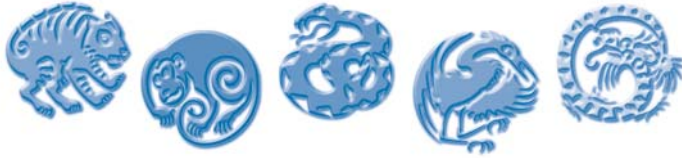


BOOKNOTES

EDUCATORS GUIDE

THE FIVE ANCESTORS



Grades 6 up
Filled with action and adventure
and steeped in Chinese culture,
this series is perfect for
engaging young readers!

using the series as a whole

KUNG FU–STYLE DOCUMENTARIES

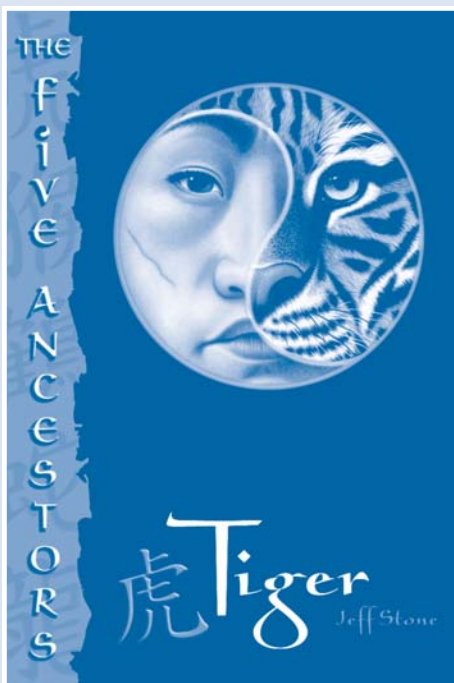
In groups of three or four, have students research one of the animals—tiger, monkey, snake, crane, or eagle—in its natural habitat, exploring the following questions and more: What are the animal's physical attributes and how does it move? What adaptations ensure its survival? What are its sleeping and feeding habits? Who are its natural enemies? Have students relate their research findings to the personalities and abilities of Fu, Malao, Seh, Hok, and Ying. How would one monk naturally get along with the other monks? Which monks would be natural enemies? How do their natural abilities help them in their kung fu styles? Next have the groups write and film a short video “documentary” explaining how the animal relates to the kung fu style of the monk. They will need to incorporate a variety of visual elements and sequences in their animal documentary and explain the role the animal plays in the young monk's life that they chose to research. For example, the albino monkey in Malao's life, the snake that attaches itself to Seh, the crane that helps Hok, and the tiger that stays in the distance for Fu. Students may follow the model of public television animal programs or may adapt the edgier tone of documentary programs such as *The Crocodile Hunter*.

CANGZHEN TEMPLE CHARACTER CHRONOLOGIES

Divide students into five groups and give each group one of the books in the Five Ancestors series. Ask each group to follow their character from the burning of the temple to the end of the series, making a list of each of the major stops along their journey, noting when possible the time lapse between moves the character makes, who he or she is traveling with, and the moves of the other characters. Then on a long piece of bulletin-board paper have each group first write their character's events on a time line, and then illustrate in color each event along the time line, making a mural that shows the travels and experiences of all five of the monks after the temple burned. When the time line is complete, students will be able to see where the lives of each brother and their sister have intersected on the journey to their destiny.

A FINE LINE: TRACING THE LINEAGE OF THE FIVE ANCESTORS

A family tree traces the background of a family to its origins. Starting at the bottom of the tree, ask each pair of students to write the names of each of the five monks, and on the same horizontal level write the names of their brothers and sisters. Just above the monks and their siblings, students should write the names of their parents (fathers and mothers) using both the animal name and the Cantonese name of everyone in the tree. If additional explanations are needed about any of the relationships, ask students to write the explanations on a side bar and identify the additional explanations with numbers correlating to each monk. Two generations of Cantonese monks has made for a strong family tree. Ask students to write on one side of the tree a brief explanation of how each of the five young monks came to be at the Cangzhen Temple.



BOOK 1: *Tiger*

Yearling PB: 978-0-375-83072-3 (0-375-83072-3)
Random House HC: 978-0-375-83071-6 (0-375-83071-5)
GLB: 978-0-375-93071-3 (0-375-93071-X)
CD: 978-0-307-20647-3 (0-307-20647-5)

about the book

Twelve-year-old Fu and his temple brothers Malao, Seh, Hok, and Long don't know who their parents are. Raised from infancy by their grandmaster, they think of their temple as their home and their fellow warrior monks—their temple brothers—as their family. Then one terrible night, the temple is destroyed. Fu and his brothers are the only survivors. Charged by their grandmaster to uncover the secrets of their past, the five flee into the countryside and go their separate ways. Book #1 follows Fu as he struggles to find out more and prove himself in the process.

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thematic connections

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

LOYALTY—The five brothers are fiercely loyal to each other and their grandmaster. How is loyalty of this degree achieved? Is it due to specific actions of the grandmaster? Or is it a result of the character of each brother? Ask students if they have ever been in a situation where their loyalty was tested. Who are they loyal to and why?

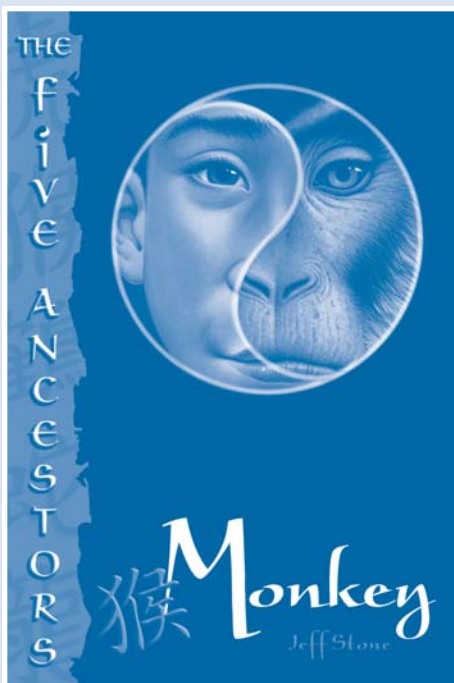
TRUST—Tonglong, a soldier of Ying's, says, "If you do not trust people, you make them untrustworthy." (p. 125) What does he mean by this statement? How does it apply to Ying and his situation? In what situation does Fu not trust, and what does it cost him? How could you apply this statement to your own life?

connecting to the curriculum

SOCIAL STUDIES—The Chinese calendar differs markedly from the Western calendar. Ask students to investigate and record facts of interest regarding the history of and legend behind the Chinese calendar. Then, in small groups, have students design and illustrate a Chinese calendar to display in the classroom. *Tiger* takes place in AD 1650, the Year of the Tiger. Have students research the "animal year" in which they were born and the history of that year.

Tiger is set in the 17th century in Henan Province, China. Ask students to locate Henan Province and research the history of the area. Have students record their findings on "ancient" scrolls to be displayed in the classroom. Use them as a catalyst to discuss how novelists use research to weave fact with fiction in historical novels.

LANGUAGE ARTS—Have students form groups and write a collaborative narrative focusing on 17th-century China, weaving this fiction with facts from the "ancient" scrolls they made above. Students should include a historical setting, well-developed characters appropriate to the time period, a timely problem/conflict, plot complications, and a resolution to the problem or conflict. Have students share their historical narratives with the class.



BOOK 2: *Monkey*

Yearling PB: 978-0-375-83074-7 (0-375-83074-X)
Random House HC: 978-0-375-83073-0 (0-375-83073-1)
GLB: 978-0-375-93073-7 (0-375-93073-6)
CD: 978-0-307-28086-2 (0-307-28086-1)

about the book

At 11 years old, Malao is the youngest of the Five Ancestors. Master of the monkey fighting style, he's curious and quick, fast and fun-loving. But now, with the destruction of the temple and the deaths of his older brothers and Grandmaster, Malao the fun-loving monkey is forced to face things he'd rather not. As he grapples with these new and unwelcome feelings, Malao has an encounter with a dangerous band of bandits, is adopted by a troop of monkeys commanded by a one-eyed albino, and hears tantalizing rumors of a mysterious recluse called the Monkey King, who is said to act, and look, a lot like him. . . .

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thematic connections

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

COURAGE—Even though Malao is quite small he risks his life by challenging a large group of bandits in order to save wild monkeys from being killed. (p. 43) What does this courageous act say about Malao's character? Why does Malao stutter and stammer when he talks to the bandits? What role does fear play in this interaction between Malao and the large man known as Hung?

FAMILY—As the tired warrior monks follow the Grandmaster's orders to uncover their pasts to find their futures, they are unsure of what is happening to them. On pages 96–99, Malao, Fu, and Hok are captured until they eventually free each other. What drives the monks' fierce tie to family? What lessons were taught to them as monks that result in their willingness to lay down their lives for one another? Why does Ying, who was trained with them, not share the same passion for family?

connecting to the curriculum

HISTORY—The Canghzen Temple and the Shaolin Temple both play integral roles in the Five Ancestors series. Divide students into groups of three and ask half of the groups to research the Canghzen Temple and the other groups to research the Shaolin Temple. Have each group make a class presentation on the history, architecture, culture, and traditions of their assigned temple. Encourage them to include interesting information such as the hierarchy of the monks, the tenets and practices of their religious studies, and the current status of the temple should also be included. Each group should create a mobile, diorama, or other 3-D model to present along with their findings.

LANGUAGE ARTS—Malao is full of fun, always joking and doing his best to make others laugh. Often times his good nature wears thin on his brothers who take life more seriously. Ask students to select three or four situations in the book where Malao irritates one or more of his brothers because of his playfulness. Have students write and illustrate a haiku or a limerick to depict the situation and then share it with the class. Collect the poems to make a classroom booklet to share with other classes.



BOOK 3: *Snake*

Yearling PB: 978-0-375-83076-1 (0-375-83076-6)
Random House HC: 978-0-375-83075-4 (0-375-83075-8)
GLB: 978-0-375-93075-1 (0-375-93075-2)
CD: 978-0-307-28393-1 (0-307-28393-3)

about the book

Twelve-year-old Seh is a snake-style master and a keeper of secrets. Close-lipped and ever-watchful, he has used his highly attuned senses to collect information about his brothers, his temple, and even Grandmaster. Now, with the temple and Grandmaster gone, Seh sheds his orange robe like an old skin, joins a bandit gang, and meets a mysterious woman whose name means Cobra—all the while trying to stay one step ahead of vengeful Ying!

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thematic connections

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

TRUST—Seh accepts and trusts what his father says and does what he asks. Why is Seh so willing to trust his father, a former monk turned bandit? Why does Seh keep secrets about his family from his brothers when trust is essential for their survival?

REVENGE—Tonglong's well-plotted revenge against Ying has finally paid off with Ying in prison, and Tonglong leading his troops. Why is Ying so surprised to discover Tonglong's betrayal? What motivates Tonglong's betrayal? What does he hope to gain?

connecting to the curriculum

ART—In Chapter 15, the fight at the bandit stronghold in the banquet hall brims with powerful words, phrases, and images. Chapter 31 similarly depicts Tonglong and his men as they attack the crowd at the Dragon Boat Festival. Divide the students into pairs and give each pair a segment of one of these two chapters to illustrate manga style. When each pair has completed their segment, assemble the sections chronologically together to form chapter booklets.

LANGUAGE ARTS—At this point in the series, the author has revealed information about all five of the brothers' parents. As a class, make a list of the information that you know about the parentage of each of the four brothers and their sister, noting the book in which they find the information and the page number on which they find it. Compile the information on a classroom chart, allowing room for additional information to be added. Have students select one of the parents—father or mother—and write one of the following to share with the class:

- A nomination with rationale for “Parent of the Year”
- An acceptance speech for “Parent of the Year”
- A “Guide to Better Parenting” brochure



BOOK 4: *Crane*

Yearling PB: 978-0-375-83078-5 (0-375-83078-2)
Random House HC: 978-0-375-83077-8 (0-375-83077-4)
GLB: 978-0-375-93077-5 (0-375-93077-9)
CD: 978-0-7393-3864-3 (0-7393-3864-1)

about the book

Hok, a crane-style kung fu master, is also a master at hiding. For the past 12 years, she has hidden the fact that she is a girl. Now her rogue brother, Ying, and his army have placed a huge price on her head. Fortunately, she manages to make it to Keifeng where she finds her mother and a “round-eye” with the very funny name of Charles. Together Hok and Charles start to make some sense of the magnitude of Ying’s plans.

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thematic connections

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

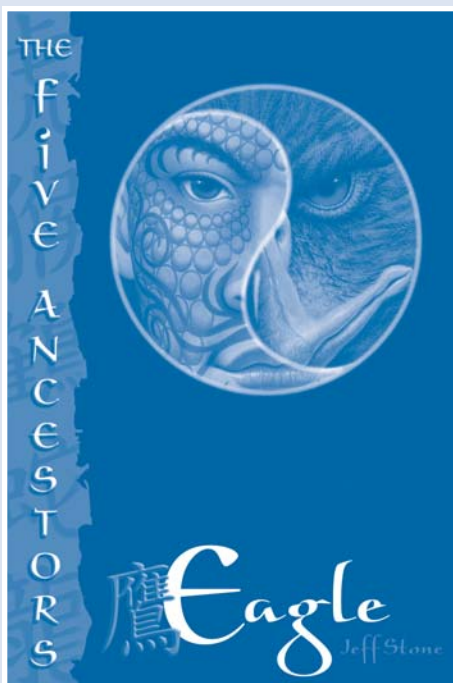
COURAGE—Hok is most courageous. She battles for her own survival after she fights with General Tsung, walking for days with a broken arm and bruises and scratches all over her body. Jumping into the fighting ring with Scar to save Malao, Hok is forced to fight General Tsung again. And alone she breaks into the Emperor’s prison to free Ying. What summons such courage within her? Why is she willing to risk her life for the lives of others? How does Hok’s courage pay off for her?

LOYALTY—When Hok learns that Seh has been left blind from the poisonous dart, she encourages him to develop new skills to adapt to his blindness. Seh sulks and pouts and tells Hok to leave him alone, but she refuses to be put off by his sullen behavior. Eventually, Seh gives in, and Hok teaches him crane kung fu techniques that focus on balance. Why does Hok refuse to give up on Seh when he is so mean to her? What role does PawPaw play in helping Hok reach Seh?

connecting to the curriculum

SOCIAL STUDIES—Even though the Jinan Fighting Club matches occurred in China in AD 1650, they can be compared to fights of World Wrestling Entertainment, the largest professional wrestling organization in the world. To focus on similarities in what occurs when the fighters/wrestlers are in the pit/ring, divide student into groups of three and ask them to reread Chapters 30 and 31, making a list of commentary from the crowd, names of the fighters, betting procedures, and other items of interest that might compare to a WWE event. Then show a short clip of a WWE wrestling match and ask the students to add to their list additional, similar, and/or dissimilar items, specifically noting the crowds’ behavior. Lastly have students write and present a script for fight entertainment at the Jinan Fighting Club including Fu and Malao.

SCIENCE—In recent years, alternative medicine has regained some popularity due to negative side effects and the rising cost of prescription drugs. Ask pairs of students to research alternative medicines for specific illnesses: colds, flu, diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, depression, cancer, heart disease, high cholesterol, headaches, and others. Ask each pair of students to find an alternative medicine or treatment that could help someone with one of the above diseases and write a brochure explaining the “cure” or prevention and its advantages over conventional prescription drugs.



BOOK 5: *Eagle*

Random House HC: 978-0-375-83083-9 (0-375-83083-9)
GLB: 978-0-375-93083-6 (0-375-93083-3)

about the book

Ying hates his grandmaster for denying him the opportunity to train as a Dragon, and holds a deep resentment for his five younger brothers—grandmaster's favorites. He takes his revenge and burns the Cangzhen temple to the ground, but the five youngsters survive and continue to be a thorn in his side. Yet, when he is betrayed by the emperor and imprisoned, it is his younger sister, Hok, who rescues him. Now Ying begins to realize that Tonglong has been manipulating him for a long time. Ying needs to figure out who are his friends and who are his enemies . . . and he needs to figure it out fast!

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thematic connections

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

REVENGE—A hatred for Grandmaster and the pain he has caused in Ying's life drives Ying to seek revenge and fuels the killing rampage. How does his desire for revenge prevent him from achieving his goal of becoming a general in the Emperor's army? Ying wants to stand out, to be respected, and most of all, to be feared. Does he ever achieve the status for which he longs? Why or why not?

TRUST—Long helps Ying escape from Tonglong and his soldiers since Ying rescued Hok, Fu, Malao, and Seh from the Jinan Fight Club. Long's honor motivates him to help Ying even though Ying has proved himself to be filled with hate and revenge. Why does Ying trust that Long will not betray him? In Chapter 21 Ying says he can believe someone, even if he doesn't trust him. What does he mean? Has this ever happened to you?

connecting to the curriculum

HISTORY—In Chapter 16, Ying marvels at the Grand Canal and how it was created. With a partner, ask students to investigate the Grand Canal and report on their discoveries. Students should start with this Web site: www.chinapage.com/canal.html Then assign each pair of students to make a clay topography map of a specific, section of the canal. Students can then arrange their canal sections in the proper order and display the complete map in the library or the classroom.

SCIENCE—Ying hopes to purchase a snake in order to mix its blood with the dragon bone, a mixture that will give him strength and healing. In Chapter 18, the pet vendor at the marketplace describes to Ying the various types of snakes he has available. Ask students to research these snakes by name and appearance to discover more about the types of snakes found in China. Ask each student to select a different snake to report on to the class. Have students prepare a poster board displaying the natural habitat and surroundings of the snake, the snake in its natural element, and possible prey. Display the posters as a herpetological display of the snakes of China.