. Call students’ attention to the special features of the comics form, including panels, gutters, and speech balloons. Ask them to note moments in the story when a structural element of comics is disrupted, like on pages 19-22 or pages 70-71.

**RL.3.5,
RL.4.5**

Describe to students the “fly on the wall” point of view sometimes used in third-person narratives to record observations rather than describe feelings. Can they think of other stories that use the same “fly on the wall” approach?

**RL.3.6,
RL.4.6**

SPEAKING AND LISTENING / WRITING

Split students into small groups and assign each different dramatic sequences from the book (ex. visiting the Beekeeper). By choosing characters and reading dialogue aloud, students can create a Readers Theater. In each group, one student can serve as a narrator, describing the scenes that are wordless. All group members should contribute to the narrators’ descriptions by pointing out what details from the scenes they think are most important.

**SL.3.1,
SL.3.4,
SL.4.1,
SL.4.4**

Ask students to write a short narrative describing what fantastical worlds they’ve seen in their dreams. How do their dream worlds differ from the real world? Have students exchange their narratives and comment on each others’ work. Allow them the opportunity to revise their work afterwards.

**W.3.3,
W.3.5,
W.3.8,
W.4.3,
W.4.5,
W.4.8**