

# The 4 Powers of Daren Sáner

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## Synopsis

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Daren Sáner has never been popular on the Starship Súperia. The son of a low-ranking technician - a clone who was not supposed to have children - Daren is considered weird by the other kids, even though his mother is a high-ranking spiritual advisor. With his only friends, Sela and Boron, Daren tries to gain popularity by exploring a forbidden room. He cannot imagine how his life is about to change. By touching a jewel, Daren releases a Dark Entity that invades the mind of Sir Asútab, the Súperia's Master Computer, causing the system to malfunction for the first time in hundreds of years. Unless Sir Asútab's madness can be fixed, the lives of everyone on board are in danger.

To Daren's delight the jewel takes him back in time to a past life, where he is Daren Saredes on the ancient planet Óshéanús. He has the four pure powers - Air, Fire, Earth and Water - but the superstitious citizens of Periápólí think that he is the legendary Forbidden Child. Riots break out across the city and Daren has to flee. He journeys across the ocean with a band of sailors, battles storms and wild beasts, and meets a High Priestess who guides him towards his destiny. That destiny is two-fold: not only must Daren put an end to the Periápólí Riots, but his past is also linked to his present and he is the only one who can fix Sir Asútab and save the starship. But his mission is extremely dangerous - will he survive long enough to fulfil his two destinies?

## Text Type

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The 4 Powers of Daren Sáner is a fast-paced adventure fantasy that will appeal to boys and girls aged 10+. Set on board the Starship Súperia and in the ancient city of Periápólí, the reader follows the adventures of Daren as he gradually develops his powers and learns about his destiny. Daren goes from being a victim of bullies on Súperia to a brave and courageous warrior on Periápólí. He learns the importance of having good friends on whom he can rely, and finally gains the acceptance of his mother, from whom he has felt distanced his whole life. Daren also comes to an understanding about the destructiveness of living in a strict caste system and uses his new powers to change the structure of society on Periápólí and foster a new understanding on board the Súperia. Themes include family relationships, friendships, following your destiny, courage and determination to achieve a goal.

## Sharing the Novel

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The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapter 1 (pp. 9- 18) Chapters 2- 9 (pp. 19- 108), Chapters 10- 19 (pp. 109- 244) and Chapters 20- 25 (pp. 245- 322).

During the shared sessions encourage students to discuss their ideas and ask questions to clarify their understanding of words and issues presented in the story. Have them make inferences and predict what is going to happen next in the story. Wherever possible, have students relate Daren's adventures to their own experiences and broader knowledge. Students should analyse the main character and look at his actions, motivations and how he develops and changes as the story progresses. They should be able to identify important themes and ideas raised in the story - especially the idea of the caste system and its effects. Encourage students to study the fantasy elements in the novel and how these influence the action.

## Introducing the Novel

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Have students study the front cover of the novel and read the blurb.

- Who is the main character in the novel?
- What is a destiny?
- What do you think Daren's powers might be?
- Where is the story set?
- How do you think Daren gets thrown back in time?
- What kind of story do you think this will be? What do you know about this genre?

Teacher reads Chapter 1 (pp. 9- 18) aloud. Students follow along in their books.

## Comprehension Chapter 1 (pp. 9- 18)

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- Why do Sela, Boron and Daren decide to break into the forbidden room? How do they get in?
- Who is Sir Asútab?
- Describe the forbidden room. What catches Daren's attention?
- What makes Sela unique?
- Who is Boron's mother? Why is Boron unpopular with the other kids?

- Who is Manix Savagon? What kind of person is he?
- Why do the other kids bully Daren?
- What happens when Daren removes the jewel?
- How does Daren know that he has disrupted the starship's system?
- How does Daren get Sela out of trouble?
- Why does Daren decide to keep the jewel a secret?

### Discussion

- Why do kids bully people who are different? Have you ever been the victim of a bully? What do you think the best way to deal with a bully is?
- What do we learn about Daren and his world in the first chapter?
- How do you think Daren will be punished for disrupting the ship's computer system?

**Students read Chapters 2- 19 (pp. 19- 115) independently before the next shared session.**

## Comprehension Chapters 2- 9 (pp. 19- 108)

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- How does Daren feel as he stands in front of the Council?
- What does Daren overhear the Council talking about?
- What is the name of the starship's home planet? Why can't it return there? How does the Council know that the target planet is uninhabitable?
- How does Daren's mother react when Daren is standing in front of the Council? Why do you think she reacts like this?
- Why does Daren lie to the Council?
- Why is Daren's birth considered "unnatural"? What punishment does Daren receive?
- Why do you think Daren's father decides not to punish him further?
- Describe the tuition room. What do we learn about the city of Periápólí during Daren's lesson? Who is Súperia the Magnificent?
- Why do you think Daren has such a strong desire to return to Óshéanús?
- What gift does Daren's father give him? How did Technician Ríper get the ediasur?
- What happens when Daren takes the jewel to bed with him? Where does Daren find himself when he wakes up? What is his new name? What does he know about himself? How far back in time has he travelled?
- Describe the caste system in Periápólí. What caste does Daren belong to? What powers is he supposed to possess? Which ones does he actually have?

- How does Daren's mother react when his powers are revealed? Why do you think she doesn't want Daren to use his powers in front of Madam Evinora and the urchins?
- What does Madam Evinora call Daren? What does she think he will bring to Periápólí?
- Why does the mob chase Daren? How does he meet Kara? Why is he in awe of her?
- How do Daren and Kara escape the mob? Who rescues them?
- Why does Daren decide to tell Captain Litus the truth about his powers? How do the crew react when they learn that Daren is the Forbidden Child? Why does Captain Litus refuse to listen to his crew?
- Where is Akawe Lítúsiaie sailing to? Why does Captain Litus refuse to put Kara ashore?
- Who is Konían?
- Who saves Daren from the mutinous sailors?
- How is Daren treated by Kara and Konían? Who is Daren's only friend on the ship? Why is Kara so angry at Daren?
- Describe the storm that hits the ship. How does Daren help the fight the storm? What new power suddenly springs to life?
- Why does Kara change her mind about Daren?
- Why do you think Daren returns to the starship when he goes to sleep? How long was he in Óshéanús for? How long was he asleep on Súperia? What strange things had happened aboard the starship in his absence?
- How do Sela and Boron react to Daren's story?
- Why does Daren punch Manix in the stomach? How does Daren's father punish him?
- How does Daren convince Sela and Boron that he has a past life?
- What strange force chases Daren down the corridor? Why does Daren think that it is Sir Asútab?
- What does Daren overhear Commander Selus discussing? What realisation does Daren come to about the jewel? Why does he decide to keep it a secret?
- In what ways is the starship malfunctioning?
- What does Daren show Kara and Boron in the common room?

### Discussion

- Why do you think Daren feels as though his mother is always disappointed in him? Describe his relationship with his mother. What is his relationship with his father like?
- Describe the setting of the story. What is the starship like? In what ways is Daren's life in the future different to yours?

- What aspects of Daren's past life in Periapóli mirror his life on board Súperia?
- What sinister plan do you think Captain Litus has in store for Daren?
- What important lesson does Kara's experience teach her about lower castes?
- Why do you think Daren is special?
- Predict what will happen in the story next.

**Students read Chapters 10- 19 (pp. 116- 236) independently before the next shared session.**

## **Comprehension Chapters 10- 19 (pp. 109- 244)**

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- Where does Daren disembark from the ship? Why is Daren excited about walking on solid ground?
- Where does Captain Litus take Kara and Daren? Why does he take them there?
- Describe Daren's meeting with the High Priestess. What does he have to do to prove that he really is the Forbidden Child?
- How does Daren defeat the Night Demon? How does he feel after this?
- What is special about the day that Daren arrives at the Temples of Lúnús?
- What meaning does Daren manage to make out of the riddle? What does he decide he has to do to fulfil his destiny?
- Why does Kara decide that she and Daren will be friends for life?
- How does Daren get revenge on Captain Litus? How does he defeat Konían? What does he say to Hawk-Eye to explain why he and Kara are back?
- How does Hawk-Eye react when he realises that Daren has stolen the ship? How does he react when he realises that Captain Litus is a traitor?
- What bad news does Hawk-Eye announce on the third day of the voyage?
- Describe the Daren's fight with Captain Narúdiol and his crew. Who comes to his rescue? How does Daren save Hawk-Eye's life? Why does Daren want Captain Litus to win the fight against Captain Narúdiol? How does he help him?
- How does Daren convince Litus that they are "even"? Who speaks up for Daren? Why does Litus agree to return to Periapóli?
- Why does Daren think that the riddle needs to be saved if Súperia is going to be fixed?
- Why does Daren decide that he has to return to the forbidden room? How does he remove his tracking band?
- How does Daren know that he has walked into a trap? How does he escape?

- How does Boron betray Daren? Why do you think he does this?
- Why doesn't the Chief Computing officer believe that the jewel is linked to Sir Asút ab's errors?
- How does Daren's mother react when the Commander suggests that his powers should be removed? What punishment is he given?
- Who visits Daren in the isolation chamber? How does she help him escape? Why is the starship virtually deserted when Daren and Kara return to get the jewel?
- Why is Captain Litus warned to turn back from Periápólí? Why does Daren feel guilty? What does he decide he has to do to redeem himself?
- How does Konían betray Daren when he and the others try to sneak in to Periápólí? Why do you think he does this? Why do the guards decide to take Daren to the Guardian of Periápólí? How does the Guardian react when he sees Daren? Why is Daren awestruck in the Guardian's presence?
- How does the Guardian test Daren?
- Who comes to rescue Daren? How does she create a diversion that allows him to escape? What does she give him to wear?
- Why does Daren decide to return to the Platform Quarter? Why is Kara so determined to accompany him?
- What does Daren discover when he returns to his mother's shack? Why does Daren feel guilty? How does Kara help him deal with the situation?
- What does Daren discover clutched in his mother's hand? Who does Kara think that the initials R.R. might belong to?
- Why does Daren think that he has solved the riddle?
- How does Daren get inside the Temple of Solus Maginor? Why does he think that destiny brought him there?
- How does Daren feel when he sees the High Priest Radian Remian? How does the Priest react when he sees Daren?
- How does Remian react when he learns that Daren's mother is dead? What does he reveal to Daren about his motives for exiling his mother? How is Remian punished for his past actions?
- What does Daren learn about the location of the jewel? Why does his father refuse to help him get the jewel?
- Who comes to help Daren? Why does Captain Litus decide to bring his crew to fight with Daren? Why is Daren suspicious of him?
- Where does Daren need to go to retrieve the jewel?

### Discussion

- How does Daren change when he realises that he has powers?
- Describe Daren's relationship with Kara. What does Kara's friendship with Daren teach her?

- Why do you think Konían betrays Daren? What does this suggest about his character? In what ways is Konían similar to Boron?
- Why do you think Daren's powers keep growing stronger?
- How do you think Daren will change history?
- What do you think Kara's destiny might be?
- Predict what will happen next in the story.

**Students read Chapters 20- 25 (pp. 237- 322) independently before the next shared session.**

## **Comprehension Chapters 20- 25 (pp. 245- 322)**

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- How does Hawk-Eye save everyone's lives when they arrive at the Peace Palace?
- How does Captain Litus save Daren's life?
- What does Daren notice about the statue of Súperia the Magnificent?
- Who do the peasants want to kill? Why do you think Hawk-Eye and Captain Litus decide to stay and help Daren when it means putting their own lives at risk?
- How does Empress Ashalané know that Daren is the Forbidden Child? Why has she been waiting for Daren to arrive? What happens when the Empress gives Daren the jewel?
- How does Daren get the people of Periápólí to listen to him? What does he say in his speech? Who does Daren crown as the new Empress of Súperiae?
- How does Daren know that his past life is over forever?
- Why is Daren so excited when he wakes up? Why does he begin to panic when he realises that the starship is still failing?
- Why is it important for Sela and Daren to leave the Sixth Wing?
- How does Daren know that he needs his mother's help?
- How does Daren's mother react when he tells her about his past life? Why does she react like this?
- Why does Daren feel anger and sadness after talking with his mother?
- What realisation does Daren come to about the energy pulse?
- Why do you think Daren refuses to accept help from his mother?
- What announcement does Commander Savagon make over the ship's speakers? Why does Daren desperately need to find Commander Savagon?
- How does Daren know that the dark entity is in Sir Asút ab's mind? Where is Sir Asút ab's mind?
- What shocking news does Daren learn from his father's hologram?

- Who helps Daren convince Commander Savagon that he is telling the truth? How long does she agree to give him before she shuts down the Master Computer?
- Why do you think Boron sticks up for Daren and openly disobeys his mother? Do his actions make up for his previous betrayal? Why/why not?
- How does Daren save Sela and Boron from the elevator? Who does Daren believe is behind the attack?
- Who saves Daren when he is fighting off the laser beams?
- Who convinces Daren that he has the power to get into the Central Computing Tower?
- What suggestion does Boron come up with for getting inside Sir Asút ab's mind?
- What does the inside of Sir Asút ab's mind look like?
- What does the Master Computer build with which to destroy Daren and the others?
- Why is it so important when Daren realises that he, Sela and Boron are in a virtual reality world? What powers do Sela and Boron imagine themselves to have?
- What does Daren discover in the rubble of the buildings?
- What is at the centre of Sir Asút ab's mind? What does Daren see when he arrives there? How does he know where to put the jewel?
- How does Daren know that he has successfully defeated the Dark Entity?
- How does Daren react when he realises that Súperia the Magnificent is broken?
- How do Daren's parents react when they realise that their son is a hero? How does Daren bring his parents closer together?
- Describe what happens at the meeting of the Council. What does Daren learn from Sir Asút ab at the meeting?
- How are Daren, Sela and Boron rewarded for their bravery?
- Why are some of the Council members reluctant to return to Óshéanús? Who casts the deciding vote?
- What does Daren learn about himself from talking to his parents?
- What does Tabis tell Daren about his friends on Óshéanús?
- Who returns the jewel to Daren?

### Discussion

- What qualities and characteristics does Kara possess that will make her a good leader?
- Why is it so important to Daren to decree an end to the caste system?
- What does the story teach us about the importance of having loyal friends?

- Identify the climax of the story. Why is this event important?
- Identify a main theme or idea presented in the story. How is this idea developed by the author?

## Activities

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**Plot** - Identify 15 important events that occur in the novel and complete a plot graph for them. List the 15 events in the order that they occur on the horizontal axis. Label the vertical axis "Level of Excitement". Plot each event on the graph according to how exciting it is. Remember to label the climax clearly.

**Writing** - Imagine you are Daren and the jewel takes you back in time to Óshéanús again. Write a diary entry about your new adventures. How has Periápólí changed? What are Kara, Konían and the Captain doing?

**Character** - Complete a character report for Daren. Include information about his attributes, important decisions that he makes and how he develops and change as the story progresses. Include five important quotes from the novel that back up your ideas.

**News report** - You are a television news reporter. Write and present a story about Daren's adventures.

**Drama** - Choose an exciting event that occurs in the novel and write a script for it. Remember to include a cast list and stage directions. Practise your scene and present it to the class.

**Theme** - Design a static image that depicts an important theme from the story. You may wish to design a collage that uses words and images from the text, or make a poster or design something on the computer.

**Board game** - Design a board game based on the novel. For every positive event that occurs, reward the player. For every negative one, penalise the player. Decorate the board with images and scenes from the story.

**Writing** - Explain how the novel would have been different if a certain event had occurred.

Notes written by Vicki Ladd