

INFINITY RING

CCSS
READY!

TEXT-BASED DISCUSSION GUIDE WITH COMMON CORE CORRELATIONS

Infinity Ring Book Five: Cave of Wonders

by Matthew J. Kirby



Europe is in the grip of the Dark Ages, but there is a light in the dark: Baghdad. The great city has become a center of learning, populated by scholars, merchants, and explorers from all across the known world. Now danger lurks in the desert . . . and Dak, Sera, and Riq must act fast to save the world's greatest library from utter destruction.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. As the story opens, Riq, Sera, and Dak are dressed in clothes from China and are dropped amidst a caravan just outside of Baghdad. Why does this not seem to be out of place?
2. Riq and Sera have a difficult time staying focused on the mission throughout the story. Why are they distracted? Why does this not seem to affect Dak?
3. Most of the story is set in the crowded, bustling streets of thirteenth-century Baghdad, where the population at that time was around 800,000 people! In what ways does this make accomplishing their mission challenging? In what ways does this make it easier than being in a more remote setting, like the American frontier at the end of the book?
4. When the Hystorians receive the details of their mission in chapter two, Riq and Sera react very differently to the idea of returning to the twenty-first century. Why?
5. In chapter three, Riq tells Sera, "You should be happy. Lots of religions and cultures means lots of choices for once." Discuss some of the ways in which the multicultural environment of the story is something that the Hystorians can take advantage of in pursuing their mission.
6. In chapter four, Dak has a bright idea to earn some cash for clothes, but that idea turns out to be less than brilliant. Why isn't it such a good idea, and what does the Market Inspector have to do with it?
7. As the trio enters the House of Wisdom, they are concerned that they may be confronted with Time Wardens. However, Riq doesn't think that will be a problem. Why not?
8. In chapter six, Abi impresses upon his fellow Hystorians the importance of saving not only Aristotle's works, but the entire library of the House of Wisdom. As Sera reflects upon this, she comes to understand that, at least in their struggle against the SQ, this is probably true. Why?
9. Initially the Hystorians think that Tusi is affiliated with the SQ, but later, Sera determines he is not. Why is there confusion about this?
10. Much as in Baghdad, Riq, Sera, and Dak are able to move rather freely through the Mongol camp. What is similar about these two settings that allows them to do so, and what is different?
11. On page 98, Dak asks his friends, "Do you wonder what is going on in the future? What the world looks like with the Breaks that we've fixed?...History is supposed to be settled." What does Dak mean by these statements, and how do they relate to his struggle to understand why history is so important to him?
12. While Dak has a couple of his usual "good-ideas-that-turn-out-not-so-good" early in the book, he has a few brilliant ideas that save the day later in the mission. What were they, and why do you think that these were more successful?

13. Abi, Tusi, Farid, and Hulagu Khan are secondary characters who are vital to the success of the trio's mission. What does each contribute to its success, and who do you think was most critical to it? Explain your choices.
14. Riq and Abi quite literally risk life and limb to get the Infinity Ring back from the vizier, and yet Riq isn't sure that doing so is the best thing. Why is he hesitant, and why does he go forward with it anyway? What do you make of this when you consider Riq's role as a Hystorian and as a leader?
15. How does Guo Kan go from being the "Divine Man" to the man out of favor with Hulagu Khan? How does Tusi go from being an advisor barely in the Khan's favor to a man for whom the Khan would delay the sack of Baghdad? What does this tell you both about authority in the Mongol Empire, and about the struggle between the Hystorians and the SQ?
16. Recall the discussion early in the book when the trio first arrives at the House of Wisdom, when the role of scholars in history is brought up. How might Tusi's efforts to save the Hystorians, to convince Hulagu to delay the pillaging of Baghdad, and to build an observatory outside of the city be considered an act of redemption?
17. What do you believe are the underlying themes or universal truths to be found in *Cave of Wonders*?
18. Throughout the story, Riq, Sera, and even Dak himself are compelled to consider why history means so much to Dak. By the end of the story, with the success of the mission within reach, Dak finally starts to understand the answer to that question. How would you answer it—why does history mean so much to Dak?
19. At the end of the novel, the trio quickly realizes that the next Break may be linked to Lewis and Clark's exploration of the Louisiana Purchase. However, they also quickly learn that they may be in more trouble than they initially realized. What do you think the Break will be, and what may stand in their way?
20. Using the phrase, "In this story, duty means...", discuss the importance of fulfilling obligations in *Cave of Wonders*. Explain your choices.
21. Using the phrase, "This is a story about...", supply five words to describe *Cave of Wonders*. Explain your choices.

USE THIS GUIDE TO TEACH THE FOLLOWING COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Fourth Grade

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details – RL 4.1, 4.2, 4.3

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration – SL 4.1a, 4.1b, 4.1c, 4.1d

Fifth Grade

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details – RL 5.1, 5.2, 5.3

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration – SL 5.1a, 5.1b, 5.1c, 5.1d

Sixth Grade

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details – RL 6.1, 6.2, 6.3

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration – SL 6.1, 6.2, 6.3

Seventh Grade

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details – RL 7.1, 7.2, 7.3

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration – SL 7.1, 7.2, 7.3

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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This guide was prepared by Rose Brock, a teacher, school librarian, and doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

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