



The
SCHOOL
 for
GOOD AND EVIL
 A WORLD WITHOUT PRINCES
 BY SOMAN CHAINANI

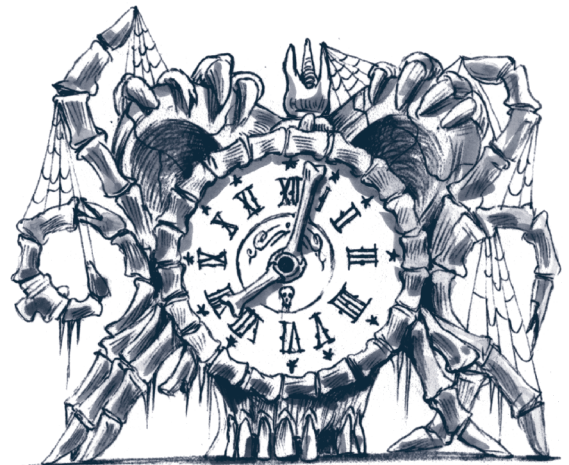
DISCUSSION GUIDE

ABOUT THE BOOK

What is “happily ever after”? Agatha and Sophie, home from the School for Good and Evil, hope their friendship will keep them happy forever. But what about true love? What about Agatha’s handsome prince? In this fast-paced adventure, the friends return to the school, only to find it divided into warring sides of girls and boys, headed for a deadly fight. Agatha has the power to heal the rift and make a better future—but is she willing to pay the price? Friendship, romance, danger, betrayal; it’s all part of growing up in this captivating fairy-tale world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. “There is an uneasiness that remains after your best friend tries to kill you,” opens this rich novel (p. 1). What does this sentence tell you about Sophie and Agatha’s past? What does it suggest about their current friendship? Discuss, too, what the sentence foreshadows about the future of their friendship and how that is played out in the plot. *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.3, RL.4.3, RL.5.3, RL.6.3, RL.7.3.*
2. The first chapter, “Sophie Makes a Wish,” is about a wish that becomes important in the plot. What does Sophie wish? What does the wish tell you about her, her background, and her situation? How does the wish affect what happens to her and Agatha later in the story? *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.5, RL.5.5, RL.6.5.*
3. In the second chapter, Agatha makes a wish that has an immediate effect on her surroundings and propels the plot in a major way. What is the wish? How does Agatha feel when she makes it and afterward? How does the wish lead to the action in the rest of the book? *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.5, RL.5.5, RL.6.5.*
4. Describe the School for Girls, including classrooms and living spaces, using details from the text. What aspects of the school reflect the new teaching that glorifies females? Describe the boys’ school and discuss the similarities and differences between the two schools. *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.1, RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.6.1, RL.7.1.*

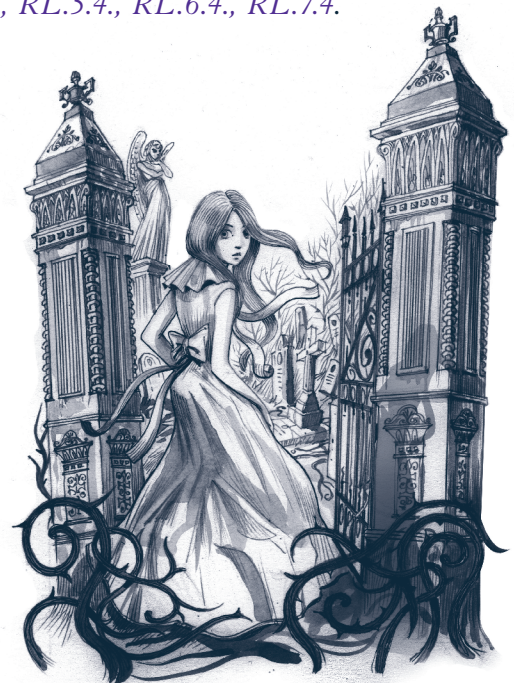


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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (cont.)

- Dean Evelyn Sader is a key figure in the story. What is her family background? Describe how she looks and acts. How do her actions drive the plot? Analyze whether or not you consider her a villain, and give your reasons. *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.3., RL.4.3., RL.6.3., RL.7.3.*
- Find examples of where females and males transform themselves into the opposite sex. Why do they do it? What does the disguise allow them to do? What do they find are the advantages of being male or female, if any? Use specifics from the text in your answers. *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.3., RL.4.3., RL.6.3., RL.7.3.*
- Tedros insists that growing up means choosing romance over friendship and that someone can't have both a best friend and a boyfriend or girlfriend (p. 335). What reasons, if any, does he give for his beliefs? How does his family history influence how he feels? Do you agree with him? Explain why or why not. *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.2., RL.4.2., RL.5.2., RL.6.2., RL.7.2.*
- In two scenes, Agatha remembers learning that "magic follows emotion" (pp. 29 & 50). What does this mean? What happens in these scenes to remind her of the idea? Where else in the book does magic follow emotion, and how does it change the plot? *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.1., RL.4.1., RL.5.1., RL.6.1., RL.7.1.*
- Re-read the passage on page 334 where Sophie notes that she thought of the fairy tale as her story with Tedros as the villain. But she realizes that Tedros thinks of it as his story and that he too deserves a happy ending. Is there one main character in this novel or more than one? What is the novel's narrative point of view? Explain your answers with examples from the text. *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.6., RL.5.6., RL.6.6., RL.7.6.*
- Betrayal is a theme throughout this book. In what ways do characters betray, or seem to betray, each other? How does each person react to the perceived betrayal? In what cases are actions misinterpreted as betrayal when they aren't? *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.2., RL.4.2., RL.5.2., RL.6.2., RL.7.2.*
- Find places where butterflies appear in the book, and discuss their functions and symbolism. What do butterflies have to do with Dean Sader, and why do her butterflies change from blue to red (p. 356)? What is the significance of the fact that Sophie's mother's name means *butterfly* (p. 347)? *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.1., RL.4.1., RL.5.1., RL.6.1., RL.7.1.*
- Trials of different kinds occur in the story and at the schools. On page 420, Dean Sader calls the word *trial* "such a delicious word." She then describes different meanings of the word. Take each meaning she gives, such as "difficult moment," and find several examples in the book that illustrate that kind of trial. Discuss how you encounter and use the word *trial* in your own life. *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.4., RL.4.4., RL.5.4., RL.6.4., RL.7.4.*





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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- 1. A SIMILE SAFARI.** This fantasy is filled with similes that refer to animals. Have students note page numbers for such similes as they read or go back and find them. Have each student choose a simile and write a paragraph explaining what is compared and how the comparison enriches the text. Then have them draw a picture of the image the simile creates in their mind. Post the images with the paragraphs on a “Simile Safari” bulletin board. *CCSS (Reading): RL.3.4., RL.4.4., RL.5.4., RL.6.4., RL.7.4.*
- 2. FAIRY-TALE FACEBOOK.** Have each student pick a character and create a social networking profile for him or her. The profile should include facts, friends, and interests. Have students write posts for their character that reflect what goes on in the book. Students can create their own social media templates with a word processing program or by hand, or use the free tool at www.classroomtools.net/FB/home-page. *CCSS (Writing): W.3.3., W.4.3., W.5.3., W.6.3., W.7.3.*
- 3. WHO’S GUILTY?** Characters in this book make major mistakes, break important rules, betray their friends, and more. Have the class discuss the different wrongdoings and choose characters to put on trial. Small groups for each accused character will marshal evidence on both sides, drawn from the text. Students can play defendant, plaintiffs, lawyers, witnesses, and judge, with the remaining class as jury. *CCSS (Speaking and Listening): SL.3.4., SL.4.4., SL.5.4., SL.6.4., SL.7.4.*
- 4. TWICE UPON A TIME.** Most of the students at the school come from families in fairy tales or legends but are not mentioned in those tales. Have students choose a fairy tale or legend and rewrite it with a new main character who’s the relative of a more well-known character. For example, the student could give Hansel and Gretel another sibling. In the rewritten tale, the new character should change the feel and ending of the story. *CCSS (Writing): W.3.3., W.4.3., W.5.3., W.6.3., W.7.3.*



Photo by David J. Martin

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SOMAN CHAINANI's first novel, *The School for Good and Evil*, has been translated into languages across six continents. As a writer and film director, Soman's films have played at over 150 film festivals around the world, winning more than 30 jury and audience prizes, and he has won numerous writing awards. When he's not telling stories or teaching in New York City, Soman is a die-hard tennis player. You can visit him online at www.somanchainani.net.



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