

ABOUT THE SERIES

The book is ancient, ravaged and full of utter nonsense. But the moment it enters Daphna and Dexter's lives, bizarre things begin to happen. Why is their father, who found the book, suddenly so distant? Is the old man who took it from him some kind of hypnotist? Why is a giant, red-eyed boy menacing them? And what does their thirteenth birthday have to do with all this?

Daphna and Dexter can't stand each other, but they'll have to learn to work together—before their lives unravel completely.



ABOUT DAVID MICHAEL SLATER

David Michael Slater was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on May 8th, 1970. He teaches high school Writing in Portland, Oregon, where he lives with his wife and son. David writes for children, teens and adults.



AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID

How did you start writing?

I didn't dream of being a writer growing up, but that all changed the moment I finished a short story I read in graduate school, "The Circular Ruins," by Jorge Luis Borges. I didn't pick up a pen right away,

but I knew somehow I had to try to write stories like that. And that's how I began, writing stories like that for adults. If you read the *Sacred Books* series, you'll find a quote from Borges at the start of each one.

What made you interested in Judeo/Christian mythology?

The topics emerged from my desire to tackle big ideas in my books—and what bigger ideas are there than the ones these myths tackle? These are the stories that shaped our culture, so it was a natural choice. I'm interested in all religions and how they explain the unexplainable.

Daphna and Dexter have some strange adventures over the course of the series. How did you think of them all?

Hmmm. Can't really say, other than they emerge as I work through each story. Each episode or adventure seems to fit a particular need in the story when they take place.

Do you have any other mythology-based books planned?

Haven't really thought about doing that. I'm just finishing up the fifth book and hope to finish with six. After that, I'll see what looks promising!

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. There are several novels right now grounded in various mythologies. How does this series embrace that tradition? Move away from it?
2. This series has been compared to Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials Series*. What do you think the two have in common? How are they dissimilar?
3. Daphna and Dexter are thrust into many situations that they feel are too much for them. Name a few of those situations. Have your students brainstorm different ways to solve the problems.
4. The third and fourth books are based on the legend of Lilith. Who was Lilith? Do you think she and other vampires are real? How does *The Book of Maps* compare to other vampire books?
5. Each of the twins have strengths and weaknesses. What are they? How do the two work together to overcome their obstacles?
6. Daphna and Dexter have to decide what to do with the *Book of Non-sense* and Rash's ledger. Do you think they made the right decision? What would you have chosen? Have the class brainstorm different things the twins could have done with the book. Vote on which solution should have been chosen.
7. Have the students create their own words of power. What would they use their words for?
8. In Book 2, the question of free will is raised. What does the class think