

The Valley of Horses Study Guide

The Valley of Horses by Jean M. Auel

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Contents

The Valley of Horses Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1-2.....	5
Chapters 3-4.....	7
Chapters 5-6.....	9
Chapters 7-9.....	11
Chapters 10-12.....	13
Chapters 13-15.....	16
Chapters 16-19.....	18
Chapters 20-22.....	20
Chapters 23-26.....	22
Chapters 27-29.....	24
Characters.....	26
Objects/Places.....	30
Themes.....	33
Style.....	36
Quotes.....	38
Topics for Discussion.....	40



Plot Summary

The Valley of Horses is the second novel in the Earth's Children series by Jean M. Auel. This novel begins where Clan of the Cave Bear ended, with Ayla alone and searching for the Others. At the same time, the novel follows the adventures of two brothers, Jondalar and Thonolan, who are on a Journey together. When a cave lion Ayla befriended attacks Jondalar and Thonolan, Ayla is able to save Jondalar and nurse him back to health. With Jondalar, Ayla begins to learn about the people from whom she came and to discover the excitement of new love. The Valley of Horses continues Ayla's story in a new and exciting direction that brings Ayla acceptance of herself and a chance at love.

Ayla makes her way north, the direction Iza told her to go in order to find people of her own. Ayla travels so long that she becomes tired and decides to winter in a small valley she discovers nearly by accident. Ayla begins to gather food, killing her first large animal, and befriends a foal who, like her, has been left abandoned by her own kind. The first winter in her new valley is long and lonely, leaving Ayla too much time to dwell on all she has lost. The winter also gives Ayla too much time to think about her future and what might happen when she finds the Others. Ayla begins to wonder if they will accept her when the only people she ever knew could not. When Ayla adopts an injured cave lion her second summer alone, she finds another excuse not to continue her travels.

At the same time, Jondalar and Thonolan set out from the cave to go on a Journey together. The Journey begins with excitement when they come across a group of flatheads, animals they have heard stories about but never seen before. Later, they come into contact with a group of people not unlike themselves whose language they do not understand. Despite this barrier, it seems Jondalar's reputation as a gentle lover has preceded him. The leader of these people want Jondalar to give First Rites of Pleasure to her great-great granddaughter with the hopes that the ceremony will give her a child of his spirit, with his blue eyes.

Jondalar and Thonolan move on, following the path of the Great Mother River. When they reach the place where the Sister River joins the Great Mother River, they are forced to find a safe way to cross the rivers. While they are struggling with this dilemma, Thonolan is gored by a rhino. Jondalar is unsure of what to do, running around in a panic, leaving bloody furs in strange places. One of these furs alerts a people down river who come to their rescue. Thonolan and Jondalar go to live with these people while Thonolan recovers. When Thonolan is well again, he finds that he has fallen in love with one of the women who helped with his care. Thonolan mates with this woman, content to spend the rest of his life with her people. Jondalar, devoted to his brother, decides to remain as well even though he is filled with a deep sense of homesickness for his home cave and his people.

Thonolan's wife, Jetamio, wants to have a child and continues to attempt to get pregnant despite several miscarriages. Finally Jetamio is able to carry a child to term.



However, it soon becomes apparent that a childhood illness has left Jetamio unable to give birth. Jetamio dies. Thonolan is so consumed with grief that he cannot remain among Jetamio's people. Jondalar considers staying with the woman he has come to care for, but she sends him away, aware of his deep affection for his brother. Jondalar and Thonolan decides to finish the Journey they began together.

Jondalar quickly becomes aware that his brother is so sick with grief that he hopes to die. Jondalar tries to keep his brother safe, but when Thonolan goes into the den of a couple of cave lions, there is nothing Jondalar can do to save him. Ayla comes upon the den when she recognizes her cave lion's cries. Ayla saves Jondalar and takes him back to her cave. As Jondalar recovers from his wounds he teaches Ayla his language. Eventually Ayla is able to tell Jondalar about her past. Jondalar is disgusted with the idea that Ayla lay with a flathead and gave birth to his child. However, Jondalar overcomes his disgust as he quickly gets to know Ayla better. Soon they become lovers and Jondalar finds the love of a woman to the degree he has never known before.



Chapters 1-2

Chapters 1-2 Summary

Ayla is a Cro-Magna woman who was raised by Neanderthals after she was found sick, wounded, and alone. Ayla was never completely accepted by the Clan that took her in. One of the Clan, Broud, never liked Ayla because of her differences and perceived ugliness. Broud was cruel to Ayla, raping her numerous times and impregnating her with a son. When an earthquake devastates the Clan, Broud blames Ayla. Broud declares Ayla dead and sends her away to fend for herself.

In Chapter 1, Ayla is walking north because Iza told her she would find the Others there. Ayla thinks about Iza and Creb, the kind Clan members who raised her and have both died. Ayla also thinks about her son, Durc, whom she was forced to leave behind. Ayla is filled with grief for the loss of her friends and angry with Broud for taking her child away. However, Ayla trusts the woman she left Durc with and knows that he will grow to be a fine member of the Clan. Ayla walks every day, hunting small animals for food and making a fire every night. Eventually it occurs to Ayla to carry a burning coal with her the way the men of the Clan would do, but it takes her several tries to figure out how to keep the coal from going out during the day. Ayla quickly grows tired of traveling and often becomes lost in her grief, wondering why she continues to fight for her survival. At one point, Ayla is forced to cross a river. The river's current is swift and Ayla becomes tired as she pushes a log ahead of her on which she tied her belongings to keep them dry. Ayla is washed up stream, causing her to change direction slightly. Ayla comes close to the edges of a glacier where the weather is dry and windy. Just as Ayla is growing frustrated with the weather and her inability to find any Others, she comes across a gorge of rocky cliffs that open into a sheltered valley.

In Chapter 2, Jondalar and Thonolan are just reaching the end of the glacier on the beginning stretch of their Journey. Thonolan teases Jondalar about his reasons for coming on the Journey, accusing him of running away from the spirited woman who expected to become his mate. Jondalar insists that he had always wanted to go on a Journey and that Thonolan's decision to make one created a prime opportunity. As Thonolan and Jondalar move into unfamiliar territory, they discuss the benefits of stopping to get information from a group of people who live nearby. Thonolan does not want to stop, but Jondalar believes it is important for them to get information about the terrain and the possibility of running into flatheads, a race of Neanderthals that Jondalar and Thonolan have been taught to consider animals. Before reaching the Losadunai, however, Jondalar and Thonolan run into a group of flatheads. One of the flatheads throws a rock at Jondalar. In response, Thonolan throws a spear. The flatheads step out from some nearby bushes and both groups stare at one another. After a few minutes, the apparent leader of the flatheads instructs one of the younger flatheads to return Thonolan's spear to him. This appears to end the conflict.



Several days later, Thonolan and Jondalar run into a Losadunai hunting party. The leader of the group and his daughter speak Zelandonii; therefore, they are able to communicate. Jondalar gets the information he wants about the terrain up ahead, as well as a warning about the flatheads. The leader tells Jondalar that some renegade groups of people have been teasing the flatheads. They began by goading the flathead men into fights when they find them alone, but the flatheads stopped hunting alone. The renegade groups then began to attack the flathead women because they do not fight back. Some of these people also began raping the flathead women, something that Thonolan and Jondalar find disgusting in light of the fact that they believe flatheads to be unintelligent animals. Later, Jondalar and Thonolan join the Losadunai for dinner and then spend the night with a couple of willing Losadunai women.

Chapters 1-2 Analysis

In Chapter 1, the reader is introduced to Ayla. Ayla was raised by a group of Neanderthals, the Clan of the Cave Bear. Ayla was never truly accepted by this group, especially Broud, the son of the leader who became leader himself shortly before Ayla left. Ayla was repeatedly raped by this man and gave birth to a son but was not allowed to take the child with her when she was thrown out of the clan in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake. Now Ayla is walking north, hoping to find the "Others," people like herself. However, Ayla is so lost in her grief that every day is deeply painful for her. Ayla shows the depth of her strength simply by surviving. Ayla is frightened about the unknown and filled with grief, but every day she continues to hunt for food and continues her journey. Finally, Ayla arrives at a sheltered valley, a tiny paradise that leaves the reader suspecting she might settle for at least a while rather than continue her journey north.

In Chapter 2, the reader is introduced to Thonolan and Jondalar. Thonolan and Jondalar are brothers who have embarked on a Journey together in order to experience some adventure before settling down to raise a family. Thonolan originally intended to go on this trip alone, but Jondalar jumped at the chance to escape mating his high spirited girlfriend. Jondalar's choice shows the reader his reluctance to commit to a relationship and also shows his depth of concern for his brother, touching on the theme of brotherly love. On their Journey, Thonolan and Jondalar run into a group of flatheads. The flatheads are Neanderthals, like the Clan Ayla grew up with. Jondalar and Thonolan have been raised to believe the flatheads are animals, no different from cave lions or horses. Therefore, Jondalar is surprised when he sees the flatheads wearing clothes and communicating with one another. Later, Jondalar and Thonolan hear stories of how people have been teasing and attacking the flatheads, further exploring the prejudice the Cave people have against the flatheads. This attitude foreshadows trouble should Jondalar and Thonolan ever meet Ayla and learn about her unique childhood.



Chapters 3-4

Chapters 3-4 Summary

In Chapter 3, Ayla moves down into the valley and makes camp against the protective wall. In the morning, Ayla bathes in the river and begins exploring the valley. Ayla finds flint on the beach and gathers some for making new tools in the future. Ayla hunts, killing a hare and making a meal for herself. As it cooks, Ayla thinks about staying in the valley for a little while. Ayla needs to make new tools and would like to dry the hare's hide. Later in the day, Ayla explores the walls of the canyon and discovers a cave that was once the home of a cave lion but has been empty for a long time. Ayla realizes the cave would make a perfect shelter because of its size, shape, and the natural smoke hole in its ceiling. Ayla decides the cave would be the perfect place to wait out the winter.

Ayla begins thinking about her past again. The cave makes her think of her totem, the cave lion. Ayla suspects the cave lion guided her to this valley in order for her to find a safe place to wait out the winter. Ayla takes off her amulet and looks through the items collected inside. Each one brings to her a memory of her childhood, increasing the sharpness of her grief. As she goes through these items, Ayla begins to think perhaps it would be better if she never finds the Others. Ayla hunts, something women of the Clan are forbidden to do, and is too large and ugly to find a mate. If no one in the Clan wanted her, why should Ayla believe a man of the Others would want her.

In Chapter 4, Jondalar and Thonolan are hunting a horse. The men chase after the horses, forcing them to scatter until they are able to separate a mare and take her down. Afterward, the two brothers dissect the meat and set it out to dry. As they wait for the meat to dry, they decide to make fishing poles to attempt to catch a huge sturgeon in the Great Mother River. Before they have a chance to begin, however, a group of people invade their camp and take Jondalar and Thonolan captive, searching through their belongings. After a time, a very old woman comes to the camp and tries to ask Jondalar questions. Unfortunately, Jondalar does not understand her language and she does not know his. The woman forces Jondalar to drop his pants and she touches his manhood, causing Jondalar a great deal of embarrassment. The next morning a large group of people join the camp and among them is a man who knows their language and is able to explain the situation to Jondalar and Thonolan. It seems that the brothers killed a horse that the hunters of the new group were hunting. It also appears that the old woman, Haduma, wants Jondalar to perform the Rites of First Pleasure with her great-great-great-granddaughter, with the hopes of making a child with blue eyes. Jondalar agrees.

The ceremony is similar to that of Jondalar's people, but he finds the situation difficult because he cannot understand what the people around him are saying. When it comes time to be alone with Noria, Jondalar is afraid of hurting her simply because he cannot explain to her what he is doing. However, Jondalar and Noria find a way to



communicate, and he is able to take her virginity with little pain. At the same time, Thonolan helps the Hadumai hunters catch the large sturgeon. The next day, Jondalar receives permission to see Noria again. Jondalar gives her a donii that has been in his family for several generations. As they leave the camp, Thonolan teases Jondalar about his prowess in bed and asks if he has ever been in love. Jondalar admits that while he has cared about every woman he has ever been with, he has never been in love. Thonolan then asks Jondalar about his relationship with Zelandoni, One Who Serves the Mother, but Jondalar gets angry, ending the conversation.

Chapters 3-4 Analysis

Ayla camps in the valley and finds several things that make her think she might stay for the winter. Ayla finds flint, food, and a cave that was once the home of cave lions. Ayla's totem, the animal who represents her spirit, is a cave lion. The coincidence of the cave lion cave and her totem makes Ayla believe that her totem has brought her to this place. Ayla's belief in her totem stems from her childhood with the Clan and shows the reader how deep her beliefs run. Ayla also spends a great deal of time thinking about the past and feeling ashamed for her ability to hunt and to survive. Where a reader might think that Ayla should be proud of her abilities, Ayla is ashamed because what she is forced to do to survive is not appropriate for a woman of the Clan. These customs and beliefs lead Ayla to question whether or not she will ever find acceptance among the Others if she could not find acceptance among the people who took her in and raised her. This fear seems to imply that Ayla is almost ready to accept a life alone.

Jondalar and Thonolan come across a group of Cave people who all originated from the same woman, an unusual situation in the time period in which the novel is set. Jondalar is impressed with their leader; therefore, there is little hesitation when he is asked to perform First Rites of Pleasure with the woman's great-great-granddaughter. This ceremony introduces the rituals of sex among the Cave people. The Cave people believe that a woman is a vessel of the Mother, their deity, and that she should be introduced to the pleasures of sex during a carefully choreographed ceremony. The Cave people also believe that a woman does not become pregnant as a result of sex, since a man can have sex with a woman many times without making her pregnant, but that when she does the baby can be of the spirit of the woman's mate. This explains the incidence of children who are born resembling the woman's mate. The Cave people also believe that men should have sex with many women and do not believe in the ideas of fidelity, a concept that will be touched on later in the novel.

After Jondalar brings pleasure to Noria during First Rites, Thonolan asks him about his popularity with women and his lack of desire to settle down with one mate. Jondalar says he has never been in love, but the reader is skeptical about this when Jondalar becomes angry at the mention of Zealadoni, One Who Serves the Mother, who lives in his cave. Clearly there was once a relationship there, one that Jondalar is reluctant to speak about, implying that he had deep feelings for this woman. Jondalar's inability to fall in love will be a theme that will be visited often in the coming chapters, shaping his motivations as he decides how to live out his future.



Chapters 5-6

Chapters 5-6 Summary

In Chapter 5, Ayla is spending a leisurely morning making plans for her preparations for winter. Ayla lists in her head all the things she needs to stock up on, causing her to think of her need to kill a large animal. One large animal would supply Ayla with a large fur, plenty of meat to last the winter, and enough fat to store for cooking and oil for lamps. However, Ayla is unsure how to go about killing a large animal because women were not allowed to participate in hunts in her Clan. First, Ayla sets about making spears. Ayla has never made one before, but she has often seen the men make spears in her Clan. The following morning, as Ayla returns to her tasks, she discovers that her menses has begun. This causes Ayla to think about time and to begin marking the passing days on a stick as Creb once taught her. Several weeks pass as Ayla struggles to find a method in which she can kill a large animal on her own. Ayla finally realizes that if she digs a pit, she could trap one of the horses in it, giving her the advantage she needs to use her spear. Ayla spends a long night digging the pit. In the morning, Ayla chases the horses toward the pit, hoping they will be so frightened that one will fall into the trap. Finally Ayla traps a mare in her trap. Ayla stabs the injured horse in the hindquarters with her spear and then stabs again in the horse's neck. When the horse is dead, Ayla skins it and then cuts up the meat in the pit. Ayla washes the mud away in the river and sets up multiple fires to dry the meat and to keep the animals away. It proves to be a struggle to keep the carnivores away and Ayla ends up killing many small animals with her sling, adding to her collection of furs and meat. As Ayla continues to cut the meat, she notices some hyenas trying to take down a small foal. Ayla realizes this foal must have belonged to the horse she killed. Ayla chases away the hyenas and feeds the young horse some gruel she had made earlier. After a second feeding, the foal realizes that Ayla is a friend. Ayla and the horse fall asleep together.

In Chapter 6, Jondalar and Thonolan are striking camp one morning, discussing the coming winter, when a woolly rhinoceros appears. Jondalar warns Thonolan to be careful, but Thonolan decides to run to keep Jondalar from throwing a spear at the animal. Miraculously, the rhino leaves, but not before it gores their tent. Jondalar reprimands Thonolan for his behavior, but Thonolan finds the whole thing amusing. The brothers move on and in a short time coming to a section of the Great Mother River where another major river, Sister River, flows into it. The water is turbulent, but the brothers need to cross it. They set up camp while they struggle to find a safe way to cross. It is finally decided they should move further upstream to find a less turbulent place to cross. Thonolan decides to break camp while Jondalar goes to cut some wood to make some spears in case they run into the rhino again. Unfortunately, before Jondalar even reaches the stand of trees he hears his brother call for help. The rhino has returned and has attacked Thonolan. By the time Jondalar reaches his brother, he is bleeding profusely from a puncture wound in his upper thigh. Thonolan was also stepped on and has dark bruising on his chest. Jondalar does not know what to do. Jondalar covers Thonolan's wound with his summer shirt, replacing it when it becomes



soaked in blood. Jondalar puts the shirt in a tree and returns to make some tea for Thonolan, hoping the willowbark will help Thonolan's pain. When the second shirt is also soaked through, Jondalar puts it in the river. Jondalar is frightened that Thonolan is going to die. Jondalar prays to Mother, asking for help. Then, while harvesting more willowbark from a tree near the river, Jondalar sees a boat coming his way.

Chapters 5-6 Analysis

Ayla is preparing for winter, but quickly realizes just what a disadvantage she has being alone. Ayla needs to gather enough food to last all winter and to kill an animal that can provide her with multiple items, including a large fur to sleep under. Ayla cannot figure out how to hunt a large animal, however, because she never saw anyone do it before. Not only this, but when the men hunt for large animals, they always have more than one person. Ayla must figure out a way she can hunt alone. Once again, Ayla proves her intelligence and her instincts to survive when she figures out that she can dig a pit to trap the animal inside. Ayla is successful in this endeavor, killing a horse that should provide her with all the meat, fur, and oil she can use. However, this kill also leaves Ayla with an unexpected side effect. Ayla has left a foal motherless. Ayla feeds the horse and it quickly adopts her, suggesting a winter that will not be as lonely as Ayla first expected.

Jondalar and Thonolan are continuing on their Journey, following the Great Mother River. When they reach a place where the Great Mother River is joined by the Sister River, they are temporarily forced to stop. Thonolan is attacked by a rhino, causing a wound that could make him bleed to death. Suddenly the dangers of their Journey become clear. Neither Jondalar or Thonolan know the healing arts and they cannot do anything about Thonolan's injuries but to allow them to heal on their own. Unfortunately, it appears that Thonolan's injuries are too severe for this to be effective. Jondalar becomes panicked, afraid for his brother, showing his deep affection for him. This illustrates the theme of brotherly love as the reader once again sees the deep bond between the two men. The reader is left wondering if Thonolan will survive, but in the last sentence of the chapter someone approaches on the river, leaving hope that help might have come.



Chapters 7-9

Chapters 7-9 Summary

In Chapter 7, Ayla continues her preparations for winter with the little foal following her everywhere she goes. Ayla decides the horse needs a name. Ayla names the horse Whinney after a sound the horse often makes while Ayla is speaking to her. Ayla performs a shortened version of the naming ceremony Creb performed when he named Ayla's son. This memory brings on a wave of grief, causing Ayla to cry but also to appreciate her new companion. Ayla has been sleeping on the beach with the horse but decides to give the horse a warm place to sleep in her cave. Later that night, Ayla is filled with a dark premonition, convinced something bad is about to happen. When Ayla is fully awake, she discovers the fire has gone out and hyenas are attempting to come into the cave. Ayla scares them away and then stays awake the rest of the night to keep Whinney safe. The next morning, Ayla breaks her hand axe and decides to make a new one. As Ayla is working the flint, she accidentally picks up a piece of iron pyrite instead of her hammerstone. When the two stones impact one another, a spark causes some kindling near them to catch fire. Ayla is not sure what caused the fire at first, but after some experimenting, she soon discovers that her two stone caused the fire. Ayla makes fire four times to prove her theory. Ayla is thrilled with this discovery, happy that it will no longer take so long to make a fire.

In Chapter 8, Jondalar finds himself awkwardly attempting to communicate with the people who have come to save Thonolan. Jondalar has no idea what made them come, but they brought a medicine person to heal Thonolan. Among them is a beautiful young woman named Jetamio who Thonolan mistakes for a donii the first time he sees her. Jondalar wakes one morning and discovers there is no fresh meat for breakfast. Jondalar organizes a hunting party, pleased to see that Jetamio is willing to go along. Both Jondalar and Thonolan like women who enjoy hunting, perhaps because their mother was known as a wonderful tracker. The hunting party encounters a herd of rhinos. They manage to separate one from the herd and surround it. However, a young rhino returns for the straggler and attempts to attack Jetamio, causing Jondalar to kill it. When they return to camp, Jondalar tells Thonolan how brave Jetamio was, deepening Thonolan's growing affection for Jetamio. A short time later, the camp is broken and the brother's return to the Shamudoi caves with their new friends.

In Chapter 9, Ayla has become restless and decides to go hunting. Unfortunately it is too cold. A few days later, they have a real snow rather than the small collection of precipitation they had experienced up to this point. Ayla decides to gather snow near the mouth of the cave to use for water. Ayla stacks piles of snow she gathered with a basket and notices that the piles have made what looks like a face. Ayla is amused, giving the face a nose. However, the sight reminds her once again of her solitude, so she destroys the face. Ayla keeps busy all winter making baskets and tools. When her hair continuously gets in her way, Ayla braids it like the reeds she uses to make baskets. Ayla is growing used to being alone and is less worried about what someone might think



of her unusual hairstyle. The weather turns warmer, causing a flood along the river bed from melting ice further up the valley. When the flood ends, the landmarks have changed, but soon the vegetation and animals return. Ayla and Whinney are finally able to escape the confines of the cave. Whinney begins to run and Ayla wants to join her, but cannot keep up. Ayla teaches the horse to return to her when she whistles. Ayla then wonders what would happen if she tried to ride the horse. Ayla climbs on Whinney's back and quickly discovers that Whinney does not mind giving her a ride.

Chapters 7-9 Analysis

Ayla begins preparations for winter with Whinney. Whinney has become Ayla's full time companion, filling the solitary hours with some entertainment. Ayla follows the Clan's ritual of naming a new member of the Clan, although she is fearful of revenge from the spirits for doing something above her station. Again Ayla's deep beliefs and fears of offending a group of people who are no longer a part of her life surfaces. With it comes a deep sense of grief and loneliness, showing the reader how deeply Ayla misses her loved ones despite their poor treatment of her. This suggests that Ayla loved her family even though they were unusual which could cause her some trouble should she ever find some of the Others. Ayla also discovers how to make fire with a flint and a piece of iron pyrite. This discovery pushes Ayla up on the evolutionary scale and makes her life much easier. In a later chapter, Ayla makes another discovery. In the setting in which this novel takes place, horses are simply another animal, something to hunt. However, not only has Ayla made the horse a friend, but she has discovered that a horse can be ridden by humans. This opens the whole idea of using a horse to make life easier, something that it is more than likely going to be touched on in the coming chapters as Ayla's relationship with the horse continues to grow.

Jondalar and Thonolan have been rescued by a group of people who somehow knew of their need and brought a medicine person. However, the group does not speak Jondalar's language so they cannot communicate properly. Thonolan does not allow this hindrance to keep him from talking to a beautiful woman, however, and quickly develops an affection for the beautiful Jetamio that is only deepened when Jondalar relates Jetamio's bravery during a hunt. Thonolan often flirts with pretty women, so this could be a flirtation, but the reader suspects Thonolan's feelings could be different this time, especially when he compares Jetamio to a donii, his people's highest religious symbol. When Jondalar and Thonolan go home with these new people, it suggests that a future with Jetamio might be in Thonolan's future.



Chapters 10-12

Chapters 10-12 Summary

In Chapter 10, Ayla enjoys riding Whinney so much that she spends as much time as possible on her back. After a while it appears that Whinney will go wherever Ayla wants without any verbal communication between them. Ayla begins making trips out on the steppes, unconsciously searching for the Others. When Ayla notices a herd of reindeer, she begins to follow them, trying to find a way to hunt one of them. Finally Ayla decides to dig a pit and trap one like she did the horse. Getting the reindeer out of the hole poses a problem until Ayla realizes she could use the horse to pull the reindeer out of the pit and then drag it back to the cave. Ayla causes a stampede after her pit is prepared and kills a reindeer. Ayla's plan works perfectly and she is on her way back to the cave with Whinney when she comes across an injured cave lion. It is clear that there had been a family of cave lions who were surprised by the stampeding reindeer and this baby was caught under some hoofs. Ayla leaves the dying animal, but when she realizes the hyenas are interested in it, she decides to bring the animal back to the cave. Ayla knows it will be dangerous to have a cave lion when it is well, but she cannot leave a baby to the mercy of the hyenas, not after what happened to the baby of one of the Clan members.

In chapter 11, Jondalar and Thonolan have become members of the Shamudo Cave people. Thonolan has fallen in love with Jetamio and they are to be mated. First, however, Thonolan must build a boat for Jetamio's Ramudo relatives. All Shamudo have Ramudo relatives. Jondalar, in the mean time, has begun to live with a young widow, Serenio, and her son, Darvo. Jondalar is fascinated by the boat building process and spends a great deal of time watching and learning while helping with the building of Thonolan's boat. In the process of preparing for the mating ceremony, there is a Feast of Promise in which all members of the Shamudo and Ramudo groups gather to celebrate the upcoming mating. Jondalar gets to know Markeno and Tholie, Jetamio's Ramudo relatives. In the course of their conversations, it is agreed that Jondalar will learn Tholie's Mamutoi language and he will teach her Zelandonii. As the meal comes to an end, Jetamio and Thonolan attempt to sneak out because it is the last time they will be allowed to be alone before their period of confinement before the mating ceremony. In the confusion that ensues, Tholie and her infant daughter are burned when someone holding a hot drink bumps into them. The Shamud comes to treat their burns while everyone else retires for the night. Jondalar stays with the Shamud to make sure Tholie and her daughter are alright. While sitting with him, the Shamud begins to speak to Jondalar about relationships in response to Jondalar's attempts to learn the Shamud's gender. The Shamud tells Jondalar that Jondalar has a close relationship to his brother that will one day take him to an unexpected place where he will finally find what he needs.

In chapter 12, Jondalar continues to learn about the boat building process, evaluating the tools they use and thinking of better tools he might make for them. Shortly before



the mating ceremony, the men who have been working on the boat with Thonolan take him out for a night of drinking. During their night out they discuss flatheads. Most of the men believe flatheads are animals who should not mingle or breed with cave women. Soon after, the boat is completed. People from distant caves come to celebrate with Thonolan and Jetamio. Before leaving for the ceremony, Serenio tells Jondalar that there will be a celebration of the Mother that night and she will not expect him to spend the evening with her. Jondalar is surprised because usually it is he who makes sure he is free. Serenio's behavior makes Jondalar feel insecure. The ceremony is a beautiful one in which the entire audience plays a part. When it is over, Jondalar attends the reception where he finds himself attracted to a woman from another cave. Jondalar is tempted to celebrate the Mother with her but is distracted when a group of girls play a joke on him, attempting to get him to share Pleasures will all of them at once. Jondalar forgets about the young woman and returns home to find Serenio. Jondalar and Serenio spend a passion filled night together, leaving Jondalar as to curious why he cannot fall in love with Serenio.

Chapters 10-12 Analysis

Ayla has found a baby cave lion that will die because of a stampede she caused unless she nurses it back to health. At first Ayla plans to leave the lion because she knows it will be dangerous to her and Whinney once it is healed but changes her mind when she sees the hyenas sniffing around it. Ayla had an experience as a child where she saw a baby taken by hyenas, so she does not like the idea of this baby being hurt by hyenas. Ayla's decision is made out of sympathy and dark memories from the past, leaving her in a position where she could possibly be hurt or cause the injury of her beloved horse. This is an unusual decision that leaves the reader with no doubt about Ayla's strength but fearful for her future.

Jondalar and Thonolan have settled in with the Shamudoi. In fact, Thonolan is to mate with Jetamio, which is similar to the modern day marriage. Thonolan is content in his new life and embraces everything about his new people. However, Jondalar has remained simply because his brother did. Jondalar once again shows his devotion to his brother with this action, touching again on the theme of brotherly love, but it seems that he is doing himself a disservice. Jondalar is homesick and ready to return to his home cave. Even sharing a bed with a new woman does not keep Jondalar from thinking about moving on. Jondalar considers for a time mating with his new lover but chooses not to when the moment is ruined. Jondalar is not in love with Serenio, and it seems Serenio knows this if the reader takes into account her announcement that she did not expect Jondalar to celebrate the Mother with her the night of Thonolan and Jetamio's mating ceremony.

Jondalar is troubled. Jondalar speaks to the Shamud, the wise healer of the Shamudoi people, and they discuss relationships. The Shamud, despite the reluctance to reveal his or her gender, tells Jondalar that Jondalar will one day experience love and that Thonolan will lead him to an unexpected place. This foreshadows a new direction in

which Jondalar's life will take in the near future. The only question for the reader is whether the Shamud was talking about Serenio or Ayla.



Chapters 13-15

Chapters 13-15 Summary

In chapter 13, Ayla takes the baby cave lion into her cave despite Whinney's clear displeasure. Ayla needs to care for the animal and the best place to do it is in the cave. However, this forces Ayla to dress the reindeer in the cave, so she must fashion a travois for Whinney to carry the carcass up to the cave. Ayla keeps a constant vigil on the lion that night, treating him with the herbs and techniques Iza taught her. Ayla and the lion form a bond during his confinement, creating a unique family consisting of a human mother and an equine sibling for the orphaned lion. As the weeks pass, the lion becomes content in his new home, learning to obey Ayla's non-verbal communications and play with Whinney. Ayla begins observing a family of lions who live a short distance from the cave, learning their ways to learn what to expect from her new companion. When it comes time to go hunting for a large animal once more, Ayla takes Baby, the lion, along and encourages him to try out his hunting instincts.

In chapter 14, Baby has grown quite large, bigger than other lions his age. When Ayla hunts now, she allows Baby to go along and once even allows him to drag a kill back to the cave. Soon Baby begins chasing his own prey, bringing down animals on his own. Baby continues to look to Ayla as a mother, however, and does not mind when she pushes him away from a kill. The winter passes quickly, with Baby making hunting easier than Ayla ever thought it could be. In the spring, Whinney becomes moody, snipping at Baby more than she has done before. Ayla comes to realize that Whinney is in season and needs to seek out other horses. Ayla rides the horse out on the steppes until they come across a herd of horses led by a dark stallion. Ayla says goodbye and watches as Whinney mates with this new stallion. Ayla hopes that Whinney will have a dark baby just like the stallion, having come to believe that the sex act has more to do with a woman becoming pregnant than spirits. Later that night, Ayla dreams about a man, an Other, who has blond hair.

In chapter 15, Jondalar attempts to sail a boat down the Great Mother River on his own. When Jondalar sees a large sturgeon, he attempts to catch it, but the power of the large fish causes him to lose control of his boat, eventually capsizing it. Jondalar manages to capture the fish, but is cold and stranded on a tiny section of beach far from the Shamudoi caves. Jondalar is also wet and freezing. A flathead appears out of the woods and beckons to Jondalar. Jondalar follows him and finds the flathead has a fire and a woman in the woods. Jondalar warms himself by the fire, amazed that these animals could utilize such a complicated tool. Jondalar also finds himself staring at the woman, since he has never seen a flathead woman before, but she appears uncomfortable under his stare and moves out of sight. When Jondalar returns to the beach at the sound of his brother's voice, the flathead communicates a desire to take half the fish. Jondalar allows it. However, when he tells his brother and his friends about the flathead, they do not believe him. Jondalar takes them into the woods where the flathead camp was, but there is no sign of the flatheads or their fire. A short time later, while in bed with



a cold, Jondalar learns that Jetamio has had another miscarriage. It seems the paralyzing disease Jetamio had as a child has affected her ability to have children.

Chapters 13-15 Analysis

Ayla spends another long winter, but this time she not only has the company of Whinney, but the unlikely companion of a young cave lion she names Baby. Baby proves to be a valuable addition to Ayla's unusual family as he learns how to hunt with Ayla in such a way that she no longer needs to dig pits to kill large animals. This is a wonderful thing for Ayla, and it also helps the young lion to learn how to care for himself when he is ready to be on his own. At the same time, Whinney has grown to adulthood and is ready to mate. Ayla is sad at this development, but she shows the reader her maturity when she not only allows, but aids the horse in finding a herd to join. Interesting as well in this chapter is Ayla's thoughts on procreation. The Clan belief that babies are made when the woman's totem cannot fight off the man's totem. However, Ayla has come to believe that babies come from sexual intercourse because she did not become pregnant until after Broud began forcing his attentions on her. This shows Ayla's intelligence because even the Cave people do not see this connection, believing instead that babies are given to women from the Mother and any similarities between the baby and the woman's mate are simply because they contain a small piece of the man's spirit.

At the same time, Jondalar tries his hand at sailing and is not good at it. Jondalar meets a couple of flatheads, however, and learns they know how to use fire. Jondalar can also see that they can communicate. Jondalar does not understand how animals, as he has been taught to believe flatheads are, can communicate and use something as complicated as fire. Jondalar is beginning to doubt his inherit beliefs in these creatures. At the same time, however, the reader sees the prejudices held against flatheads by many of Jondalar's contemporaries, such as one of the Shamudoï who becomes angry when Jondalar tries to explain what happened between him and the flatheads. The final piece of important information in this chapter is Jetamio's second failed pregnancy. Jetamio deeply wants to be a mother, but there is suspicion that a childhood illness left her unable to carry to term. Jetamio's misfortune leaves the reader wondering how it might impact her and Thonolan's relationship, as well as their future.



Chapters 16-19

Chapters 16-19 Summary

Chapter 16, as spring becomes summer, Ayla fights to keep her sadness at Whinney's leaving under control. Ayla gathers food for the coming winter while also helping Baby hone his new hunting skills. As the summer progresses, Baby begins going off on his own and his absences grow longer and longer. Ayla knows that Baby is looking for other lions and fighting to stake out his own territory. Ayla begins taking long walks across the steppes, exploring the areas around her valley. One day Ayla comes across a herd of horses and she recognizes Whinney among the mares. Ayla whistles for the horse, but another mare keeps Whinney from coming to her. Ayla turns around and begins the long walk back to the cave. Ayla comes across a dead horse and recognizes the stallion she saw mate with Whinney. Before Ayla can reach the cave, a snowstorm begins, and Ayla becomes lost in the thick snow. Suddenly Whinney appears, allowing Ayla to catch a ride back to the cave. For a time after the snowstorm, Ayla suffers from an illness. Whinney stays with her, but Baby is gone. Shortly after Ayla recovers, she and Whinney go for a run where they run into Baby. Ayla also finds that Baby has found a mate.

In chapter 17, Jondalar is on a hunting expedition with Darvo and Thonolan, as well as several other members of the cave, when Serenio catches up with them. Jetamio has gone into labor and is having problems. It seems Jetamio's childhood illness left her pelvis too narrow to allow her to deliver a baby. Jetamio dies. The Shamud attempts to rescue the baby, but unfortunately he dies as well. Thonolan is devastated by this event. Thonolan wants to leave the Shamudoi and continue his Journey, but Jondalar has begun to think he should remain with Serenio and make her his mate. However, when Jondalar tells Serenio this, she refuses to accept, explaining to him that she knows he does not love her. Serenio believes she is pregnant with a child of Jondalar's spirit, a pregnancy she had believed was impossible. Serenio is content to let Jondalar go as long as she has the child. In chapter 18, Jondalar and Thonolan say goodbye to all their friends and leave the caves in a boat. The first day is difficult because they run into a storm and are not experienced enough with the boat to maneuver it easily. The second day they capsize the boat and Jondalar is injured. They swim to shore and camp for the night. The following day, they begin walking along the shore and come to a place where they need to cross the river. Thonolan suggests they take off their clothes and float them across the river with their other belongings so they will not have to dry them out again. When they reach the other side, they have to climb up a muddy bank, so they decide not to dress. Thonolan gets trapped in quicksand. Jondalar tries to help him, but Thonolan is content to die so he can be with Jetamio. Before he is completely in cased in sand, however, a group of Mamutoi find them and help Thonolan out of the sand.

In chapter 19, after a particularly hard winter, Ayla decides to explore the west side of the steppes beyond her valley, a place she has not explored before. At the same time, Jondalar and Thonolan have continued their Journey and have just killed a giant deer.



The deer is stolen by a lioness. Thonolan chases after her, determined to recover his spear if not his kill. The lioness leaves the deer in a blind canyon. As soon as she is gone, Thonolan goes into the canyon. Ayla happens to come up to the same blind canyon a short time later and hears Baby. Ayla goes into the canyon and chases Baby away from two men who appear injured. One of the men is dead, but the other is bleeding from a devastating wound to his leg. Ayla pulls the man out of the canyon and lays him on the travois behind Whinney, then sets off a small avalanche in the canyon to bury the other man. Ayla takes the man into the cave and cuts away his clothes before examining his wounds. The man has many cuts and bruises, but the most worrisome is the wound on his thigh. Ayla cannot make the skin stay closed, but the man's clothing gives her the idea to sew the edges together. Ayla spends the whole night watching over the man, finding herself unable to move her eyes from him. The man is so different from the men of the Clan, Ayla is fascinated with him. Just before dawn, Whinney goes into labor. Ayla helps her deliver her colt, so engrossed in what she is doing, she is surprised when Jondalar speaks to her.

Chapters 16-19 Analysis

Whinney comes back to Ayla about the same time Baby finds a mate and leaves. Ayla is happy to have Whinney back even though she had accepted Whinney's need to be with her own kind. The idea of Whinney being with her own kind seems to parallel Ayla's attempt to find the Others, an idea that like should be with like despite Ayla's childhood with the Clan. However, the definition of like changes when Whinney chooses Ayla, her foster mother, over the other horses, once again paralleling Ayla's story.

Jetamio dies giving birth to Thonolan's son, leaving Thonolan practically suicidal. Thonolan cannot stand to be around Shamudoi, so he decides to continue his journey. Jondalar thinks about remaining with Serenio, but Serenio knows him better than he knows himself. Serenio knows Jondalar needs to be with his brother, touching on the theme of brotherly love. The trip gets off to a bad start and Thonolan gets trapped in quicksand. Thonolan is so filled with grief for Jetamio that he does not want to be rescued. Thonolan is ready to die. Thonolan's behavior causes Jondalar to worry about his safety and to feel grateful that he decided to continue this trip with his brother. Jondalar cannot allow Thonolan to give up. It turns out that Jondalar has no control over his brother, however, and cannot save him when Thonolan finds an opportunity to end his life. Whether Thonolan knew he would die when he went after the deer, the reader will never know. However, Thonolan did die.

The reader might recall at this point that the Shamud predicted Thonolan would take him to an unexpected place where he would meet his fate. Moments after Thonolan and Jondalar are attacked by a cave lion, Ayla arrives. The lion is Baby, her lion, and she is able to push Baby away from Jondalar. Ayla rescues Jondalar and takes him back to her cave to treat his wounds, once again showing her intelligence when she figures out how to sew his wound closed. Ayla then further shows her strengths and abilities when she delivers Whinney's coat. Ayla is amazing and even Jondalar can see it in the haze of his injuries.



Chapters 20-22

Chapters 20-22 Summary

In chapter 20, Jondalar wonders if Ayla is a donii. Jondalar has never seen a woman with such an intimate relationship with a horse before, or any animal. Jondalar asks her how she does it, but Ayla does not understand his language. Ayla tries to communicate, but Jondalar does not interpret her gestures and grunts as a language. When his amazement abates, Jondalar realizes Thonolan is not there in the cave with them. Jondalar knows what this means and he begins to cry. Ayla holds him, offering the only comfort she can. Ayla provides for Jondalar's needs throughout the day and they develop a clumsy way of communicating. Ayla is fascinated by Jondalar's way of expressing himself, recalling that Creb once told her that she made noises like that when they first found her. Ayla is able to tell Jondalar her name and to understand his. After a while Ayla is able to express her desire to learn to speak Jondalar's language. Jondalar begins teaching her simple words.

In chapter 21, Ayla has learned a great number of words, but she can understand them better than she can say them. Jondalar has healed well and is anxious to get out of the cave and look around. Ayla insists on taking his stitches out of his leg first. When they come out well, Ayla agrees to let him go outside the next day. Jondalar is fascinated by Ayla and cannot figure out who she is. When he sees Ayla light a fire in seconds, he is shocked. Jondalar wants to know how she did it, but cannot get his desire across to her. His question is quickly forgotten, however, when she suggests they go outside. Ayla helps Jondalar fix a fur over his nakedness and then settles him out on the porch while she goes to take a bath in the river. Ayla allows Jondalar to stay in the sun too long, causing him to be sunburned. Ayla treats the burn, unaware of Jondalar's sudden interest in her nakedness. Jondalar begins to rub Ayla's back, trying to express his interest. Ayla turns her face from him in the tradition of the Clan, but Jondalar does not understand her meaning and assumes she is not interested in taking him as a lover. Jondalar promises he will never touch her again.

In chapter 22, Ayla's understanding of Jondalar's language has progressed well enough that they are able to ask questions of one another. Jondalar asks about Ayla's people, curious why she is alone. Jondalar suspects she might be One Who Serves, but there are things about her that do not fit that idea. Ayla, however, is still unable to tell Jondalar about her past. Ayla tells him in Clan language, a language of sounds and gestures, and this helps him understand that her gestures have meaning, but he does not know what that meaning is. When their meat supplies run low, Ayla tells Jondalar she needs to go hunt. Ayla is afraid Jondalar will not approve, but he assures her that he likes women who hunt. Ayla shows Jondalar Whinney's harness and the travois, explaining how she used it to bring him to the cave. Jondalar is impressed. Ayla goes hunting, checking out an area where there appears to be a fire. Ayla does not have to hunt thanks to the fire and returns with plenty of meat. Ayla falls into a deep sleep upon returning and has a dream about the time before the Clan found her. When she wakes, Ayla can speak



Jondalar's language better. Ayla is able to express her surprise at the fact that Jondalar cut up the meat.

Chapters 20-22 Analysis

Paralleling Thonolan's reaction to Jetamio, Jondalar wakes to find Ayla delivering Whinney's colt. Jondalar sees this and wonders if Ayla is a donii. It does not hurt that Ayla is beautiful. Almost immediately, the reader can feel the sexual tension between these two characters and realizes that it will not be long before they fall in love. However, there is a language barrier between them. Ayla's language, the Clan language, is made up mostly of gestures with a few grunts thrown in. Ayla attempts to talk to Jondalar, but he does not recognize the gestures for what they are. However, they manage to find a way to communicate anyway.

Ayla's deep-seated customs begin to play a role in her relationship with Jondalar. Ayla is afraid Jondalar will not like that she hunts because a woman hunting was unheard of in the Clan. However, Jondalar likes a woman who hunts. Ayla also finds it difficult to look Jondalar in the eye because this, too, is not proper in the Clan. When Ayla drops her eyes from Jondalar while he is attempting to seduce her, it is her way of telling him she is ready to be his lover. Jondalar reads it as her attempts to make him stop, so he does.

Jondalar is convinced that Ayla is a holy woman who should not be touched. Ayla's talents and care with Whinney convince him that she cannot be a typical woman. Jondalar has no clue as to the truth of Ayla's past, leaving the reader curious as to how Jondalar will react. The reader has seen the prejudice Jondalar's people have against the flatheads; therefore, it does not bode well for Ayla when Jondalar finally realizes from where she came.



Chapters 23-26

Chapters 23-26 Summary

In chapter 23, Jondalar is deeply attracted to Ayla and has trouble hiding it. When Jondalar touches Ayla and she pulls away, he tries to hide his desire by expressing it in private. Ayla is aware of what he has done, however, and is offended by the idea that he does not find her attractive. To distract Ayla and himself, Jondalar asks to ride Whinney. Afterward they return to the cave where Jondalar tries to apologize for hurting Ayla's feelings. Ayla tells him that he made her feel undesirable and this leads to a discussion about the customs of the Clan. Finally Ayla is able to tell Jondalar about her past, about Broud's repeated rapes and the birth of her son. When Jondalar realizes Ayla's Clan is the flatheads, he is disgusted. Jondalar calls the flatheads animals, causing Ayla to become angry and defend them, even Broud. In chapter 24, Jondalar is left alone in the cave, confused and shocked by Ayla's story. Jondalar is also ashamed of his reaction, though he still cannot think of Ayla as anything but spoiled now that he knows she gave birth to a flathead child.

Ayla wanders around the valley, crying for all she has lost and for the shame that Jondalar has made her feel. Ayla is also now afraid of how the Others will react when they learn the truth, if they will react as Jondalar did. Ayla is unsure if she even wants Jondalar to stay around now. When Ayla returns to the cave, Jondalar tries to apologize, but Ayla is too angry. When Ayla learns that Jondalar only taught her his language, she becomes angry again. Ayla needs to learn the language of the Others who live near her valley because they are the ones she will most likely meet. Jondalar is ashamed he did not think of this and promises to teach her the Mamutoi and Shamudoï languages. In chapter 25, Jondalar becomes aware of how much Ayla has done for him. Jondalar wants to give something back to Ayla. Jondalar asks Ayla to show him how she makes tools and weapons. Ayla shows him her techniques. Jondalar then shows Ayla his technique, which is more advance and results in more tools. Ayla asks Jondalar to teach her how to use his method, after he assures her it is proper for a woman to learn. Jondalar is so touched that he again feels himself aroused. However, he cannot get pass the idea of Ayla giving birth to a flathead child.

In chapter 26, Jondalar questions Ayla about her spear, curious how she could hunt with such a long spear. Jondalar offers to make a new spear for her and teach her how to throw it. Jondalar asks Ayla for a bowl in which to soak bones. When he sees how many bowls and baskets Ayla has, he asks how long she has been in the cave. Ayla shows Jondalar the sticks she has been marking the days on. Jondalar counts them up and realizes she has been alone in the cave for more than three years. Jondalar is also able to calculate Ayla's age when she gave birth to Durc, eleven. Jondalar is shocked and filled with compassion for Ayla. This conversation leads to another discussion about the Clan. Ayla begins to notice that Jondalar no longer calls them animals. They also discuss Jondalar's family and he tells her that his people do not believe a man can father a child, but that a child is born of the mother and if she is lucky, her mate's spirit.



Chapters 23-26 Analysis

Jondalar learns about Ayla's past and, as suspected, is not pleased to learn his new woman once laid with a flathead and had his child. To Jondalar, this makes Ayla unclean. Jondalar has grown up with the idea that flatheads are animals, therefore they are not fit to lay with his women. Jondalar's thoughts are similar to those who believe people of certain races or sexual orientation do not deserve the same rights as others. Jondalar's reaction causes a rift between him and Ayla that is deeper than the wall her beliefs have created. The reader wonders if Ayla and Jondalar will be able to overcome this rift. However, it seems that Jondalar is slowly letting go of these old prejudices the more he gets to know Ayla. Jondalar learns how old Ayla was when Broud first forced her and realizes it was never her fault.

At the same time, Jondalar shares with Ayla some of the techniques his people use to make tools that is more advanced than the techniques she learned from the Clan. When Ayla expresses a fear of offending Jondalar by asking, he realizes how different his culture is from hers. Jondalar wants Ayla to hunt and to share his love of making tools. Jondalar does not realize how deeply Ayla's hurts and fears go, but every time Ayla expresses a difference between their cultures, he begins to see it. Perhaps this knowledge will help Jondalar to overcome his feelings about Ayla's past with the Clan.



Chapters 27-29

Chapters 27-29 Summary

In chapter 27, Ayla begins to practice with her new spears but cannot get the power with them that she can with the sling. Jondalar gets the idea of making a spear that Ayla can throw from a sling-like apparatus. After some work, Jondalar is able to fashion a spear-thrower. They practice on the throwers together. When they reach a certain proficiency, Ayla goes to scout a herd. When Ayla is gone past dusk, Jondalar becomes worried. Tension explodes between them until Ayla realizes Jondalar has cooked for her, something a man of the Clan would never have done. Soon after, Ayla and Jondalar go hunting with both horses. They follow a herd of bison Ayla had tracked the day before and pick one to target. As they make their move, a young bull comes after Ayla. Rather than running away, Ayla turns to face the animal with her spear ready, but Jondalar's spear hits its mark first. Jondalar is impressed by Ayla's bravery. Jondalar kisses her and asks to be allowed to give her her First Rites.

In chapter 28, Ayla and Jondalar return to the cave where they decide to put the bison aside until after the ceremony of First Rites. Jondalar takes a bath and then Ayla goes down to take hers. When Ayla returns to the cave, she finds that Baby has backed Jondalar into a corner. Jondalar is holding a spear and calls out a warning to Ayla, completely shocked when she calls to the animal and allows it to give her a hug. Ayla allows Baby to take the smaller of the two bison, shocking Jondalar again when she pushes the lion away from the bigger animal and encouraging him to take the smaller. Ayla explains Baby to Jondalar who is just that much more impressed with her. Forgetting the day's events, Ayla and Jondalar concentrate on the Rites of First Passion. Afterward, Jondalar tells Ayla about Zelandoni, the woman who taught him all he knows about pleasuring a woman. Jondalar knew her when she was Zolena, an older woman who took her under her wing and taught him all he needed to know. However, they spent too much time together and this caused tension between Jondalar and another man in the cave. A fight broke out and Jondalar has always regretted his part in the melee.

In chapter 29, Ayla begins to worry about getting pregnant. Ayla cannot have a baby on her own and she believes that Jondalar is still planning on leaving. Ayla decides to use herbs Iza taught her about to keep a baby from growing to term. However, when Jondalar wakes from a bad dream he comes to realize that he is in love with Ayla. Jondalar tells Ayla that he wants to be with her always and that he will never leave her. Ayla is very happy at this news. Jondalar and Ayla decide to remain in the valley for the winter but agree to move on the following spring. Until then, Jondalar suggests they explore the steppes west of the valley where Ayla has not yet gone. While camping beside a river, they run into a small group of Mamutoi hunters. Ayla is surprised that they smile when they see her.



Chapters 27-29 Analysis

Jondalar and Ayla also use their combined knowledge to come up with a new way to fire a spear at a moving animal, creating what modern readers will recognize as a bow and arrow. The invention once again shows the reader how intelligent both Ayla and Jondalar are and how advancement in the human race could have taken place. Ayla and Jondalar go hunting with these new tools and are successful. At the same time, Jondalar sees how brave Ayla is when she faces down a young bison without fear. Jondalar is so overwhelmed by this that he cannot hide his attraction to Ayla any longer. Jondalar has realized that Ayla never had her First Rites of Pleasure, so he offers to give them to her. Ayla quickly agrees because she has been attracted to Jondalar all along. Ayla never understood that Jondalar was waiting for her consent to his seduction because once again her deep seated beliefs from the Clan have kept her from explaining her problem to Jondalar and kept him from seeing her attraction to him. Now, however, it seems they have finally overcome their difficulties. Finally Ayla and Jondalar admit their feelings for each other and agree to stay together, an event that has been foreshadowed almost from the beginning of the novel, first in the structure of the novel and then in the things Shamud told Jondalar. The story has come to its expected end, leaving the reader anxious to see what happens next in the novel that follows.



Characters

Ayla

Ayla is a young woman who is abandoned for unknown reasons when she was only five and found, sick and injured, by a group of Neanderthals. These people, known to Ayla as the Clan of the Cave Bear, took her in despite her strange appearance and their fears that she might bring them bad luck. Ayla grows up under the tutelage of their healer and their mystic, learning their language and their customs. Ayla is told she cannot hunt because she is female, but Ayla learns how to use a sling to kill small animals. Ayla also learns about healing. When an earthquake strikes the Clan and kills many of their beloved members, Ayla is blamed. Ayla is declared dead and sent away, forced to leave behind her baby boy, the product of multiple rapes perpetrated by the leader of the clan.

Ayla wanders the land, moving north because the healer told her many of her own people were in the north. Ayla finds no sign of human life but discovers a small valley that is protected from the insistent wind created from the glaciers that cover the northern half of the continent. Ayla makes a home for herself in a natural cave that was once inhabited by cave lions, the animal of her totem. Ayla intends to only stay for one winter, but when she befriends a horse and a cave lion, she finds many excuses to stay rather than face an uncertain future with people about whom she knows nothing.

Ayla is out exploring west of her valley one day when she finds two men who have been attacked by her baby lion and his mate. Ayla saves the man who is still alive, burying the other under an avalanche of rocks. Ayla heals this man and learns his language, but the differences in their customs and his prejudices against her clan threaten to tear them apart. Eventually, however, they find a mutual need in one another and become lovers.

Jondalar

Jondalar is a young flint knapper who has gone on Journey with his brother rather than face a difficult future with his intended mate. Jondalar is a sensitive young man who has been the chosen male in a great number of First Rites of Pleasure for young women in his cave because he was taught to give young women Pleasure at a time when pain is inevitable. This talent serves Jondalar well, but somehow he never finds emotional attachment with any of the women. Jondalar likes women, but somehow he can never commit his heart to one. On his travels, Jondalar meets several women he shares his bed with, including a woman he offers to make his mate, but he never finds love.

Jondalar's brother is injured on their journey and as a result, they come to live with a group of cave dwellers who coexist with a group of river people. Jondalar is happy here, living with a young widow and learning about boat building. However, Jondalar misses



his home and dreams of returning there. When his brother's wife dies, Jondalar suggests they return home, but his brother is determined to continue their Journey. Jondalar agrees, out of fear for his brother's sudden fascination with death. It seems his brother hopes to die on this Journey. Finally, Jondalar's brother gets his wish when they are both attacked by a cave lion.

Jondalar wakes to find himself in the cave of a beautiful woman. As Jondalar begins to learn about this woman, he finds himself drawn in by her charms. However, when Jondalar learns this woman was once a part of a Clan of what he has known as flatheads, he is disgusted. Jondalar has always believed that a woman who has lain with a flathead is dirty, spoiled. Ayla helps Jondalar overcome his prejudices and he moves past them to admit to himself that Ayla is different from every woman he has ever known. Eventually Jondalar is forced to admit that he is in love with Ayla.

Thonolan

Thonolan is Jondalar's brother. Thonolan is an adventurous man who has gone on Journey to find what there is outside of the small community of his cave. Thonolan never intended for Jondalar to go with him on his Journey but is glad that he did. Thonolan and Jondalar grow closer on their Journey than they ever could have back at their cave. When Thonolan becomes injured on the Journey, it seems this will be the end for him. However, a group of people come to their rescue with their medicine person. Thonolan's injuries are healed. During his recuperation, Thonolan falls in love with a woman of this new cave. Thonolan and Jetamio become mates after Thonolan completes the creation of a boat for Jetamio's river cousins.

Jetamio was sick as a child and was left with a slight limp. When Jetamio goes into labor with her first child, it soon becomes clear that her childhood illness left her unable to give birth. Jetamio dies, leaving Thonolan devastated. Thonolan decides to continue his Journey rather than remain in the home he shared with Jetamio and live with his memories. Along the way, Thonolan makes it clear to Jondalar that he would be happy to die and return to the arms of his love. Jondalar tries to keep his brother safe, but when Thonolan comes up against a cave lion, there is little Jondalar can do.

Jetamio

Jetamio is a young woman who belongs to the Sharamudoi cave. Like Ayla, Jetamio is an orphan raised by another member of the cave group. Jetamio suffered a paralyzing disease as a small child that left her with a permanent limp. When the Sharamudoi come across Jondalar and Thonolan, Jetamio is amused by their bumbling attempts to communicate. Soon love blossoms between Jetamio and Thonolan. After their mating ceremony, Jetamio becomes obsessed with the idea of having a child. Jetamio wants to give Thonolan a child of his spirit. Jetamio becomes pregnant several times, but loses each of the pregnancies. Finally, Jetamio is able to carry a child to term. However,



during labor is soon becomes clear that Jetamio's childhood illness left her pelvis too narrow for her to give birth. Jetamio and her child die.

Serenio

Serenio is a widow woman of the Sharamudoi. Serenio lost two mates to death, as well as a child. Serenio lives with her young son and works with the Shamud. When Thonolan and Jondalar come to the caves, Serenio spends a great deal of time with them helping with Thonolan's care. When Thonolan is healed, Jondalar moves in with Serenio. While Serenio loves Jondalar, she does not allow that feeling to show because she knows Jondalar is not ready to commit to one woman. Serenio tries to give Jondalar his space, and in doing so causes him to depend on her even more. Finally Jondalar decides he wants to mate with Serenio, but she refuses him. Serenio knows that Thonolan is more important to Jondalar than any woman could ever be and she wants him to be free to go with Thonolan on the rest of his Journey.

Haduma

Haduma is an old woman who has lived to see five generations of her family born. It is unusual for a woman to grow to such an old age; therefore, her family treat her as though she is a god. Haduma is rumored to have a power that will help a man be more virile if she simply touches his manhood. Haduma touches Jondalar and then asks him to perform First Rites of Pleasure with her great-great-great-granddaughter. Haduma wants the next generation of her family to have blue eyes like Jondalar. Jondalar agrees and is able to perform the rite in such a way that he leaves the young woman satisfied and confident.

Noria

Noria is Haduma's great-great-great-granddaughter. Noria is the young woman with whom Jondalar is asked to perform First Rites of Pleasure. Jondalar does not meet Noria until the time of the ceremony, which causes him to feel lack of confidence is his ability to put her at ease. However, Jondalar is able to communicate his concern for the young woman and to perform the ceremony in such a way that she feels pleasure rather than the pain she has been afraid she will feel. When Jondalar leaves, he gives Noria his family's donii, an object that has both deep personal and religious meaning for him. Noria has fallen in love with Jondalar and he wants to make her happy.

Whinney

Whinney is the horse that Ayla befriends. Ayla is preparing to stay in the valley for the winter and knows she needs to kill a large animal to have enough meat and furs to survive. Ayla digs a pit and traps a horse inside, killing the animal and then butchering it while it remains in the muddy hole. As Ayla is preparing to dry the meat, she notices that



a small foal did not leave with the other horses. Ayla realizes this is the foal of the horse she has killed and that it will die if she leaves it to the hyenas who have come to steal her meat. Ayla chases the hyenas away and feeds the horse. After the second feeding, the horse has realized that Ayla means to help her and the foal becomes dependent on Ayla. Ayla invites the horse into her cave and soon they become friends, sharing the same home. In time Ayla learns to ride the horse and also uses her to transport her kills from the steppes to her cave.

Baby

Baby is a cave lion that Ayla befriends. Ayla once again needs to kill a large animal in order to prepare for winter. Ayla takes Whinney and creates a stampede in order to force a large animal into a pit she has dug. When Ayla and Whinney begins their trip back to the cave with their kill, they come across a baby cave lion that was injured in the stampede. At first Ayla leaves the animal, but when she sees hyenas attempting to attack it, Ayla scares them away and decides to take the animal back to her cave. Ayla heals the cave lion and raises it as though it were her own child, sharing kills with it and teaching it to respect her commands. After a while, the cave lion goes off to mate with one of its own. One day, Baby finds a man trying to steal a fresh kill from its home. Baby attacks the man and his brother. When Ayla finds them, she makes Baby move away and rescues the man who is still alive; Ayla buries the dead man under an avalanche of rocks.

Shamud

Shamud is a genderless healer who lives with the Sharamudoi. Shamud comes to Jondalar's rescue when Thonolan is injured and Jondalar does not know what to do. Later, when Jondalar has come to live with the Sharamudoi, Shamud tells Jondalar that one day his brother will take Jondalar to a place Jondalar is meant to be, but it will be a place that is strange and unexpected. Later, when Jondalar realizes his feelings for Ayla, he comes to understand that Shamud meant that Thonolan would take him to find Ayla.



Objects/Places

Donii

Jondalar's people believe the First Mother has the power to create and bring forth life and by honoring women they repay the First Mother for her awesome gifts. The donii is a figurine carved in ivory or limestone to honor the First Mother or Doni. Most donii do not have a face, but the night of Ayla's First Rite of Pleasures Jondalar carves a donii that resembles Ayla, making her promise to never lose it in case it contains some of her spirit.

Ayla's Amulet

Ayla believes that everyone has a totem that is represented by a particular animal. Ayla's totem is a cave lion. Whenever a person's totem gives them a sign in the shape of an object, the person takes that symbol and places it in a small pouch they wear around their necks. The Clan people believe that if they lose their amulet, they will die.

Flint

Flint is a rock that both Ayla and Jondalar use to make tools and weapons. Ayla finds flint on the beach in the valley where she has come to live.

Fire Stone

Ayla finds iron pyrite on the beach that she accidentally discovers can make a spark when struck against flint. Ayla calls these stones fire stones.

Spears

Ayla uses long spears to kill animals for food, oil, and furs that she saw the men of the Clan make. Jondalar teaches Ayla how to make the smaller spears he uses to hunt with that he can throw. When Ayla has trouble mastering the technique, Jondalar fashions a spear thrower that he and Ayla can use to fire spears at animals.

Pits

While alone, Ayla is forced to dig pits in order to trap large animals to kill. Later, Ayla hunts with Baby, who is able to bring down large animals without a pit. Finally, Ayla learns to hunt with smaller spears with Jondalar in order to forgo the need to dig a pit.



Clothing

Ayla wears traditional Clan clothing, which consists of furs tied around the body with thin leather thongs. Jondalar wears clothing sewn and made to fit the curves of the human form. Ayla learns to sew and to create new clothes for herself by studying Jondalar's clothing.

Rites of First Pleasures

Rites of First Pleasures is a ceremony among the Cave people in which an experienced man takes a young woman's virginity and makes her a woman. Jondalar has been chosen for this ceremony many times because he is capable of giving the young woman pleasure during what could be a very painful act. Jondalar performs this ceremony with Ayla even though she has already lost her virginity and given birth because she never experienced the ceremony.

Mating Ceremony

The Cave people have a ceremony whenever two people chose to mate with one another. Their mating ceremony is similar to a modern day marriage ceremony, with the same promises of commitment, but not necessarily the same promise of fidelity.

Ayla's Cave

Ayla finds a cave in a small valley north of where she lived with the Clan. Ayla believes the cave was once inhabited by cave lions, her totem, so she feels as though the cave is appropriate for her to live in. Ayla shares the cave with a horse and a cave lion before Jondalar finds her.

Valley of Horses

While traveling north to find people like herself, Ayla comes across a valley filled with horses where she finds a suitable cave to live in for the winter.

Clan of the Cave Bear

Ayla was rescued by a clan of flatheads, or Clan people, when she was a child, only to be expelled from the Clan after an earthquake devastates the Clan. Jondalar, who was raised to believe Clan people are animals, is shocked when he learns about Ayla's past.



Zelandonii

Zelandonii is the name of the Cave people to whom Jondalar belongs. Each group of Cave people is known by a specific name, often the name of the person who began the cave.

Hadumai

The Hadumai are a group of Cave people who consist of four generations of children born to the leader, Haduma.

Mamutoi

Mamutoi is a group of Cave people who are known for hunting mammoths. Jondalar learns their language from a relative of his brother's wife who belongs to a Mamutoi group. The Mamutoi are also the people Jondalar and Ayla run into while exploring the area west of Ayla's valley.

Sharamudoï

The Sharamudoï are the group of Cave people who come to Thondalar's rescue after he is gored by a rhino. Thondalar falls in love with one of the Sharamudoï women and marries her, only to leave their cave when his wife dies in childbirth.



Themes

Finding One's Place in the World

At the beginning of the novel, Ayla finds herself alone after having spent most of her life in the bosom of a Clan of people who, while they did not completely accept her, made her a part of their traditions. Ayla was never a true part of the Clan because she did not look like them; her mind did not work like theirs, and she was too big to fit in. Only a few members of the Clan accepted Ayla despite her clear differences. With these few, Ayla created a family, a mother and father who taught her to communicate and their unique knowledge of healing. To Ayla, this was the only family she thought she would ever know. Ayla also had a child, a boy conceived through the repeated rapes of a man who hated Ayla for her differences. Ayla was forced to leave all this behind in order to find a people who left her abandoned many years before.

Ayla travels north, believing if she keeps moving she will eventually run into her own kind. Ayla has no idea what to expect of these people; therefore, she takes advantage of many excuses to stop and remain in a peaceful valley where she is content to spend her time with a horse and a cave lion she has rescued from sure death. Ayla misses her child desperately and aches to have another person around to talk to and with whom to share her grief. However, Ayla worries that these other people, these people she knows nothing about, will not accept her. When Ayla stumbles upon Jondalar and his brother in the moments after a vicious lion attack, she does not hesitate to help save Jondalar's life. However, Ayla has many doubts as Jondalar recovers and becomes a part of her life, worried that he will not accept her for who she is and will leave her once he is healed. It takes a long time for Ayla to finally realize that Jondalar does not have the same reservations regarding women as the people she grew up with and that he wants her just the way she is.

At the same time, Jondalar and his brother, Thonolan, are on a journey to help them discover where it is they belong. They travel through many territories, coming across many different people. For a time it seems they might be content to settle down with the Sharamudoi people; however, Thonolan's Sharamudoi wife dies and he cannot face the memories of her in their home. Jondalar leaves with Thonolan, still looking for a place where he belongs, for a woman he can love. Jondalar has never found a woman he loves, although he has often found women he admires and cares for. Jondalar does not believe he belongs anywhere or he can ever love one woman the way Thonolan loves his wife, until he meets Ayla. Finally, when Jondalar and Ayla come together they both find the place where they belong.

Brotherly Love

Jondalar is content in his life. Jondalar is not in love, but has a spirited woman he might mate. However, when Jondalar's brother, Thonolan, announces he wants to go on a



Journey, Jondalar immediately jumps at the chance to go along. Thonolan often questions Jondalar's motives, accusing him of running away from the spirited woman who is determined to force him to settle down. Jondalar denies it but admits to himself that perhaps he is running from a loveless mating. Jondalar also admits to himself that he has come on this journey because he wants the opportunity to be close to his brother and to get to know him on a level he might never have found in the safety of their home Cave.

Jondalar and Thonolan have many adventures together during the first year of their journey. They meet a group of flatheads who appear to show intelligence when they walk away from a fight. They meet a group of Cave people who are many generations born from one woman, an unusual situation in their time. Jondalar gives First Rites to a young woman who hopes to have a blue eyed child just like him. Then Thonolan is injured in an animal attack that leaves Jondalar panicked, afraid for his brother's life. Jondalar prays and works frantically to save his brother's life, aware only a miracle will help. A miracle comes in the shape of a new group of Cave people who come with a medicine person in apparent answer to Jondalar's prayers.

When Thonolan finds love among these miraculous people, Jondalar settles to life in their Cave even though Thonolan urges him to go home. Jondalar cannot reconcile the idea of returning home without his little brother. Jondalar has a deep love for his brother and is assured by the healer that his brother will lead him to the place he is meant to be. Jondalar remains by Thonolan's side, especially after the death of Thonolan's wife leaves him suicidal. Jondalar loves his brother so much that he sets aside his own homesickness and stays with Thonolan with the hopes that he can convince him to find value to life again. Unfortunately, Thonolan is killed in a lion attack, but by continuing his Journey before his death, Thonolan brings Jondalar to Ayla.

Soul Mates

Ayla is an orphan who was raised by people who are not like herself. Ayla is of an advanced race of human beings while her foster people are of a prehistoric group of humans who will eventually become extinct. Ayla has never felt accepted by these people. In fact, Ayla's foster people feel threatened by her, afraid of what her presence among them might mean to them. Eventually, Ayla is expelled by the Clan because of a natural disaster they blame on her. Ayla is left alone with no knowledge of her own kind and no way of knowing how to find them. Ayla wanders the land, afraid of what might happen if she does find her own kind, eventually making a home for herself, isolated from all mankind, in an attempt to protect herself from further emotional harm.

Jondalar is a man who has always been around his own kind and has always been accepted. In fact, as Jondalar became a man he found himself the object of a great deal of desire by those of the opposite sex. Jondalar is a highly experienced man and knows how to bring pleasure even to women who have never known it before. This causes a great deal of ridicule for Jondalar from men but also admiration from both men and women. However, Jondalar has never known love. Jondalar has shared a bed with



many women and has felt a great deal of affection but has never known love like the love Thonolan had for his wife, Jetamio.

When Ayla and Jondalar find each other, their relationship begins on rocky ground. At first, Ayla and Jondalar cannot communicate because of the differences in the form of communication each has known since childhood. Eventually Ayla learns to speak Jondalar's language and communicates well. However, the different culture of their people creates boundaries between them. When Ayla realizes Jondalar plans to leave her and Jondalar learns that Ayla was raised by flatheads, their relationship seems doomed to failure. Fortunately, they find their way back to each other, and Jondalar experiences desire and emotion like he has never known before. Finally Jondalar realizes he has found love for the first time in his life. Jondalar and Ayla are soul mates, brought together by fate and perhaps something higher and more powerful, making soul mates a theme of the novel.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of this novel is the third person omniscient point of view. The novel is written in alternating chapters in which one set of chapters are written through the eyes of Ayla, the young woman expelled from the only home she has ever known to find her own people. The other set of chapters tell the story of Jondalar, a young Cave man who is on a Journey with his little brother, out to have as many adventures as possible before settling down to a life with a mate and a hearthside full of children. Eventually these two characters come together, and the narration shifts back and forth between them as they get to know each other and become lovers.

The point of view of this novel works well in the first half of the book. The chapters alternate in the first half of the book, between the two main characters. Using the third person point of view allows the writer to develop an intimacy between the reader and these two main characters. It is especially important in the chapters dealing with Ayla because she is alone so there is no dialogue to distract from Ayla's thoughts and actions. In the latter half of the book, the two main characters come together and these later chapters are seen through both of their eyes. The shift in narration in these later chapters can be confusing because sometimes the switch happens mid-sentence, leaving the reader wonderign in whose mind they are as they read the thoughts and feelings of the narrating character. However, the third person point of view is a good choice for this novel because it does allow the reader to see both the feelings of Ayla and Jondalar, which is of great importance as they struggle with their budding relationship.

Setting

The novel is set during the Ice Age, in a time when Cro-Magna people coexist with Neanderthals. Through the course of their Journey, Jondalar and Thonolan follow the course of the Great Mother River, a description of which suggests it might be the Danube River. Jondalar and Thonolan come to live with the Sharamudoi people during their journey, who live in caves cut into a sheer cliff along the course of the river. Ayla, too, lives in a cave that is naturally occurring in a rock wall of a small valley she finds south of a glacier. The valley is protected from the wind that comes from the weather system created from the cold of the glacier, making it a prime place for both human, animal, and vegetation to grow.

The most important aspect of the setting in this novel is the time period in which it is set. The main character, Ayla, is an orphan who was raised by a Clan, or flatheads, or Neanderthals. These people have strict codes of conduct and traditions that leave Ayla full of misgivings when she imagines finding people of her own kind. At the same time, Cro-Magna people are introduced to the narration in the form of Jondalar and his



brother Thonolan, who are on a Journey to experience adventure before settling down to raise children with their future mates. There are many traditions among these people that are amazingly similar to traditions of modern human beings. However, they are radically different from the Neanderthals in many ways, causing obstacles for Ayla when she meets and falls in love with Jondalar.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple English. However, due to the unique nature of the time period in which the novel is set, there are many words and phrases that while not unusual to modern vocabulary, are used in unique ways. For example, rather than using the vulgar words for sexual intercourse, the people who populate this novel refer to the act of making love as Pleasures. Marriage is mating, while God is referred to as Mother or Doni. There are also other words that are unfamiliar to most modern readers, such as knappers, the word used for tool and weapon makers in Jondalar's cave.

The language of the novel is simple in its narration and descriptions. There are words in the novel that are unfamiliar or used in a new way for most readers, but these words are often explained either within the text or through their context in dialogue or description. The writer attempts to keep much of her language consistent with how she imagines the people spoke in the time period in which the novel is set, keeping her story authentic. However, there are times in which these unusual words can be jarring, taking the reader out of the story for seconds at a time and making the plot difficult to enjoy.

Structure

The novel is divided into twenty-nine chapters. Each chapter is fairly long, many containing more than thirty pages. In the first half of the novel, the chapters are divided into the two separate story lines that unfold within the plot. The narration alternates from chapter to chapter, with one following Ayla as she attempts to find her own people and then settles down in a cave on her own, with the next chapter following Jondalar as he and his brother, Thonolan, embark on a Journey. Toward the end of the novel, Ayla finds Jondalar injured from a lion attack and takes him to her cave where he heals. These chapters include narration through the eyes of both Ayla and Jondalar, giving singular focus to the narration.

The novel begins with two plots that unfold separate of one another. One plot follows Ayla as she searches for her own people and then gives up, settling in a small valley with only the company of a horse and a cave lion. The other plot follows Jondalar and Thonolan as they embark on a Journey together. These two plots remain separate until the final chapters of the novel when Jondalar and Thonolan's Journey ends near Ayla's cave with a lion attack. Ayla saves Jondalar's life and befriends him, learning his language and the customs of his people. At the same time, Jondalar overcomes a long held prejudice against Ayla's Clan people and falls in love with her.



Quotes

"She was dead. What did it matter if icy needles of freezing rain flayed her skin raw."
Chapter 1, pg. 1

"Jondalar studied the big flathead and had the disconcerting feeling that the large brown eyes staring back were studying him. He had never been so close to one before, and he was surprised. These flatheads did not quite fit his preconceived ideas of them."
Chapter 2, pgs. 24-25

"Jondalar crouched low and watched the herd through a screen of tall, golden-green grass, bent with the weight of unripe seed heads. The smell of horse was strong, not from the dry wind in his face carrying their hot rangy odor, but from the ripe dung he had rubbed on his body and held in his armpits to disguise his own scent if the wind shifted."
Chapter 4, pg. 51

"Noria had listened with fascination to stories other women told of their Rites of First Pleasures. Some women didn't think they were such a pleasure. They said the Gift of Pleasure was given to men, that women were given the ability to give men pleasure so men would be bound to them; so men would hunt and bring food and skins to make clothes when a woman was heavy with child or suckling young. Noria had been warned there would be pain in her First Rites."
Chapter 4, pg. 69

"Ayla was almost asleep when the filly sniffed her and then lay down beside her. She didn't think at the time that the foal's responses would wake her if any predator came too close to dying fires, though it was so. Half asleep, the young woman put her arm around the warm little animal, felt her heartbeat, heard her breath, and cuddled closer."
Chapter 5, pg. 94

"Jondalar was far from home and did not know the customs of these people, yet he had no doubt that the person standing in front of him was a healer. Maybe One Who Served the Mother, maybe not; it didn't matter. Thonolan needed a healer, and a healer had come."
Chapter 8, pg. 125

"Like the indecisive spring, with its swift changes from icy showers to warm sun and back again, Ayla's inclination shifted from one extreme to the other." Chapter 10, pg. 163

"He looked at the woman beside him and wondered how long it would take to make her ready again, then breathed in her ear. She smiled at him. He kissed her neck, and then



her mouth. It would be slower this time, he would take his time. She is a beautiful, wonderful woman...why can't I fall in love?" Chapter 12, pg. 232

"But every time she thought of a man's face, she saw Broud, with a gloating sneer. She could not imagine the face of a man of the Others. Her eyes grew tired and she lay down again. She dreamed of Whinney and a bay stallion. And then of a man. His features were vague, in a shadow. Only one thing was clear. He had yellow hair." Chapter 14, pg. 261

"Ayla had no use for leisure time. She had no way to fill it." Chapter 16, pg. 277

"Was she a...donii? Who but the mother could make animals do her bidding? What about her healing powers? Or her phenomenal ability to speak so well already? For all that she had an unusual accent, she had learned most of his Mamutoi, and some words in Sharamudoi? Was she an aspect of the Mother?" Chapter 28, pg. 466

"As the group neared, Ayla turned to Jondalar, her face full of surprise and wonder. 'Those people, Jondalar, they are smiling,' she said. 'They are smiling at me.'" Chapter 29, pg. 502



Topics for Discussion

Discuss Ayla. Who is she? Why is she alone? Why does she choose to travel north? Why does Ayla not travel in another direction? What does Ayla hope to find? Why does she stop in the valley of horses? Does Ayla really intend to continue her travels? Why or why not?

Why does Ayla kill the horse? Why does Ayla then befriend her kill's baby? What does Ayla hope to receive for saving the horse? Is Ayla's action with the foal a symbol of her loneliness? Explain. What does Ayla's action say about her instinct for survival?

Why does Ayla save the baby cave lion? How dangerous is this action? What might have happened if Ayla had not been able to control the lion? How does befriending this lion help Ayla to survive? How is survival a theme of this novel? How is the lion a symbol of that theme?

Who is Jondalar? Why is Jondalar on Journey with his brother? What is Jondalar escaping? For what is Jondalar looking? Why do both men and women admire Jondalar? What does Jondalar do during First Rites of Pleasure that make him so admired? Why does Jondalar do these things? Does Jondalar love the women with whom he has sex? Why is Jondalar with so many women? How does this reflect the values of Jondalar's people?

What is Doni? Is Doni Jondalar's God? Why does Jondalar worship Doni and donii? Why does Jondalar create a donii with Ayla's face? How does this go against Jondalar's beliefs? Why does Jondalar do something that is so clearly against his beliefs? What does this action prove to the reader about Jondalar's feelings?

Discuss flatheads. Why do Jondalar and his people believe flatheads are animals? What is it about the flatheads that support this belief? Why do Jondalar's people torture and harm flatheads? What do these actions say about prejudice and cruelty? Compare Jondalar's people's prejudices to modern day racism. How are these similar? How are they different?

Discuss customs. List Ayla's customs. List Jondalar's customs. How are Ayla's customs different from Jondalar's customs? How do these customs cause Ayla difficulties in her growing relationship with Jondalar? How do these differences cause Jondalar trouble in relating to Ayla? How do Jondalar and Ayla overcome these differences?