



CHAPTER TEN

Before there were Books

In *The First Flame*, the Spark Riders arrive at the Waystation—a huge hall filled with notebooks.

But these aren't all books like the ones we know today. Their covers are made from leather, bark, cloth, carved wood, bamboo, burlap, and materials Kezbah can't even name. Some look ancient. Others look almost new.

For thousands of years, people have found ways to save their words, pictures, ideas, and stories—even before modern paper existed.

Can you identify the image below? Hint: It is in Canyon de Chelly on the Navajo Reservation.



What Did People Write On?

Stone

People carved pictures, symbols, and words into stone. Some have survived for thousands of years.

Clay

Ancient people pressed marks into wet clay tablets and then dried or baked them.

Papyrus

Ancient Egyptians made writing sheets from the papyrus plant.

Bamboo

In ancient China, writing was sometimes placed on narrow strips of bamboo that were tied together.

Parchment

People also wrote on specially prepared animal skins. Pages made this way could last for centuries.

1. Make a Book Without Paper

Imagine paper doesn't exist.

What would you make your book from?

Stone • Clay • Bark • Wood • Bamboo • Something else

My choice:

Why did you choose it?

2. What Would Survive?

Which do you think would have the best chance of surviving for 500 years?

A text message • A paper book • A clay tablet • Words carved in stone

Why?

Think About It

The Waystation contains notebooks from what seem to be many different times.

If you could open one book written by a kid who lived 1,000 years ago, what would you want to ask them?
