

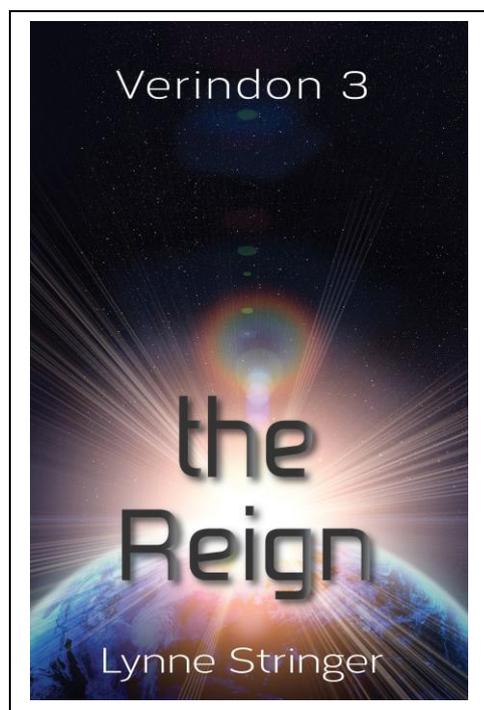


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The Reign

by Lynne Stringer

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Recommended Age: 14 and up

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Introduction

The Reign is the final book in the Verindon Trilogy and tells the continuing story of Sarah, who grew up on Earth, before discovering that she was the heir to the throne of another planet.

Story Summary

By the time *The Reign* commences, about a month has passed since the events of the second book, *The Crown*. Sarah is still desperate to have Keridan as her consort, but is forced to face the fact that it is impossible for someone in her position. As Sarah tries to live with the knowledge that she and Keridan can never be together, she accepts a pledge of allegiance from the graduating class of agents. But this allegiance will be tested when an unexpected visitor arrives on Verindon; a visitor with a shocking secret. What effect will this have on Sarah's reign?

Key Learning Areas

Overcoming racial differences, difference between upper and lower classes, power and control, corruption in government, traditions versus change

Values Addressed/Themes

Racism, slavery, politics, rebellion, oppressive regimes

About the Author



Lynne Stringer has been passionate about writing all her life, beginning with short stories in her primary school days. She began writing professionally as a journalist and was the editor of a small newspaper (later magazine) for seven years, before turning her hand to screenplay writing and novels. Lynne currently works as a professional editor and proofreader. She lives in Australia with her husband and young son. *The Reign* is her third published novel and the final book in The Verindon Trilogy.

Discussion Questions

Chapter One

1. Sarah is bad tempered with both Hajitis and Denzik, even though they are not the ones directly responsible for Keridan staying away. Is she justified in taking out her anger on them? Can you recall circumstances when you have taken your anger out on a person when they didn't deserve it? How can you guard against this kind of behaviour?
2. Sarah lies about why she wants Keridan to remain unbonded. This forces her into a corner, as she now has to announce someone as her consort. Is lying ever justified? Can you think of any situations when you have lied and it made a situation worse, rather than better? Can you think of any other ways she might have behaved that would have not forced her hand like this?
3. What do you think Perisina is trying to tell Sarah when she says the medallists are 'very young'?
4. Why do you think Denzik is reluctant to allow the agents' art to be shown at the opening of the art gallery? Can you think of reasons why a race that prides themselves on keeping their emotions under control would consider art important?
5. In spite of being a compassionate person, Morlanda does not suggest any changes to the agents' condition. Why do you think this is? Is it because she's too afraid to suggest changes because of Denzik or just that it's 'always been that way' so she doesn't see anything wrong with it? Can you think of any situations in our society where attitudes need to change because people only hold their opinions because it's 'always been that way'? What can we do to combat this attitude?

Chapter Two

1. Do you agree with Sarah's assessment of the upper class on Verindon? Should love always be the reason for any marriage? Can you think of cultures or situations in our society where other reasons are given for marrying? Do you believe these are wrong? Why or why not?
2. Sarah has noticed that the Agency will believe in a legend if it supports their agenda and will speak against it if it doesn't. Can you think of anywhere in our society that you have seen this kind of hypocrisy? Now think of your own opinions. Are there any situations where you are doing the same thing?
3. Do you think Ardon is being repellent, as Sarah believes? If not, what do you think is the reason for his behaviour?
4. Have you ever looked at the way the royal families in our societies live? Do you think their lives are as easy as the tabloids make out or is there more to life than privilege, as Sarah thinks?

Chapter Three

1. Do you think Sarah is right to be outraged at Lady Insolin's suggestion? Do you think this tradition should be followed or should Sarah follow Lady Insolin's advice? Do you think Sarah would be reluctant if Keridan was her betrothed?
2. Have you ever known anyone who had an arranged marriage? Do you know anything about what it was like for them to be intimate with someone when they didn't love them and perhaps didn't even know them that well? How do you think you would cope in that situation?
3. Do you think Keridan asked Hajitis to lead the team just so he doesn't have to speak to Sarah or do you think there's another reason? If yes, do you think this was appropriate behaviour for him or should he have spoken to her?

Chapter Four

1. Why do you think that Sarah is so desperate to spare Amanda Fenhardt from an agent-only interrogation? Do you think she still has feelings for the woman she knew as her mother? Do you think she is wise to do this or should she let the agents have free rein? What would you do in the same circumstances? Why?
2. Why do you think the agents didn't bother to check Amanda Fenhardt's background thoroughly? Do you think it was careless of them or is it a case of hindsight providing an angle that didn't seem important earlier? Can you recall a time when you did something that, in hindsight, was a mistake? What implications did it have?
3. Why do you think Sarah hides Amanda Fenhardt's lie from the agents? Do you think it's wise for her to do this? Do you think you would do the same if you were in her situation? Why or why not?

Chapter Five

1. Should Sarah have told the agents about the message she received from Amanda Fenhardt? How do you feel about her reasons for refusing to tell them? Which reason do you think is more important to her: finding out the truth or putting herself in danger to escape the drudgery of her life and/or attract Keridan's attention? Can you think of any other course of action that she could take?
2. Did it surprise you to discover that there were 'rebellious' agents? Do you think it would be more logical for them to rebel against their leadership, rather than Sarah, who has been trying to free them? What do you think motivates them to stand against her?

Chapter Six

1. Did it surprise you to discover that Petos was leading the squad? Why do you think Petos is the leader even though his talent is clearly not strategy?
2. Sarah goes into the Safety Zone and managed to kill all five agents, when three of them were also zonal and they had more experience in the zone than she. What do you think enabled her to do that?

Chapter Seven

1. What do you think motivates Hajitis to support Sarah even though she is no longer Overlord and is, instead, something that Vendel generally consider an abomination?

Chapter Eight

1. Do you agree that what Keridan did in leaving Sarah and keeping her at arm's length was the right thing for him to do? Why or why not? Can you think of something else he could have done that would have been more appropriate?
2. Do you think Keridan is right in assuming that Korviki really cared about Sarah or do you think she had another motive for doing what she did? Do you have any idea what else might have been motivating her?

Chapter Nine

1. Do you think Keridan was right to put Sarah at risk just because he wanted them to be together? Do you think it's worth risking something like that or would caution have been better, even if it did work this time? Have you ever been in a situation where you have done something irrational because of how you felt about it and it caused problems? What problems did it cause? How could you have handled the situation differently?
2. The agents deliberately wipe out a bystander's credit to create a fight as a diversion. This would have resulted in the injury and possibly the death of some innocent bystanders during the ensuing fight. Do you think the end justifies the means in this case? Are there

instances where you think collateral damage like that is justified or should it always be avoided?

Chapter Ten

1. Why do you think Keridan sent the file to Ardon rather than to someone else in the Agency or the High Council? Why do you think Ardon came to meet them with only regular guards and no agents?

Chapter Eleven

1. With what you have seen of the agent's lifestyle, how do you think Sarah will cope with that kind of life? What do you think she will find the most difficult?
2. If the selection process the agents have is meant to choose the best match for any individual agent, why do you think the program selected Keridan for Sarah?

Chapter Twelve

1. Why do you think the Agency doesn't allow divorce or separation for the agents but has no problem with trying to kill off an unpopular agent so that their partner can be given to someone else?

Chapter Thirteen

1. In this chapter we see clear evidence that Denzik has been plotting something. How long do you think his plotting has gone on? Why do you think he has let Sarah live all this time if he was plotting something?

Chapter Fourteen

1. What do you think Denzik knows about Vashta's talent? Why do you think Sarah is the one to have rediscovered it?

Chapter Fifteen

1. Sarah states that legends can be true, if only in part. Think about some of the legends we have. Can you think of any that might have some truth in them, even if the majority of the story, as we know it today, is probably not true?
2. The Agency seems to have outlawed Vashta's talent because they don't want women to be in charge. Can you think of any similar power plays in our history or in the modern world where people take seemingly extreme measures just to keep power to themselves? Is there any way we can guard or fight against this kind of thing to keep it from happening?

Chapter Sixteen

1. What do you think made Sarah step out to save Letz even though Keridan clearly didn't support the idea?

Chapter Seventeen

1. Why do you think Denzik has kept Sarah alive when it's likely he knew that she had come with others and, being the head of the agents, probably knew how many there were and who they were?
2. What do you think motivates Keridan to speak to the enemy agents? What effect do you think his words had on them?

Chapter Eighteen

1. Trayzon elects to kill the rebellious members of his own race, rather than another race. Can you see logic in this action or do you think it was a sign that he was mad? Explain your answer.

Chapter Nineteen

1. Did it surprise you to discover that Hajitis was in love with Sarah? Why do you think he didn't tell her? With this in mind, what do you think made him go back for Keridan? Wouldn't it have been better for him to leave Keridan to die so he could have a chance with Sarah?
2. Why do you think Keridan's emotional appeal worked with a group of people trained not to love or care for anyone? Do you agree with his assessment, or do you think there could have been other reasons for their behaviour?

Chapter Twenty

1. Given the way Ardon seems to be ruling, were you surprised that the law prohibiting marriage between the Verindal and the Vendel hadn't been scrapped? Do you think such a prohibition could be overcome or is it likely the differences between the two races would make that level of trust impossible?
2. Can you think of ways to unite the races on our own planet and ways that you and those in your circle of friends can help overcome poor racial attitudes and prejudices?