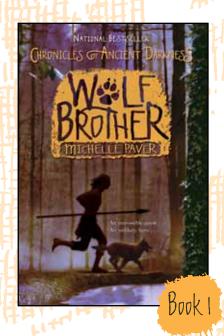
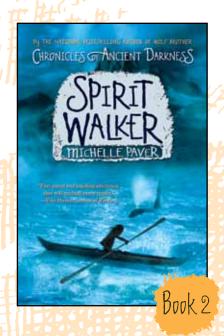
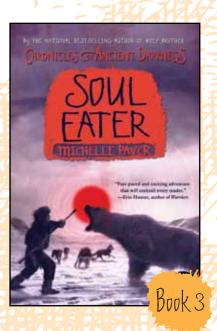
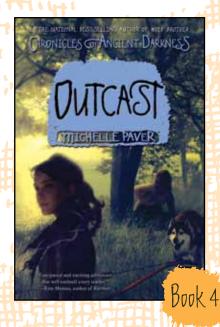
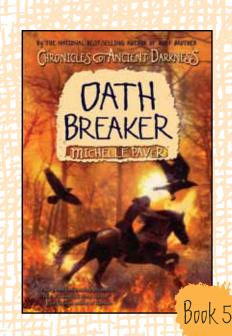
Discussion Guide

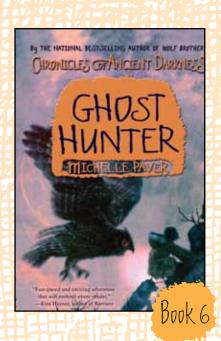






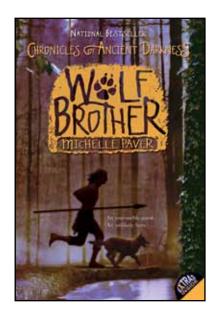






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WOLF BROTHER DISCUSSION GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK. After his father is killed by a demon-possessed bear, Torak is left alone in the ancient Forest. He must find his way to the Mountain and ask the World Spirit for help. Captured by the Raven Clan, Torak learns about his father's past and why a Soul-Eater created the demon bear. Led by his guide, a young orphaned wolf, and with the aid of a young woman who helps him escape from the Raven Clan, Torak seeks to fulfill the promise he made to his father—that he will find the Mountain or die trying. During their arduous journey to the Mountain, Torak must locate three of the most powerful pieces of the Nanuak to gain the World Spirit's help. Only then will it be possible to vanquish the demon bear—but Torak's battle with evil is far from over.

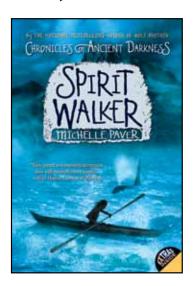
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Research information about prehistoric clans from different continents, including their traditions and cultures. What is the hierarchy within each clan? How are the cultures of these clans different from or similar to cultures in today's world?
- **2.** Why is Torak upset by his father's insistence that he find the Mountain of the World Spirit (pp. 7–8)? Does Torak understand why his father has asked him to find a mountain that he thought was legendary?
- **3.** How does Torak's vision upon finding the lone wolf cub relate to his father's prediction that Torak's guide will find him (p. 19)?
- **4.** Wolf calls Torak Tall Tailless and considers him a packbrother. Why doesn't Wolf respond in a similar manner to Renn? How does Wolf's opinion of the female tailless change with time?
- 5. What does Torak do to stop the fight with Hord? Why does this self-protective action change the way Fin-Kedinn views Torak (pp. 78–84)? How does Torak's action foretell his identity? Why doesn't Torak know about the clan legends that are so familiar to the rest of the people? Do you think Torak's lack of knowledge helps or hinders him in his quest?

- **6.** How does Hord's involvement with the demon bear's creation relate to his overpowering need to be the one who saves the clans? Do you think Hord can think rationally, based on what he knows and has seen?
- 7. Torak escapes captivity because he is helped by one of the Raven Clan (pp. 110–113). Why does Renn help Torak? What does she know about Torak's quest to find the Mountain of the World Spirit and the future of their people? If you had been in Renn's place, knowing what she knows, would you have gone with Torak on his quest?
- 8. Who is the Walker, and why do you think he does not refer to himself as "I"? What role does he play in helping Torak search for the Nanuak (pp. 161–169)? Do you think Torak's father knew the Walker? If so, what was their relationship, and how does it affect Torak's quest?
- 9. What is the relationship between Soul-Eaters and the crippled man who created the demon bear (pp. 263–267)? Are they part of the reason Torak's father kept him away from the clans? From whom was he trying to protect Torak? Do you think Torak's father made the right decision?
- 10. In the end, the World Spirit destroys the demon bear. In return, does the Spirit receive the payment it wants? Does this mean that the terror is over and the clans can live in peace and harmony? What is Torak still seeking, and what or whom do you think he will battle next?

Page numbers refer to the paperback edition of Wolf Brother.





ABOUT THE BOOK. A terrible sickness plagues the people of the Forest. Torak feels it is his destiny to find the cure, despite Fin-Kedinn's warning that the sickness might be a trick to capture Torak and gain his powers. Alone in the Deep Forest and at the Sea, Torak meets Tenris, a mage who may not be what he seems. Torak is a reluctant hero—thrust into the role by powers he never asked for, powers he does not understand. Part of his quest is to explore those powers and learn to use them for good. Doing so is an important step in realizing who he is and where he fits in, whom he can trust, what his parents were like, and what their heritage means to him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

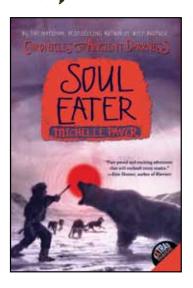
- 1. Clan leaders such as Fin-Kedinn command respect and obedience from the clan members. Are there people in contemporary society who get this kind of respect? Give an example and explain.
- 2. Fin-Kedinn is filled with guilt after he fails to protect Oslak from the ravages of the sickness. Is Fin-Kedinn's promise of keeping the clan safe an empty one (p. 22)? He hopes that he can save Torak, but does he truly believe he can? Explain.
- 3. Although he has been living with the Raven Clan for six months, Torak knows he will always be an outsider (p. 30). Teenagers often feel like outsiders—alienated by others and their surroundings. Does this quality make it easy to identify with Torak? Are there other similar traits between Torak and today's youth?
- 4. While skilled in protecting himself in the Forest, Torak is still inexperienced, and when he climbs a tree to escape a boar, he is in a panic because he has made a poor choice (p. 74). This is neither the first nor the last time that Torak acts in a rash manner. Find other examples from *Spirit Walker* where Torak should have chosen a different path.
- 5. Torak begins to "feel watched" (p. 60). Who or what is the creature pursuing Torak? How might Torak's Follower be a metaphor for other fears? How can fear be helpful as we take risks to achieve our goals? Has being afraid ever protected you? Has it ever prevented you from doing something?

- **6.** Think about the nature of the friendship between Torak and Wolf. Wolf risks his life to save Torak (p. 320). How does Renn fit into this relationship? Do you have a friend for whom you would risk your life or vice versa?
- 7. Author Michelle Paver did a great amount of research about the Stone Age. Imagine an archeological dig she might have gone on. What artifacts might she have found to reveal elements of religion, family, tribe, community, shelter, weapons, and customs? What clues does she give that convey that the story is set in northern Europe?
- **8.** Fantasy novels often center on quests. What quest is Torak on? How successful is he? What parts of his quest remain unresolved?
- 9. Betrayal is an ongoing theme in the Chronicles of Ancient Darkness series. How is Torak betrayed, and how does he seek his revenge? Have you ever been betrayed by someone you trusted and held in esteem? How did you react?
- **10.** In *Wolf Brother*, Torak's father warned him to stay away from men (pp. 7–8) but died before he could explain why. In *Spirit Walker*, Fin-Kedinn warns Torak that the Soul-Eaters know that someone in the Forest has power (p. 42). What powers does Torak have? Can you predict other powers he might discover in the next book?

Page numbers refer to the paperback editions of *Wolf Brother* and *Spirit Walker*.



SOUL EATER DISCUSSION GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK. Torak's enemies capture Wolf and take him on a harrowing trip across the Far North. Terrified and determined, Torak and Renn give chase. With help from new Far North friends, they learn to survive the freezing wind, snow, and ice. While pursuing and then fighting the Soul-Eaters, Torak is tested almost beyond endurance, as a spirit walker and as a friend. He learns more about survival, loyalty, betrayal, his magic's strength, and the terrible evil of which ordinary people are capable, as well as the ability of powerful people, such as the Soul-Eaters, to do immense good.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **1.** As Torak travels, what does he notice about tracks, animal behavior, and changes in the weather? How does paying such close attention to his surroundings help him survive?
- 2. After a snowstorm, Torak realizes that he and Renn have left all their weapons and supplies outside their shelter (p. 59). What might have been the consequences if Torak and Renn had not dug for their weapons and supplies? What other survival mistakes do they make?
- **3.** What survival skills do the White Fox Clan, the Raven Clan, and the Seal Clan have? How are each clan's skills different from those of the other clans? Why might these differences exist? Do Ravens, Seals, and White Foxes learn any similar survival skills? What are they?
- **4.** Why do the characters eat meat more than any other food? What fruits and vegetables do they eat, and where do they get these foods? Could they survive without meat? If so, how?
- 5. The Mage of the Raven Clan says of Torak: "His life is not his own; he must not risk it for a *friend*!" (p. 77). Renn tells Torak: "If [the Soul-Eaters] catch you, if they take your power, it could endanger the whole Forest" (p. 126). Yet Torak feels that he must save Wolf. Is Torak right to stay loyal to Wolf and risk all the Forest clans? Why or why not?

- 6. Torak spirit walks into a polar bear to search for Wolf (pp. 188–190). However, once inside the bear, Torak's souls are almost trapped and overwhelmed. Is Torak right to risk losing his souls to save his friend? What are the reasons for and against taking such a risk? Is any risk ever too great to take for a friend's benefit?
- 7. Inuktiluk says to Torak: "It seems to me that you're like the black ice bear, who comes once in a thousand winters. You may never find peace. But you will make friends along the way. And many lands will know your name" (p. 310). Does Inuktiluk think that Torak's magic is more of a gift or a burden? Why? Why might Torak agree or disagree with him?
- 8. To fight the Soul-Eaters, Torak pretends to be their apprentice, and the mages demand that he sacrifice an owl (pp. 153–154). Torak considers this sacrifice evil. Why? Why does he feel he must kill the owl anyway? Are evil acts always wrong, or can they sometimes be justified if they bring about good results?
- 9. After Torak kills the owl, the Soul-Eaters give him a root to eat so that he will go into a trance (p. 176). Does Torak want to participate in the ritual? Why or why not? Does Torak pay too high a price for the good he hopes will come from this action?
- **10.** "She wasn't wholly bad," Torak says of the Bat Mage, a Soul-Eater (p. 300). What does he mean? In what ways might he be right? How might he be wrong?

Page numbers refer to the paperback edition of $Soul\ Eater.$





ABOUT THE BOOK. Torak is keeping a terrible secret from Renn and the entire Raven Clan: The Soul-Eaters have put their mark on him. His secret is discovered, and the clans declare him outcast. Running from them, he falls prey to a soul-sickness caused by a mysterious evil, and he no longer recognizes friend or foe, not even his beloved companion, Wolf. Opposing clan law, kinsman Bale searches for and finds Torak and Wolf, and Renn discovers that she must use her dreaded Magecraft talents to fight the evil menace that threatens to enslave them all.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

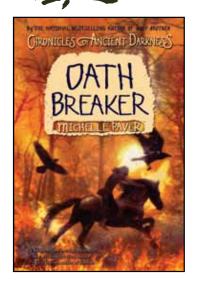
- **1.** Study the map at the beginning of *Outcast*. What does it tell you about the story's setting and the story itself? How?
- 2. Outcast, like the other books in the Chronicles of Ancient Darkness series, has points of view from various characters. How does seeing through multiple characters' eyes enhance your understanding and appreciation of their stories?
- **3.** What do the characters' clans and clan creatures teach them about themselves as individuals? What do these affinities teach them about the larger world? What do you have in your life that is similar to a clan, and what has it taught you?
- **4.** "Until now, he hadn't understood how much a secret can set you apart" (p. 3). What does this statement mean in relation to Torak? Using examples from your own life, explain why you agree or disagree with this potential effect of a keeping a secret.
- 5. What does it initially mean to Torak to be clanless? How does the meaning of being without a clan change for him over the course of the story? What in your life correlates to the idea of being with or without a clan? Have you ever felt clanless? If so, how did that experience affect you?

- **6.** Wolf and the other animal characters in the story behave like realistic animals, yet they also have emotions similar to humans'. How is this depiction of animals realistic? Are there any ways in which it is unrealistic? Why or why not?
- 7. How are the concepts of fate and destiny important to Torak, Renn, and the other characters in the series?
- 8. Rather than the power of physical aggression, the Soul-Eater Seshru wields the power of manipulation. What are the similarities and differences between these two powers? Is one any better or worse than the other? Why or why not?
- **9.** How does the natural world influence clan cultures in *Outcast*? In what ways does the natural world that surrounds you influence your culture? If you think that nature does not affect you, articulate the reasons for your opinion.
- **10.** What secret has Renn been keeping about her heritage? How has the secret affected her actions over the course of the Chronicles of Ancient Darkness stories? What might the secret mean for her future?
- 11. Fin-Kedinn says, "Growing up can be a kind of soul-sickness, Torak. The name-soul wants to be strongest, so it fights the clan-soul telling it what to do. You've got to find a balance, like a good knife" (p. 309). What does he mean by this statement? Do you agree or disagree with this description of growing up?

Page numbers refer to the paperback edition of Outcast.



DISCUSSION GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK. Torak leaves Bale alone on watch because of a disagreement, and Bale falls victim to the Soul-Eater Thiazzi's evil plot. Wracked by guilt, Torak vows to avenge Bale, so he, Renn, and Wolf launch themselves on a hunt for the murderous Thiazzi. The hunt leads them to the Deep Forest, where the clans are mired in a spiritual crisis caused by Thiazzi. While Torak risks his friends during his vengeance quest, Renn and Wolf each learn more about themselves: knowledge they must use to protect Torak—and to protect every clan from annihilation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

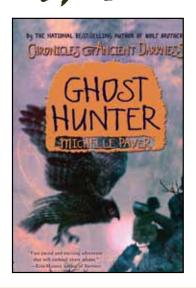
- 1. How do the Deep Forest clans differ overall from the Open Forest clans? Why do you think these differences exist? How do such cultural differences resemble those found between other historical or contemporary cultures that you have studied?
- 2. Why does Torak feel responsible for Bale's death? Should he? Describe a bad situation for which you have felt responsible. What did you do to try to make amends, and why?
- **3.** Torak thinks, "The scrape marks were as plain as a raven on an ice floe" (p. 21). How do such similes help convey the way Torak sees the world? What kinds of similes might you use to describe your world? How are they similar to and different from the ones Torak uses?
- **4.** After Bale's death, how is Torak's need to seek revenge a kind of grieving? Is there one correct way to mourn a terrible, unexpected loss? Explain.
- 5. "Until now, [Renn] hadn't grasped how the evil of the Soul-Eaters spread, like cracks on a frozen lake" (p. 118). Do you believe in evil? Why or why not? If you do believe it exists, do you think it spreads "like cracks on a frozen lake"? Why or why not?
- **6.** To demonstrate why the Red Deer refuse to fight, Durrain shows Torak and Renn the skulls of stags that locked horns while battling and then starved to death (pp. 130–131). Do you find Durrain's defense of pacifism convincing? Why or why not? In what real-life circumstances would you choose to take a pacifist stance, and why?

- 7. What role does religion play in the novel? Why do you think author Michele Paver chose to depict religion in this way? Compare and contrast religion's role in *Oath Breaker* with the functions it serves in cultures you have studied or observed.
- 8. How does Wolf come to realize that Torak is not a wolf? How does the realization change his relationship with Torak? How do you imagine that the animals in your life perceive the differences between you and them? In what ways do these differences affect their relationships with you?
- 9. How does Torak's quest for vengeance affect the other characters in the story? List at least three other examples from literature of companions whose lives are profoundly altered by someone else's unwavering quest. How would you characterize the results of the quests for these companions? Explain.
- 10. By the end of the story, why do Torak's and Renn's perceptions of each other shift? How do you predict these shifts will ultimately affect their relationship? Relate a situation in which your perception of a long-term friend changed. What was the result of your shift in perspective?
- **11.** What is your opinion of Torak's final choice to break his oath? If you were in his situation, would you have made the same choice? Why or why not? In what circumstances do you think breaking an oath is the right thing to do?

Page numbers refer to the hardcover edition of Oath Breaker.



GHOST HUNTER DISCUSSION GUIDE



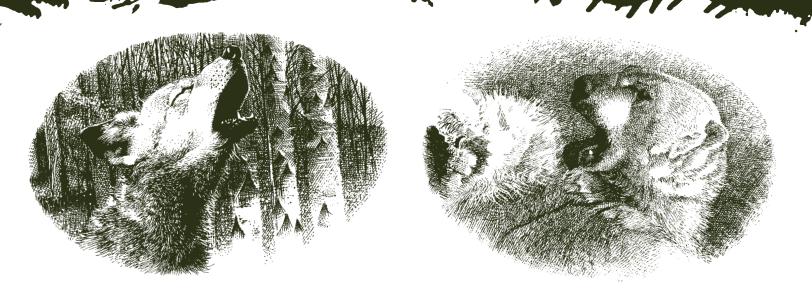
ABOUT THE BOOK. Torak careens toward his destiny as he seeks to defeat the most dangerous Soul-Eater of all, Eostra, the Eagle Owl Mage. At the beginning of Torak's quest, Eostra torments him by sending a sickness to the clans. She also strikes out at Wolf and his family. Torak, haunted by doom-filled dreams, endures the torment, and with the help of Renn and Wolf, he climbs the Mountain of Ghosts toward tokoroths, demons, the Gorge of the Hidden People, and the ruthless Eostra. As Torak, Wolf, and Renn battle Eostra, they make heartrending choices that transform them and their world forever.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. In what ways does each of the Chronicles of Ancient Darkness titles—Wolf Brother, Spirit Walker, Soul Eater, Outcast, Oath Breaker, and Ghost Hunter—represent a different aspect of Torak's character? If you were to add a seventh book to the series, what title might you give it to best describe the man Torak has become? Explain your choice.
- **2.** Why are dreams so important to Torak, Renn, and the other characters in *Ghost Hunter*? How do dreams help them better understand themselves and their world? In what ways do your dreams serve a similar purpose in your life?
- 3. Why does Torak initially try to leave Renn and Wolf behind? Why does this attempt anger Renn? Why might she be right to be angry, and why might she be wrong? If you were she, how would you feel about and respond to Torak's actions? Explain.
- **4.** Torak remembers what Renn once told him about wolves and death (p. 37). Do you think animals experience death differently than humans? Why or why not?
- 5. Describe the survival skills that are crucially important to Torak and Renn in the novel. Which of these skills are important because of the time period in which the characters live, and which are skills that people in today's world should also know? Provide reasons for your answers.

- 6. If you had to live as Torak and Renn do—catching your own food, making your own shelter, finding your own water, etc.—how would such a lifestyle change you? How might Torak and Renn change if they were transported to your world and lived as you do?
- 7. How do the Soul-Eaters use animals to achieve their goals? What effect does this have on the animals? Providing examples from *Ghost Hunter*, as well as examples you have experienced or observed, articulate your thoughts on acceptable human use of animals.
- 8. What does Dark's name say about who he is and the people he came from? How might his name have an allegorical meaning? Which characters in other stories you have read have allegorical names, and why are these names important to their respective stories?
- 9. Ultimately, Renn and Torak must make difficult sacrifices. How do they decide what to do? In situations where you have had to make sacrifices, how did you make your decisions? What were the results of your choices, and were the sacrifices worth the gains?
- **10.** Why do Torak and Wolf believe that "a wolf cannot be of two packs" (p. 282)? What do you think of this statement? How does it relate to your life and the lives of others around you?
- 11. What do you imagine Renn, Wolf, and Torak will do next? How will their pasts—their lives over the course of the Chronicles of Ancient Darkness series—affect their futures?

Page numbers refer to the hardcover edition of Ghost Hunter.



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