

## Firebird: Where Fantasy Takes Flight™

Although the recent resurgence of interest in fantasy—as seen with the success of the Harry Potter books and the film version of *Lord of the Rings*—has brought the genre into the public eye in a big way, there have always been wonderful fantasy and science fiction novels and devoted readers. It is writing that transports both its author and its audience into another world, with remarkable heroes and heroines, heartstopping conflicts, and inventive magic.

Firebird titles are not any one particular kind of fantasy or science fiction. There are books set in “our” world; those full of sword and sorcery in other worlds; animal epics; and those set far in the future, on other planets. No matter what sort of book you choose for your classroom or reading group, you’ll find that there is much to discuss. I’ve provided some general questions to get you started—tailor them as you see fit. And have a wonderful time!

Sharyn November  
Editor  
Firebird

### **Discussion questions that can be used with any Firebird title:**

1. What defines a title as a “fantasy” or “science fiction” book?
2. Fantasy novels are frequently divided by genre—“high” and “low” fantasy. High fantasy is set in a world other than our own, and characterized by sword and sorcery. Low fantasy is based in our world, and turns on the device of everyday things imbued with magic. How would you classify the book you’re reading? Why?
3. Often, fantasy novels contain an object or objects that are considered symbols of power, or are set in a place that is a nexus of power. What are those things, or this place, in the book being discussed?
4. Many fantasy novels descend from the tradition of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* or folk and fairy tales, or one country’s native mythology. What is the case in this book? Is there more than one source?
5. As a reader, do you prefer fantasy/science fiction novels to have maps? Why or why not?
6. A number of fantasy novels feature an animal rather than a human society. How does this make the book different? Does it allow the writer to take more chances or fewer? Do you consider the books more or less believable?
7. Many novels in the genre pivot on important battle scenes. Do you consider this as endorsing violent behavior? To add to the discussion, how do Lloyd Alexander’s *Westmark* books treat the subject?

8. Do any of the books seem to have an “invented” mythology, universe, or belief system?—in other words, they may draw from certain sources, but still seem wholly original? What makes them original?
9. Do you think that comedy is an essential part of the fantasy genre? Do you think it is easier or harder to incorporate than tragedy? Are there certain Firebird books that are more comedic than others?

### **Firebird Reading List**

The Beguilers  
Kate Thompson  
0-14-250139-5 PB / 192 pp.

Castaways of the Flying Dutchman  
Brian Jacques  
0-14-250118-2. PB / 336 pp.

The Changeling Sea  
Patricia A. McKillip  
0-14-131262-9 PB / 144 pp.

#### The Claidi Journals by Tanith Lee

Wolf Tower (#1)  
0-14-230030-6 PB / 240 pp.  
Wolf Star (#2)  
0-14-230152-3 PB / 240 pp.  
Wolf Queen (#3)  
0-14-250187-5 PB / 240 pp.

Crown Duel  
Sherwood Smith  
0-14-230151-5 PB / 480 pp.

#### By Robin McKinley

The Blue Sword  
0-14-130975-X PB/ 288 pp.  
The Door in the Hedge  
0-698-11960-6 PB / 224 pp.  
The Hero and the Crown  
0-14-130981-4 PB/ 240 pp.  
The Outlaws of Sherwood  
0-698-11959-2 PB / 288pp.  
Spindle’s End  
0-698-11950-9 PB / 432 pp.

The Ear, the Eye and the Arm  
Nancy Farmer  
0-14-131109-6 PB / 320pp.

By Francesca Lia Block

Ecstasia  
0-14-240037-8 PB / 192 pp.  
Primavera  
0-14-240067-X PB / 256 pp.

Enchantress of the Stars  
Sylvia Engdahl  
Introduction by Lois Lowry  
0-14-250037-2 PB / 304 pp.

By David Clement-Davies

Fire Bringer  
0-14-230060-8 PB / 512 pp.  
The Sight  
0-14-250047-X PB / 480 pp.

Firebirds: An Anthology of Original Fantasy and Science Fiction  
Edited by Sharyn November  
0-14-250142-5 HC / 440 pp.

By Meredith Ann Pierce

Treasure at the Heart of the Tanglewood  
0-14-250013-5 PB / 256 pp.

The Firebringer Trilogy

Birth of the Firebringer (#1)  
0-14-250053-4 PB / 240 pp.  
Dark Moon (#2)  
0-14-250057-7 PB / 256 pp.  
The Son of Summer Stars (#3)  
0-14-250074-7 PB / 256 pp.

Growing Wings  
Laurel Winter  
0-14-230219-8 PB / 224 pp.

By Charles de Lint

The Dreaming Place  
0-14-230218-X PB / 160 pp.  
The Harp of the Grey Rose: The Legend of Cerin Songweaver  
0-14-240060-2 PB / 240 pp.

The Riddle of the Wren  
0-14-230223-6 PB / 304 pp.  
Wolf Moon  
0-14-240077-7 PB / 256 pp.

By Nancy Springer

The Hex Witch of Seldom  
0-14-230220-1 PB / 288 pp.  
I Am Mordred: A Tale from Camelot  
0-698-11841-3 PB / 192 pp.  
I Am Morgan le Fay: A Tale from Camelot  
0-698-11974-6 PB / 240 pp.

By William Sleator

Interstellar Pig  
0-14-037595-3 PB / 208 pp.  
Parasite Pig  
0-14-240086-6 PB / 224 pp.

The Kin  
Peter Dickinson  
0-14-250120-4 PB / 640 pp.

The Redwall Series by Brian Jacques

The Bellmaker: A Tale from Redwall  
0-14-240030-0 PB / 352 pp.  
Mariel of Redwall: A Tale from Redwall  
0-14-230239-2 PB / 400 pp.  
Martin the Warrior: A Tale from Redwall  
0-14-240055-6 PB / 384 pp.  
Mattimeo: A Tale from Redwall  
0-14-230240-6 PB / 448 pp.  
Mossflower: A Tale from Redwall  
0-14-230238-4 PB / 432 pp.  
Redwall  
0-14-230237-6 PB / 352 pp.  
Salamandastron: A Tale from Redwall  
0-14-250152-2 PB / 400 pp.  
Taggerung: A Tale from Redwall  
0-14-250154-9 PB / 448 pp.

The Secret Country Trilogy by Pamela Dean

The Secret Country (#1)  
0-14-250153-0 PB / 304 pp.  
The Hidden Land (#2)  
0-14-250143-3 PB / 208 pp.

The Whim of the Dragon (#3)  
0-14-250161-1 PB / 336 pp.

The Winter Prince  
Elizabeth E. Wein  
0-14-250014-3 PB / 208 pp.

*From the winner of the World Fantasy Life Achievement Award*

The Westmark Trilogy by Lloyd Alexander

The Beggar Queen  
0-14-131070-7 PB / 256 pp.

The Kestrel  
0-14-131069-3 PB / 256 pp.

Westmark  
0-14-131068-5 PB / 192 pp.

**Coming in April 2004!**

The Green Man: Tales from the Mythic Forest  
Edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling  
Decorations by Charles Vess  
0-14-240029-7 PB / 400 pp.

*Winner of the World Fantasy Award (Best Anthology)*