

FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX
DISCUSSION GUIDE

DREAMHUNTER

Book One of the Dreamhunter Duet

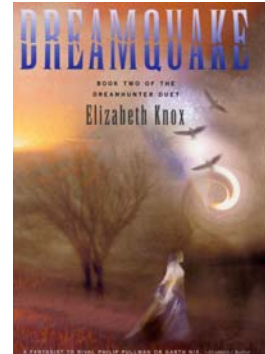
DREAMQUAKE

Book Two of the Dreamhunter Duet

Both books by Elizabeth Knox

Reading Level

Grades 7 up



About the Novel

Laura comes from a world similar to our own except for one difference: it is next to the Place, an unfathomable land that fosters dreams of every kind and is inaccessible to all but a select few, the dreamhunters. These are individuals with special gifts: the ability to catch larger-than-life dreams and relay them to audiences in the magnificent dream palace, the Rainbow Opera. People travel from all around to experience the benefits of the hunters' unique visions.

In *Dreamhunter*, Book One, fifteen-year-old Laura and her cousin Rose, daughters of dreamhunters, are eligible to test themselves at the Place and find out whether they qualify for the passage. But nothing can prepare them for what they are about to discover. For within the Place lies a horrific secret kept hidden by corrupt members of the government. And when Laura's father disappears, she realizes that this secret has the power to destroy everyone she loves. In *Dreamquake*, Book Two, Laura and Rose discover that the government has built a railroad leading deep into the Place, and Laura decides to follow the line to its end. As she attempts to discern the government's sinister plans, a deeper mystery unfolds, one that only Laura can solve, and it involves the very origin of the Place. What is the Place exactly? And what does it want from Laura?

In the midst of a fascinating landscape, Laura's dreamy childhood is ending and a nightmare beginning. These rich novels, filled with beauty, danger, politics, and intrigue, lead to a powerful crescendo and finally to a dramatic and satisfying conclusion.

Discussions Questions

1. In the Dreamhunter Duet, dreams are bought and sold as commodities. How are these dreams similar to television programs or movies in our modern society?
2. The Dreamhunter Duet is set in the early twentieth century. How does the historical setting affect the story? How would it be different if it were during the present time?
3. How do different groups of people—the Church, the Regulatory Body, dreamhunters themselves, and the general public—react differently to the industry of dreamhunting? What are the motives behind their reactions?
4. Both books in the Dreamhunter Duet are complex, with several storylines that come together seamlessly. How do these simultaneous storylines affect the books' progression?

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5. Laura is a teenager, yet she works in an adult field as a dreamhunter. How does she change and develop through her experiences? Would her choices have been different if she'd been ten years older?
6. Though Rose and Laura are first cousins and good friends, they are very different people. How are their differences and similarities apparent on their separate paths—dreamhunter versus debutante? How would the story change if Rose were the dreamhunter and Laura the debutante?
7. When Laura realizes that the Regulatory Body is using nightmares as a form of punishment for prisoners, she decides to let people know about it by overdreaming her aunt at the Rainbow Opera and sharing the nightmare with the well-to-do audience. What result does this have? What other courses of action could Laura have taken?
8. The public officials and the Regulatory Body that oversee dreamhunters use dreams to punish people and to control popular thought. Debate whether or not the government should use dreams for these purposes.
9. What role does the Sandman play? How is he symbolic?
10. If dreams were available today as a form of entertainment, how would the public react to them? How would the government? Would you attend a performance at a dream theater?



About the Author

Elizabeth Knox was born in Wellington, New Zealand, and is the critically acclaimed author of several books for adults, including *The Vintner's Luck*. *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake* are her first books for young adults. She explains, "I like fantasy for some deep aesthetic reason, but I also like it because you are actually processing the emotional experience of awe or terror itself. This is particularly true of young adult books." She lives in Wellington with her husband and son.

Dreamhunter: Book One of the Dreamhunter Duet

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Dreamquake: Book Two of the Dreamhunter Duet

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Both books by Elizabeth Knox

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