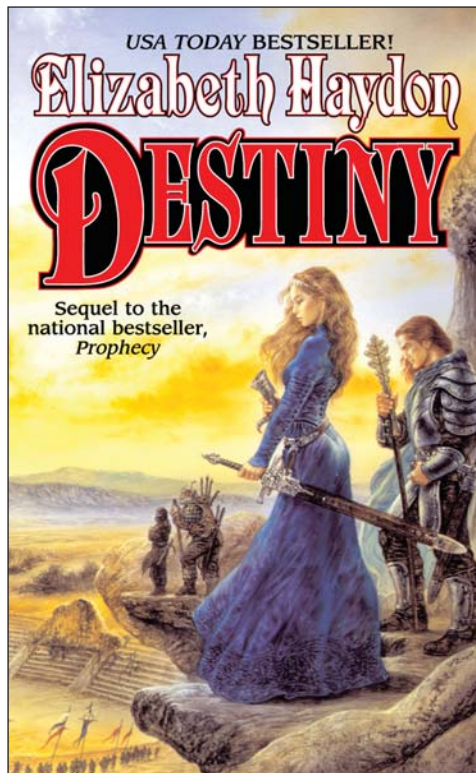




Elizabeth Haydon

Destiny



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“Haydon’s epic saga of the endless battle between light and darkness resounds with the richness of ancient myths reworked into new forms.”

—LIBRARY JOURNAL ON *PROPHECY*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth Haydon has traveled the world, sampling the cultures and gathering the experiences which add such extraordinary depth and authenticity to her fiction. She enjoys anthropology and is an accomplished herbalist, harpist, and madrigal singer. She lives with her family on the East coast, where she works as an editor in educational publishing. Her previous book, *Rhapsody*, has been optioned for film in a seven-figure deal.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The epic story that began with *Rhapsody* and continued in *Prophecy* builds to a shattering crescendo as the disparate races of the Old World and New are pushed toward devastating conflict by the twisted schemes of the demon F’dor.

Newly revitalized under the iron rule of the new king Achmed, and his giant master-at-arms Grunthor, the Firbolg civilization is quickly rebuilding the ruins of Canrif, their mountain fortress. *Rhapsody* is not there to witness this stunning rebirth, however, as she undertakes a critical mission: gathering together the demon-spawned children of the Rakahas, whose tainted blood carries the stink of the F’dor. Their blood is the only link to the demon itself, offering Achmed’s Dhrcian sensitivity its best chance to perceive the beast as it hides inside its human host.

But the F’dor is clever and powerful. Already, its poison seeps through the land, sowing mistrust and fear, turning neighbor against neighbor in an ever-increasing cycle of violence. As forgotten heroes and long-buried nightmares rise and walk together across the harsh and bleeding land, the Three Companions unite for the final showdown with the F’dor, confronting the destiny that was theirs all along. With a depth and enchanting richness only rarely found, *Destiny* offers an explosive and satisfying conclusion to one of today’s most impressive fantasy trilogies.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Throughout *Destiny*, Rhapsody is referred to as naïve, and many of her actions prove this to be correct. Yet, she has led a life that could hardly be called sheltered. How has she remained so pure of heart, and how does this innocence influence the story? Does it make her more or less vulnerable to the F'dor?
2. Of the Firbolg culture, the author writes: "Bloodied warriors could lie on the battlefield and die of non-mortal wounds while medical attention was directed to a laboring woman, in the belief that the infant was the Future, while the soldier was merely the present. Anything that was the Past did not matter, save for a few stories and the all-encompassing need to survive." Is this an effective belief system for a civilized culture? How does this belief system help Achmed gain the Firbolg crown? How does this culture compare with other cultures?
3. Achmed, like all Dhracians, is literally a sworn blood enemy of the F'dor's demonic race, biologically predisposed to track the demons through the scent of their vile blood, just as certain species of animals seem to know dangerous predators instinctively. Do you believe that enemies are born or made?
4. In all her books, Elizabeth Haydon confronts many of the most profound questions of religion and faith. In *Destiny*, as Rhapsody and Achmed discuss the disappearance of the Wellspring of Entudenin, the Firbolg king says, "Have you ever noticed, Rhapsody, that when something miraculous and good happens it's a gift from the All-God, but when something baleful happens, it was man's fault? Perhaps everything that happens, good and bad, is just random chance." Is this statement consistent with Achmed's personality? Do you think Rhapsody would agree with his observation? Do you agree with his observation?
5. Speaking of the Cymrians, Llauron says, "Longevity that borders on immortality is as much a curse as a blessing, my son, maybe even more so." Discuss his contention, including how it relates to Rhapsody, Ashe, and Anborn, and to Llauron's own decision to attain his true dragon form.
6. Time is a dynamic and flexible dimension in *Destiny*, as Rhapsody's visit to the realm of the Lord and Lady Rowan illustrates. Before Rhapsody sets off, Oelendra warns that it may be hard to find her place in Time again. Yet, Rhapsody undergoes her ordeal and returns with apparently no ill effects. What character traits does Rhapsody have that allow her to endure, and keep her place in Time?

7. In the mystical realm of the Rowans, Rhapsody vividly dreams of her dead sister Jo, who tells her, "It's the connections that we make in life that allow us to know love in the Afterlife." How does this knowledge influence Rhapsody's actions with the children of the Rakshas? With the Cymrians at the Moot?

8. When Rhapsody is tricked by Llauron into saying he has been killed, she feels that her truthfulness is tainted and that she is no longer a Namer. Achmed argues that Truth is subjective, and she bears no responsibility for Llauron's misleading her. Is he correct? Is an unwitting lie really a lie? What other examples of Rhapsody being deceptive are in the book? How does she justify them?

9. Rhapsody is a most altruistic character; virtually everything she does is for the betterment of others. Achmed repeatedly insists he is the opposite, that he does things for his own purposes and in his own time. Yet, his actions often belie his claims. Discuss in depth the character of Achmed, paying close attention to how the author portrays his seeming contradictions.

PRAISE FOR ELIZABETH HAYDON

"Haydon's conclusion to her Rhapsody trilogy (*Rhapsody*, *Prophecy*) blends Celtic lore with Asian myth to produce a world both strange and hauntingly familiar. A good choice for fantasy collections." —*LIBRARY JOURNAL*

"Though obviously inspired by music theory, Norse and Celtic folklore, and seemingly by such authors as Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Patricia A. McKillip, Anne McCaffrey and Palmer Brown...the author uses a fluid writing style to build a world uniquely and compellingly her own. In this shimmering symphony of exhaustive (though not exhausting) detail, epic myths, music, and magic intertwine in a resounding fugal crescendo."

—*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

"Haydon has gathered and woven the threads of her story into a carefully patterned whole. Complex but extremely satisfying." —*BOOKLIST*

"Distinguished by its superior wit and intelligence, this fantasy debut opens what looks to be an outstanding saga.... This huge and complex novel draws expertly on deep scholarship in Celtic, Norse, and animist folklore, myth and history.... One of the finest high fantasy debuts in years."

—*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*, STARRED REVIEW ON *RHAPSODY*

"A well-worked-out backdrop of impressive depth and appeal." —*KIRKUS REVIEWS* ON *RHAPSODY*