

FOR VISUAL READERS
TOON BOOKS®

The Secret of the Stone Frog

by David Nytra

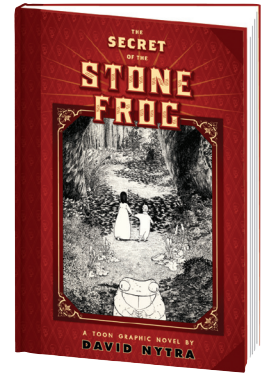
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Guided Reading Level =K

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**

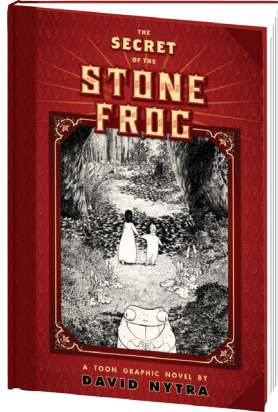
Ask students to write a short narrative describing what fantastical worlds they’ve seen in their dreams. How do their dream worlds differ from the real world? Have students exchange their narratives and comment on each others’ work. Allow them the opportunity to revise their work afterwards.

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



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SUBMITTED BY *J.D. HO*
 AUTHOR AND CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEWER

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Guided Reading Lesson Plan

<p>Before Reading</p>	<p>1. Ask how many students read comic books. Do they read any long stories in comic book format? What do they enjoy about longer comic books? Are they easier to read than chapter books that are mostly text?</p> <p>2. Discuss why you think an author chooses to make a comic book instead of writing things out in chapters.</p>
<p>During Reading</p>	<p>1. Look at pages 8 and 9. Have students describe what is happening in each panel. Why do you think the left-hand page is so big and the ones on the right are smaller? Comic books often use a sequence of images to show where characters are (context), and then move in closer to look at details or the characters' expressions, a little bit like how a camera lets you take a picture of an entire birthday party, but also lets you zoom in to focus on someone's face.</p> <p>2. A clock is a common way to show time passing in the movies or on television. In what other ways can pictures show us that time is passing? Look at pages 47-50. Leah and Alan are waiting for a train. What methods does the illustrator use to indicate that they are waiting for quite some time? What are the "CLOP CLOP CLOP" sounds? What does it mean when we see more "CLOP" sounds? What is the other indication that time has passed? How many fish people are standing on the platform when Leah and Alan first arrive? How many are there by the time the train comes?</p> <p>3. The beginning of this story shows Leah and Alan waking up in a strange world. The ending shows them going to sleep in a world very much like ours. Do you think their adventures really happened? Or do you think they were a dream? Some of the things Leah and Alan encounter are ordinary, like bees, lions, cherries, and train stations. What does the illustrator do to make these things seem like a dream? Do we need words to know these things are not quite as they are in everyday life?</p>
<p>After Reading</p>	<p>1. Talk about what the comic book format adds to this story. Do you think the story would have been as good if it had been written in chapters with just an illustration here and there?</p> <p>2. Activity: Draw a short comic (one page or a 2-page spread) showing a situation or setting in a large panel, and then use smaller panels to draw the reader's attention to details, sounds, or your character's facial expression. Alternatively, in one or two pages, use panels to show the passing of time, but don't use clocks or characters talking about time.</p>

