

## *Bone Talk* by Candy Gourlay

### Characters:

**Samkad:** The protagonist of the story. Samkad is desperate to become a man and to slay a Mangili.

**Father:** Samkad's father. The tribe's best warrior and Samkad's only parent after his mother dies in childbirth.

**Little Luki:** Samkad's closest friend and rival. Luki is a fierce girl who worries about losing her friendship with Samkad when he becomes man.

**The Ancients:** They decide what is going to happen in the village and when a child becomes a man.

**Tambul:** A friend of Samkad's and a fierce warrior. Watch out for how this relationship changes the way Samkad sees the Americans.

**The Mangili:** The tribe's sworn enemy. Beheading a Mangili is a key part of becoming a man.

**Chuka:** Samkad's faithful dog. Chuka is used to explore the theme of **loyalty** in the novel.

**Coporal Quinlan:** An American soldier. The novel's main antagonist. He is much more aggressive than Mister Williams who appears to just be studying the tribe.

**Context:** The novel is set in 1899 and centres on the Philippine American War.

The Philippines had been a Spanish colony since 1571. In 1896 the Filipinos started plotting a rebellion.

The Americans helped the Filipinos fight the Spanish leading to the Filipinos announcing independence from Spain in 1898.

Spain agrees to give the Philippines to America for \$20 million dollars. The American President, William McKinley, states that the Americans have come 'not as invaders or conquerors, but as friends, to protect the natives.' He calls this process 'Benevolent Assimilation'. When Filipinos resist he launches a full scale invasion.

### Key Themes and Ideas:

**First Contact Narrative:** A narrative focused on the first meeting between two cultures.

**Colonialism:** When one country takes control of another and exploits it economically.

**Symbolism:** The use of images to represent different ideas.

**Exploitation:** Profiting from the unfair treatment of others.

## Knowledge Organiser Questions

### Bronze (Recall)

1. Who is Samkad?
2. List one detail about Samkad's father.
3. What does Little Luki worry about?
4. Explain what the Ancients do.
5. Who is Tambul?
6. How do you become a man?
7. What nationality is Corporal Quinlan?
8. Who is Chuka?
9. What is Mister Williams looking to do?
10. When is the novel set?
11. Who are the Mangili?
12. When was the Philippines colonised?
13. What happened in 1896?
14. What did America promise to do?
15. How much did the Philippines cost?
16. Define exploitation.

### Silver (Apply)

- What is Samkad desperate for?
- Why is Samkad's father respected?
- How does Little Luki link to Samkad?
- Why are the Ancients respected?
- Why is Tambul an important character?
- How is manhood linked with violence?
- What is Quinlan's role in the novel?
- What theme is Chuka used to explore?
- What is a First Contact Narrative?
- Which war is taking place in the novel?
- Why are the Mangili important?
- What is colonialism?
- How did the Americans help the Filipinos?
- What did President McKinkley say?
- How are Americans presented differently?
- Who is the protagonist of this story?

### Gold (Investigate)

- What inspired Gourlay to write about Sam?
- How does Samkad's father change?
- Why does Luki worry about losing Sam?
- How Americans exploited Filipinos.
- Exploitation and how it links to Tambul.
- Cultural practices in the Philippines.
- Benevolent Assimilation.
- The theme of loyalty in *Bone Talk*.
- Find three other First Contact Narratives.
- President William McKinley.
- Why are the Mangili included in this text?
- The history of the Philippine American War.
- The importance of guns in the war.
- How Filipinos were sent to America.
- How Americans presented the conflict.
- How different characters are exploited.