

= Eldest =

Eldest is the second novel in the Inheritance Cycle by Christopher Paolini and the sequel to Eragon . Eldest was first published in hardcover on August 23 , 2005 , and was released in paperback in September 2006 . Eldest has been released in an audiobook format , and as an ebook . Like Eragon , Eldest became a New York Times bestseller . A deluxe edition of Eldest was released on September 26 , 2006 , including new information and art by both the illustrator and the author . Other editions of Eldest are translated into different languages .

Eldest begins following several important events in Eragon . The story is the continued adventures of Eragon and his dragon Saphira , centering on their journey to the realm of the Elves in order to further Eragon 's training as a Dragon Rider . Other plots in the story focus on Roran , Eragon 's cousin , who leads the inhabitants of Carvahall to Surda to join the Varden , and Nasuada as she takes on her father 's role as leader of the Varden . Eldest ends at the Battle of the Burning Plains , where Eragon faces a new Dragon Rider , Murtagh , and a new dragon , Thorn .

Reviews pointed out the similarities between Eldest and other works such as The Lord of the Rings , while praising the themes of the book , such as friendship and honor . Several of these reviews commented on the style and genre of Eldest , while others considered the possibility of a film adaptation similar to the first film .

= = Plot synopsis = =

= = = Setting = = =

Eldest begins three days after the events of the preceding novel , Eragon , in the dwarf city of Tronjheim , inside of a hollowed mountain named Farthen Dûr . Farthen Dûr is in the southeastern part of Alagaësia , the fictional continent where the Inheritance Cycle takes place . Throughout the novel , the protagonists travel to many different places : Ellesméra , the elven capital city located in the forest Du Weldenvarden , on the northern portion of Alagaësia ; Carvahall , a small town located on the northwestern part of Alagaësia in Palancar Valley ; Aberon , the capital of Surda , located in the southern portion of Alagaësia , and Helgrind located in the city of Dras @-@ Leona , in the southern portion of Alagaësia .

= = = Characters = = =

The story is told in third @-@ person through protagonists Eragon , Roran , and Nasuada . Eragon is nearly always accompanied by his dragon Saphira . Due to the multiple points @-@ of @-@ view , multiple stories take place concurrently , and the protagonist characters do not meet often . Several other characters return from Eragon , including Arya (the elf warrior , daughter of the elven queen) , Oriek , Roran (Eragon 's cousin and a major character) , Ajihad (the leader of the Varden , who dies and is replaced by his daughter Nasuada) , and Angela (the herbalist) . Some new characters are introduced in Eldest , such as Oromis and his dragon Glaedr . Murtagh appears briefly as a minor protagonist but then reappears later as a primary antagonist with his dragon , Thorn . Galbatorix and the Ra 'zac also reprise their roles as primary antagonists .

= = = Plot summary = = =

Eldest begins as Ajihad , the king of the rebel Varden force , is ambushed and killed , with Murtagh gone while The Twins and Murtagh are assumed dead . At his funeral , Ajihad 's daughter Nasuada is elected to command the Varden . The protagonists Eragon and Saphira then decide to travel to the forest Du Weldenvarden to become trained as a Dragon Rider by the elves . The dwarf king , Hrothgar , decides to adopt Eragon to his clan , Dûrgrimst Ingeitum , and have his now foster brother , Oriek , accompany him to the forest . Once there , Eragon meets Oromis , The Cripple Who

Is Whole , and his Dragon Glaedr , a dragon with a missing front leg , and the only Dragon and Rider secretly alive besides Eragon , Saphira and Galbatorix and his forcibly bonded dragon Shruikan . Oromis and Glaedr , however , are both crippled , and so cannot fight Galbatorix and must hide to avoid Galbatorix hunting them down . Eragon and Saphira are taught the use of logic , magic theory , scholarship , and combat , among other things .

Meanwhile , Eragon 's cousin Roran , is planning to marry Katrina , daughter of Sloan the butcher . While the village is at peace , they are unexpectedly attacked by Galabatorix 's soldiers and the Ra 'zac , the strangers who had killed Roran 's father , Garrow . The village metalsmith , Horst , equips his sons along with Roran with equipment . Roran takes a hammer and attacks the soldiers . The Ra 'zac and most of the soldiers escape , saying that they want information from Roran . The entire village then sets up defenses , and during a second invasion , the Ra 'zac escape again . One night , Roran wakes up to find Katrina being attacked by the Ra 'zac , who sneaked into the house . Roran then takes off the cloth around the Ra 'zac 's face and sees that they are monsters , not humans . A Ra 'zac bites Roran , leaving a serious injury , and leave with Katrina captured . While Roran is chasing them , Sloan , the village butcher and Katrina 's father , betrays the village and joins the Ra 'zac . The Ra 'zac escape with their steeds , the Lethrblaka , who were originally their parents .

Meanwhile , Nasuada chooses to move the Varden from Tronjheim to Surda to mount an attack on the Empire . The Varden , who are effectively refugees , suffer financial troubles , until Nasuada learns that she can create an expensive lace with magic , and sell it at extremely low rates . One night when Nasuada is in her room , a character named Elva saves her from an assassination attempt . Elva is enchanted , and locates the assailant , who is killed after unwillingly surrendering information to Varden magicians about a subversive group based in Surda called the Black Hand , who is plotting to kill Nasuada . Nasuada later attends a meeting with key figures in Surda 's government to discuss a potential upcoming battle against the Empire . They learn that the conflict is coming sooner than they initially suspected , and mobilize forces to attack , as well as sending for help from the dwarves .

In the meantime , Eragon continues his training , but is discouraged when the scar on his back causes him to have agonizing seizures multiple times per day . He has been swooning over Arya for most of the book . Saphira also has a similar problem with Glaedr , as she believes him to be a good choice for a mate and tries to win his affections . Eragon tells her it would not be proper , and she in turn replies that Arya is not as important as his education . Both efforts fail miserably , but bring Eragon and Saphira closer together . Later , at the ancient elven ceremony , the Agaetí Blödhren (Blood @-@ Oath Celebration) , Eragon is altered by a spectral dragon . The changes alter his senses , and enhance his abilities , effectively turning him into an elf @-@ human hybrid , as well as healing all of his wounds , scars , and back injury . Reinvigorated , Eragon continues training until he learns that the Empire will soon attack the Varden in Surda . Afterward he confesses his feelings for Arya who rejects him harshly . Dismayed , he leaves without completing his training , to aid the Varden in battle . Upon leaving he is given a bow with magical arrows , a belt with twelve priceless diamonds , an enchanted flask of elvish concoction , a copy of a poem he wrote and presented for the Agaetí Blödhren , and the blessing of Oromis and Glaedr .

Meanwhile , Roran is planning to rescue Katrina . He decides that the only solution is to join the Varden in Surda , and so he convinces almost the entire village to travel there . The village reaches Narda , where they pay for barges to sail to Teirm . In Teirm , Roran meets Jeod , Brom 's friend , who tells him about Eragon and that he now is a Dragon Rider . Roran is stunned that his cousin is a Dragon Rider , and he asks Jeod for help to reach the Varden . Jeod decides to go with them and he gathers a group of his friends to steal a ship called the Dragon Wing . The village is chased by a group of Galbatorix 's boats , but they force themselves into the gigantic whirlpool , the Boar 's eye , so that they can trap the enemy ships .

Meanwhile , Eragon arrives at the Varden 's camp , who are under attack by an army of one hundred thousand of Galbatorix 's soldiers . A group of Urgals join the Varden , and Eragon is able to repel the opposing army with help from the dwarves ' reinforcements . Eventually , a Dragon Rider appears in favor of the Empire . The hostile Dragon Rider kills the dwarf king Hrothgar , and

soon begins to fight with Eragon . The Dragon Rider is soon unmasked by Eragon and is revealed to be Murtagh , his old friend . Murtagh tells Eragon that he was kidnapped and forced into loyalty by Galbatorix after a dragon hatched for him , whom he named Thorn . Murtagh outmatches Eragon , but shows mercy due to their old friendship . Before leaving , Murtagh reveals that Eragon is his brother , and takes Eragon 's sword Zar 'roc , which he believes to be his inheritance . Ultimately , Galbatorix 's army is forced to retreat due to heavy losses , after the arrival of the dwarves and the village of Carvahall and the departure of Murtagh and Thorn . Roran manages to defeat the Twins by bashing them in the heads with his hammer , thus enhancing his title of Roran Stronghammer . In the end , Eragon reunites with Roran and Eragon decides to help Roran rescue Katrina from the Ra 'zac in Dras @-@ Leona .

= = Critical reaction = =

Eldest received generally negative reviews , and it was met with criticism similar to Eragon for its derivative nature . School Library Journal noted that Eldest lacked originality , but would still find reception among fans . It also acknowledged that themes of Eldest are based generally on the works of other writers . BookBrowse also criticized Eldest , but said , as School Library Journal noted , that nothing the reviewers can say will stop some children from reading the book . Entertainment Weekly rated Eldest as one of the worst five books of 2005 , calling it a " 700 @-@ page drag . " The Boston Globe gave a negative review for Eldest , criticizing the very low points and for " drama that rises to a wet pop . " The Christian Science Monitor gave Eldest a C + grade . Similar to other reviews , it criticized the long plot and its similarities to The Lord of the Rings and Star Wars , as well as the lack of humor . The review commented that Roran , one of the secondary major characters , had the best part of the book . SFSignal also gave Eldest a poor review , giving it one out of five stars . The main reason of this was for its dull pace . The SFSignal review , like The Christian Science Monitor , did say that Roran had the " strongest sequence " in the book .

However , there were also some more positive reviews of Eldest . Bookmarks magazine saw Eldest 's similarity to other works , but said that Eldest displayed more emotional depth than Eragon . Publishers Weekly also gave a positive review for Eldest , praising the revelations in the final pages . Barnes & Noble gave a positive review for Eldest , in particular for its style , characters and themes such as friendship , forgiveness , responsibility , and honor . Eldest won the 2006 Quill Award in Young Adult Literature . Eldest also was nominated for a British Book Award in the Children 's Book of the Year section , the Disney Adventures Book Award , the Colorado Blue Spruce Award , Young Adult Book Award , and the Wyoming Soaring Eagle Book Award .

= = Themes = =

Several themes in Eldest have been noted . A Barnes & Noble reviewer praised the honor , friendship , responsibility , and forgiveness in the book . The reviewer called these themes " age @-@ transcendent " . School Library Journal commented on how Eragon looked for a definition for good and evil . A third review , while not identifying any specific themes , said the author was " layering his themes " to make the book more exciting . Another review praised the story for the themes of power , family , and maturing . Paolini commented on the theme in Eldest of vegetarianism :

" One of my goals as an author is to explore various aspects of human nature . It 's my job , then , to attempt to understand why people act , even if it differs from my own point of view or practice , and to present those reasons to the best of my ability . The actions and beliefs of my characters are not necessarily my own . "

There are also themes of religion and atheism , the dwarves being highly religious , the elves being atheists , and Eragon , growing up without a religious background but a set of superstitions , wondering if there are higher powers .

= = Literary style and genre = =

Eldest falls in the genre of juvenile fiction and fantasy . Reviews often commented on how Eldest borrowed from the fantasy genre . Other reviews criticized and praised the writing style of the author . Los Angeles Times , while noting that the writing was more mature , criticized the novel for being inconsistent . An Entertainment Weekly review was negative toward the story because it was slow @-@ paced , while The Washington Post said Eldest needed to be shortened . A reviewer from The Boston Globe said :

" He is to English as a bad dog to a chainsaw : he worries it , and worries it , and devastation spreads around him . "

On the other hand , Barnes & Noble called the writing style fluid and Children 's Literature praised the story for being richly detailed . Kirkus Reviews compared the story to a patchwork of fantasy elements and characters , then concluded that it , despite being derivative , was exciting and held together well .

= = Film adaptation = =

Whether or not the book will be adapted to film remains a matter of speculation . When asked whether there would be a movie adaptation of Eldest at the premiere of Eragon , Christopher Paolini replied , " I think we 'll know after opening weekend . " Many critics have considered the possibility of a sequel in their reviews of Eragon . One critic said that 20th Century Fox 's plans to adapt Eldest was " jumping the gun " and that " they will have a tough time convincing anyone but the most die @-@ hard fans to return for another helping . " Even some critics who gave the film positive reviews were skeptical towards the possibility of a sequel : " That the studio hopes to build a franchise on this , now that ? that is expecting way too much . "

According to an interview with director Stefen Fangmeier :

Fangmeier 's comments were made in March 2007 , before the October 2007 announcement that the trilogy was to be expanded into a four @-@ book cycle . As of 2015 , there are no plans for Eldest being made into a movie .

= = Limited edition = =

A deluxe version of Eldest called the " Limited Edition " was released on September 26 , 2006 . It was published by Random House . The deluxe edition included an excerpt of Brisingr , a poster of Glaedr (which would become the cover art for Brisingr) , the history of Alagaësia , art by Christopher Paolini , and a list of characters , places , objects , and dwarf clans . The deluxe edition was also released in an Ebook format .

Eldest has been published in forty @-@ one countries , several translations from English into different languages have been made . Translations for languages such as Spanish , Portuguese , and Serbian have appeared . Worldwide Eldest has several publishers including Gailivro , which publishes the Polish and Portuguese Eldest , and Gramedia Pustaka Utama , the publisher of the Indonesian translations .

An omnibus of Eragon and Eldest was published on July 8 , 2008 and included never @-@ before @-@ seen manuscripts by Christopher Paolini .