

Reading Guide

OldEarth ARAM Encounter

Elementary

- 1** What is the main conflict in the story? What are some of the side conflicts that revolve around Aram?
- 2** Who is your favorite character and why? Did any character anger or annoy you? What was so challenging about him or her?
- 3** This novel is set in the ancient past but reflects transcendent human characteristics, like the need for security. What are some other characteristics that transcend time?
- 4** What did you think of the different settings in the novel? Which was your favorite place in the story?
- 5** Aram's clan had to successfully deal with dangerous forces of nature to stay alive. What forces do humans have to deal with today to stay alive?

Secondary

- 1** In the beginning of the story, Aram had challenging relationships with everyone around him. What were some of those relationships and how did he manage them?
- 2** Which characters changed the most in the novel? Were there any characters that did not change?
- 3** How might you have handled some of the dangers facing Aram and other clan members? Considering the time and place, did he have options, or was he a victim of circumstances?
- 4** Ishtar's father, Neb, demands that his son commit an act of atrocity without any consideration of the effect it will have on him and others. Do people like Neb really exist, or is he an iconically evil character created as a backdrop to the more complex characters?
- 5** There are many "side characters" with complex back stories. Which side character interested you the most? Why?

Adult/Book Clubs

- 1** There are several examples of personal growth in the novel. Which ones could you relate to best?
- 2** Which characters did you love? Why? Which did you hate? Did he or she remind you of anyone?
- 3** Death hovers in the background throughout the story, almost like an unseen character. Does death seem real to you or as just something to be passed off, an unreality to be ignored as much as possible?
- 4** There are many conflicts in the story. Some are handled well, some not so well. Which situations would you have handled differently? How?
- 5** The characters' lives continue in the next book, OldEarth Ishtar Encounter. Who do you most want to reconnect with? Why? Is there anyone in real life that you wish you could reconnect with?

Paperback/Journal Reflections

- 1** If I were living in the novel, which clan would I join? Why?
- 2** If I could visit one place in the novel, where would I go? Does it remind me of someplace real that I miss?
- 3** Are people in my life struggling through the kinds of emotional issues that the characters face? Are some of life's journeys lonely simply because no one can walk in another person's shoes, or can we walk with others even without fully understanding their suffering?
- 4** Ishtar grows personally by rejecting his father's power over him. Have I ever had a spurt of personal growth and then suffered a relapse? What do I think will happen to Ishtar in the next novel?
- 5** Are there any hopeful examples that light a forward path and encourage me to transcend failure, rejection, misunderstanding, or any other painful situation? How can I apply those lessons to my life?