



Discussion Questions

Eragon by Christopher Paolini

Source: Madison Public Library

1. What was Eragon's life like before he found the dragon's egg in the Spine? How did his discovery of the egg change his life?
2. Why was Eragon comfortable exploring the Spine when everyone else in his village was afraid of the place? What does the Spine represent to the other inhabitants of Carvahall?
3. The first line of Eragon reads: "Wind howled through the night, carrying a scent that would change the world." What does this opening tell you about the meaning of destiny in the tale? What does the author mean by a "scent that would change the world"?
4. Discuss the importance of names in Christopher Paolini's novels. How does it affect Eragon to learn that his name was also the name of the first dragon rider? How does he choose Saphira's name?
5. What does Saphira mean when she says, "It is our destiny to attempt the impossible, to accomplish great deeds regardless of fear. It is our responsibility to the future." Is this true for everyone? What is the responsibility of each of us to the future?
6. In Eragon, Angela the fortuneteller says, "To know one's fate can be a terrible thing." Would you want to know your future if someone could tell you? Why does Eragon decide to hear her predictions? What does she mean when she says, "That freedom [to choose your fate] is a gift, but it is also a responsibility more binding than chains"?
7. In Eragon, how does Eragon know that he can trust Brom enough to travel with him? Why does he leave his home and all that is familiar to him?

8. Who are the Ra'zac and what do they represent to Eragon when he first encounters them in Eragon?
9. When Eragon realizes that Arya is an elf, does it change his feelings about her? Why does he rescue her from the prison even though it puts his own safety in jeopardy?
10. When Eragon finds the stronghold of the Varden he is challenged and his mind probed by the Twins. Why did Ajihad trust the Twins?
11. How does Eragon feel when he learns about Murtagh's parentage? Does the fact that Murtagh's father was Morzan affect Eragon's trust of him? Does it affect your feelings about his character?
12. What is Eragon's greatest fear? What is Roran's greatest fear? Do their fears affect the way they act and interact with others?
13. Discuss the connection of magic to power in this story. Why does Eragon have to learn the use of magic so slowly? Who are other characters that can use magic and what are the limits on their magical powers?
14. Why does the use of magic drain the energy of the person performing the magic?
15. Many fantasy novels deal with the struggle between forces of good and evil. Discuss the ways in which Eragon explores this theme and which characters represent good and which represent evil. Are there some characters that you are still not sure about by the end?
16. Eragon begins with the Shade and his ruthless ambush of the elf we later learn is Arya. How did this Prologue affect your anticipation of the story to come? Why is the Prologue titled "Shade of Fear"? What do we learn of the Shade's past when he is killed at the end of Eragon?
17. How did Galbatorix establish his rule of Alagaësia? According to the history Brom shares in Eragon, what experiences turned Galbatorix into a cruel and feared ruler?

18. The Urgals seem to be completely ruthless, yet Eragon is hesitant to kill them with his magic. In the chapter called "A Costly Mistake," why does he only use his magic to stun them? Why is he so upset when Murtagh kills Torkenbrand, the slave trader?
19. Describe the character of Saphira. How has she grown from the time she was a hatchling? What are some of the difficult feelings and pain that Saphira and Eragon share? What are some of the joys that they share?
20. Do you think Eragon will ever be able to return to the Palancar Valley and Carvahall? He longs for his home in the midst of his adventures, but will he and Roran be able to return to the farm when their adventures are over?
21. What kinds of good and evil do you hear about in the news of our world? Discuss examples from news stories that report events representing the good and evil in our society and in international news.
22. What circumstances can bring people together to become friends and what can make those friendships grow and develop? What circumstances can hurt a friendship? What are some of the ways people have difficulty with family members?
23. Do you feel that some people have a destiny to fulfill or a special reason for living? Name people in history who had a strong responsibility to a cause for good or evil. (Possibilities might be Abraham Lincoln, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. for good causes and Attila the Hun, Adolf Hitler, and Josef Stalin for evil.)