

DISCUSSION GUIDE



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THE SCHOOL for GOOD AND EVIL

BY SOMAN CHAINANI

WHEN BEST FRIENDS Sophie and Agatha arrive at the School for Good and Evil, their fates appear reversed. Princess wannabe Sophie is dumped in the School for Evil, taking classes in henchmen training, while witchy loner Agatha attends the School for Good so she can channel her inner Snow White.

For two hundred years, there's been an intense rivalry between the schools. But Sophie and Agatha are shaking things up, especially when a certain Prince Charming (son of King Arthur) is thrown into the mix. Plus, there are those “friendly” match-ups such as the Trial by Tale and Circus of Talents, and the Snow Ball, the most ferocious competition of all—if a princess-in-waiting doesn't get asked to the ball, she *fails* (and is one step closer to turning into a helpful rodent).

The School for Good and Evil is an epic journey into a dazzling new world where flunking your fairy tale is not an option.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What were your reactions to the beginning of the novel? How did the very first sentence shape your predictions of what might unfold in *The School for Good and Evil*?
- Describe the legend of the School Master and how the different inhabitants of Gavaldon react to his imminent arrival to take selected children to the School for Good and Evil.
- Sophie feels like a “red rose amongst thorns” (p. 39) at her school while Agatha perceives herself to be “the cat in a nightingale's nest” (p. 40) at her school. How do these descriptions help the reader understand how the characters view themselves and their respective settings?

- Once at the School for Good, Agatha discovers The Gallery of Good and evidence of what has happened to those kidnapped from Galvador and brought to the school. Agatha realizes that “the line between stories and real life is very thin indeed” (p. 72). What does Agatha discover about the connection between life at the school and life in Galvador?
- Castor and Pollux say that “All children are born with souls that are either Good or Evil. Some souls are purer than others” (p. 80). Discuss the idea that a soul can be either fundamentally good or evil and how this theory is supported—and in some cases refuted—by events in the story.
- How does Tedros influence the highs and lows of the friendship between Agatha and Sophie throughout the story?
- Agatha and Sophie both wrestle with their unlikely placement in their individual schools. What story events help Agatha and Sophie recognize the accuracy of their school placements?
- What is the Storian? How does it influence what happens to Agatha and Sophie at the School for Good and Evil?
- Sophie’s Never roommates reveal the history of the School Master as they tour Evil Hall. What is the timeline of events in the history of the School Master? What mystery remains after the Great War?
- Sophie undergoes a transformation in appearance and behavior in her quest to attract Tedros’ attention. Describe the lengths to which Sophie goes to entice her beloved prince. What are Sophie’s true intentions? How does Sophie’s motivation reveal more about her character?
- How does Agatha demonstrate her loyalty to Sophie throughout their time at the school? What does Agatha’s devoted behavior reveal about her character?
- Why do you think Agatha chooses to improve her appearance even after being shown that her inner character is strong enough to triumph over evil?
- When the School Master’s motivation for bringing Sophie to the School for Good and Evil is revealed, all that has held true for Nevers and Evers melts away. Discuss your reaction to this pivotal plot element and how the School Master’s revelation shapes the ending of the story.

ACTIVITIES

Villain in Training

Select a villain from a familiar fairy tale. Create a portrait of what you imagine the villain looks like prior to training at the School for Good and Evil and a drawing of who the villain becomes upon graduation.

Never vs Ever

Use a Venn diagram to compare the characteristics of one Never and one Ever, such as Tedros and Hort or Agatha and Sophie. Cite what makes each unique as well as characteristics, hopes, and dreams that the characters share.



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Friendship Map

Design a timeline of Sophie and Agatha's friendship over the course of the story through the twists and turns of loyalty and betrayal at the School for Good and Evil. Which story events were most important in defining their friendship?

A Model School

Create a model of either the School for Good or the School for Evil after rereading the rich descriptions of each setting given when Agatha and Sophie arrive at their respective schools. Think of the use of color and detail that defines each setting and incorporate these important elements in your model.

Happily Ever After?

The author of *The School for Good and Evil* leaves a trail of clues in the story that hint that more of the story is yet to be told. Create a T-chart listing some of these moments of foreshadowing on one side of the chart, and listing what you predict will happen if the story continues beyond this book on the other side of the chart. For example, the School Master remarks, "What other villages?" when asked why he didn't kidnap children from places other than Galvador. What could happen next in the story based on the School Master's comment? Using the T-chart of story clues and predictions, write the first chapter of a sequel to *The School for Good and Evil*. What has happened to Agatha and Sophie? What becomes of Tedros as Agatha leaves her prince behind? Is the evil School Master truly gone? Try to address some of the questions left unanswered at the end of *The School for Good and Evil*.



SOMAN CHAINANI believes in fairy tales wholeheartedly. While studying at Harvard, he practically created his own fairy tale major. He is an acclaimed screenwriter and a graduate of the MFA Film Directing Program at Columbia University. His films have played at more than 150 film festivals around the world, and his writing awards include an honor from the Sun Valley Writers' Conference. He lives in New York City. Learn more about his life and work at www.somanchainani.net. Visit www.SchoolforGoodandEvil.com for exciting activities based on the book.

Common Core State Standards addressed by the discussion questions and activities in this guide:

CCSS ELA-Literacy RL 5.3, 6.1, 6.3, 6.5, 7.2, 7.3, 8.3

The discussion questions and activities in this guide were written by Leigh Courtney, PhD. She teaches in the Global Education program at a public school in San Diego, California. She holds both master's and doctoral degrees in education, with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.



NAME _____

ENTRANCE EXAM

1. If, during a test, you notice your teacher's answer key lying on the desk in front of you, do you:
 - A. Correct all your answers without guilt, since it's his fault he left it there?
 - B. Check all your answers but don't correct the wrong ones?
 - C. Pretend it's not there and do your test on your own?
 - D. Alert the teacher he's left it out in plain view?
2. On the first day of school, the most unpopular villain in the entire school asks if he can sit with you at lunch. Then you see the villains at the "cool table" waving you over to sit with them. Do you:
 - A. Turn them down and sit with the unpopular kid?
 - B. Bring the unpopular kid over with you to them, even though they might turn you both away?
 - C. Leave the unpopular kid and sit with the cool villains?
 - D. Tell the unpopular kid you can hang out in secret, but not when there are other people around?
3. The date you're taking to the Snow Ball develops a hideous acne breakout the day before the Ball. Do you:
 - A. Say nothing, since you'll still have a good time?
 - B. Ask your date if there's anything you can do to help clear it up?
 - C. Feign illness and not go to the Snow Ball?
 - D. Tell your date you don't want to go with him/her anymore, since he/she should have warned you he/she was prone to ill-timed breakouts?
4. You notice your best friend is spending an awful lot of time with your crush. Do you:
 - A. Act mean to your friend and your crush as long as it lasts?
 - B. Deliberately embarrass your friend in front of your crush?
 - C. Secretly stew and try to find a new crush?
 - D. Confront your friend about his/her disloyal behavior?
5. You're the captain of your rugby team in the big match between Good and Evil. Your team is down 1 point with 5 seconds to go and as you score the winning goal, you fumble the ball to the ground. The teacher referee is from your school and calls it a goal. Do you:
 - A. Ask your teammates what you should do?
 - B. Celebrate your goal as if it were real?
 - C. Tell the other team it wasn't a goal and let them win?
 - D. Take the win and confront your teacher afterwards?

To score your test and discover if you belong in the School for Good or the School for Evil,
visit www.SchoolforGoodandEvil.com.