

= Eragon =

Eragon is the first novel in the Inheritance Cycle by Christopher Paolini . After writing the first draft for a year , Paolini spent a second year rewriting and fleshing out the story and characters . Paolini 's parents saw the final manuscript and decided to self @-@ publish Eragon . Paolini spent a year traveling around the United States promoting the novel . By chance , the book was discovered by Carl Hiaasen , who got it re @-@ published by Alfred A. Knopf . The re @-@ published version was released on August 26 , 2003 .

The book tells the story of a farm boy named Eragon , who finds a mysterious stone in the mountains . A dragon he later names Saphira hatches from the stone , which was really an egg . When the evil King Galbatorix finds out about Eragon and his dragon , he sends his servants , the Ra 'zac , after them in an effort to capture them . Eragon and Saphira are forced to flee from their hometown , with a storyteller called Brom , and decide to search for the Varden , a group of rebels who want the downfall of Galbatorix .

Critiques of Eragon often pointed out the similarities to other works such as Earthsea , Dragonlance , and Star Wars . Reviews also called the book a notable achievement for such a young author as Paolini . Eragon was the third @-@ best @-@ selling children 's hardback book of 2003 , and the second @-@ best @-@ selling paperback of 2005 . It placed on the New York Times Children 's Books Best Seller list for 121 weeks . Eragon was adapted into a feature film of the same name that was released on December 15 , 2006 .

= = Background = =

= = = Origins and publication = = =

Christopher Paolini started reading fantasy books when he was ten years old . At the age of fourteen , as a hobby , Paolini started writing the first novel in a series of four books , but he could not get beyond a few pages because he had " no idea " where he was going . He began reading everything he could about the " art of writing " , and then plotted the whole Inheritance Cycle book series . After a month of planning out the series , he started writing the draft of Eragon by hand . It was finished a year later , and Paolini began writing the " real " version of the book . After another year of editing , Paolini 's parents saw the final manuscript . They immediately saw its potential and decided to publish the book through their small , home @-@ based publishing company , Paolini International . Paolini created the cover art for this edition of Eragon , which featured Saphira 's eye on the cover . He also drew the maps inside the book .

Paolini and his family toured across the United States to promote the book . Over 135 talks were given at bookshops , libraries , and schools , many with Paolini dressed up in a medieval costume ; but the book did not receive much attention . Paolini said he " would stand behind a table in my costume talking all day without a break ? and would sell maybe forty books in eight hours if I did really well . [...] It was a very stressful experience . I couldn 't have gone on for very much longer . " In the summer of 2002 , American novelist Carl Hiaasen was on vacation in one of the cities that Paolini gave a talk in . While there , his stepson bought a copy of Eragon that he " immediately loved " . He showed it to his stepfather , who brought the book to the attention of the publishing house Alfred A. Knopf . Michelle Frey , executive editor at Knopf , contacted Paolini and his family to ask if they were interested in having Knopf publish Eragon . The answer was yes , and after another round of editing , Knopf published Eragon in August 2003 . It also led to a new cover , drawn by John Jude Palencar .

= = = Inspiration and influences = = =

Paolini cites old myths , folk tales , medieval stories , the epic poem Beowulf , and authors J. R. R. Tolkien and Eric Rücker Eddison as his biggest influences in writing . Other literary influences

include David Eddings , Andre Norton , Brian Jacques , Anne McCaffrey , Raymond E. Feist , Mervyn Peake , Ursula K. Le Guin , and Frank Herbert . Paolini has also received inspiration from the two authors Philip Pullman and Garth Nix . In Eragon , Paolini " deliberately " included the " archetypal ingredients " of a fantasy book ? a quest , a journey of experience , revenge , romance , betrayal , and a " special " sword .

The ancient language used by the elves in Eragon is based " almost entirely " on Old Norse , German , Old English , and Russian myth . Paolini commented that " [I] did a god @-@ awful amount of research into the subject when I was composing it . I found that it gave the world a much richer feel , a much older feel , using these words that had been around for centuries and centuries . I had a lot of fun with that . " Picking the right name for the characters and places was a process that could take " days , weeks , or even years " . Paolini said that " if I have difficulty choosing the correct moniker , I use a placeholder name until a replacement suggests itself . " He added that he was " really lucky " with the name Eragon , " because it 's just dragon with one letter changed . " Also , Paolini commented that he thought of the name " Eragon " as the two parts of it : " era " and " gone " , as if the name itself changes the era in which the character lives . He thought the name fit the book perfectly , but some of the other names caused him " real headaches " .

The landscape in Eragon is based on the " wild territory " of Paolini 's home state , Montana . He said in an interview that " I go hiking a lot , and oftentimes when I 'm in the forest or in the mountains , sitting down and seeing some of those little details makes the difference between having an okay description and having a unique description . " Paolini also said that Paradise Valley , Montana is " one of the main sources " of his inspiration for the landscape in the book . Eragon takes place in the fictional continent Alagaësia . Paolini " roughed out " the main history of the land before he wrote the book , but he did not draw a map of it until it became important to see where Eragon was traveling . He then started to get history and plot ideas from seeing the landscape depicted .

Paolini chose to have Eragon mature throughout the book because " for one thing , it 's one of the archetypal fantasy elements " . He thought Eragon 's growth and maturation throughout the book " sort of mirrored my own growing abilities as a writer and as a person , too . So it was a very personal choice for that book . " Eragon 's dragon , Saphira , was imagined as " the perfect friend " by Paolini . He decided to go in a more " human direction " with her because she is raised away from her own species , in " close mental contact " with a human . " I considered making the dragon more dragon @-@ like , if you will , in its own society , but I haven 't had a chance to explore that . I went with a more human element with Saphira while still trying to get a bit of the magic , the alien , of her race . " Paolini made Saphira the " best friend anyone could have : loyal , funny , brave , intelligent , and noble . She transcended that , however , and became her own person , fiercely independent and proud . " Saphira 's blue tinted vision was in turn inspired by Paolini 's own color @-@ blindness .

Paolini added in archetypal elements of a fantasy novel like a quest , a journey of experience , revenge , romance , betrayal , and a ' special ' sword . The book is described as a fantasy with Booklist writing " Paolini knows the genre well ? his lush tale is full of recognizable fantasy elements and conventions " . The book has been compared to other books of the fantasy genre such as Star Wars and Lord of the Rings . Reviews have also felt that the plot genre is too similar to those other fantasy novels . The book was called a " high fantasy " by Kirkus Review .

= = Plot summary = =

A shade named Durza , along with a group of urgals , ambushes a party of three elves . After he and the urgals kill the other elves , Durza attempts to steal an egg , that one of the female elves carries , but is foiled when she causes it to vanish . However , he renders her unconscious with a ball of fire and has her at his mercy .

Eragon is a fifteen @-@ year @-@ old boy who has lived with his uncle Garrow and cousin Roran on a farm near the village of Carvahall , ever since his mother , Garrow 's sister , left him there right after his birth . While hunting in the Spine , Eragon is surprised to see the blue dragon egg , which he believes to be a stone , appear in front of him . A few months later , Eragon witnesses a baby

dragon hatch from the egg . Eragon names the dragon Saphira . He raises the dragon in secret until two of King Galbatorix 's servants , the Ra 'zac , come to Carvahall ; though it is later revealed that they weren 't looking for the egg at first . Eragon and Saphira manage to escape by hiding in the Spine , but Garrow is fatally wounded and the house and farm are burned down by the Ra 'zac . Once Garrow dies , Eragon is left with no reason to stay in Carvahall , so he goes after the Ra 'zac with his newly hatched dragon , seeking vengeance for the destruction of his home and his uncle 's death . He is accompanied by Brom , an elderly storyteller , who provides Eragon with the sword Zar 'roc and insists on helping him and Saphira .

Eragon becomes a Dragon Rider through his bond with Saphira . Eragon is the only known Rider in Alagaësia other than King Galbatorix , who , with the help of the now @-@ dead Forsworn , a group of thirteen dragon riders loyal to Galbatorix , killed every other Rider a hundred years ago . On the journey , Brom teaches Eragon sword fighting , magic , the ancient elvish language , and the ways of the Dragon Riders . Their travels bring them to the city of Teirm , where they meet with Brom 's friend Jeod . Eragon 's fortune is told by the witch Angela , and her companion , the werecat Solembum , gives Eragon some mysterious advice . With Jeod 's help , they are able to track the Ra 'zac to the southern city of Dras @-@ Leona . Although they manage to infiltrate the city , Eragon encounters the Ra 'zac in a cathedral and he and Brom are forced to flee . Later that night , their camp is ambushed by the Ra 'zac . A stranger named Murtagh rescues them , but Brom is gravely injured . Saphira watches over Brom as the night progresses , yet when morning comes they realize there is nothing they can do to save him . Brom gives Eragon his blessing , reveals that he was also once a dragon rider and that his dragon 's name was Saphira , and dies . Saphira then encases Brom in a tomb made of a diamond .

Murtagh becomes Eragon 's new companion and they travel to the city Gil 'ead to find information on how to find the Varden , a group of rebels who want to see the downfall of Galbatorix . While stopping near Gil 'ead , Eragon is captured and imprisoned in the same jail that holds a woman he has been having dreams about . As she is being dragged past she is revealed as an elf when her pointed ears are uncovered . Murtagh and Saphira stage a rescue , and Eragon escapes with the unconscious elf . During the escape , Eragon and Murtagh battle with Durza . Murtagh shoots Durza between the eyes with an arrow , and the Shade disappears in a cloud of mist . Then escaping , they run off . Eragon succeeds in communicating with the elf , whose name is revealed as Arya , and learns the location of the Varden . After some arguing , Murtagh decides to still travel with Eragon to the Varden but is still wary of them .

An army of Kull (Urgals who can grow up to 8 feet) reach Eragon right outside the Varden 's entrance , but are driven off with the help of the Varden , who escort Eragon , Saphira , Murtagh , and Arya to Farthen Dûr the mountain hideout of the varden . When they arrive in Farthen Dûr , Eragon is led to the leader of the Varden , Ajihad . Ajihad imprisons Murtagh after he refuses to allow his mind to be read to determine if he is a friend or a foe to the Varden . Eragon is told by Ajihad that Durza was not destroyed by Murtagh 's well placed arrow , because the only way to kill a Shade is with a stab through the heart . Oriq , nephew of the dwarf King Hrothgar , is appointed as Eragon and Saphira 's guide . Oriq shows them a place to stay and introduces them to Hrothgar . Eragon also meets Ajihad 's daughter , Nasuada , and Ajihad 's right @-@ hand man , Jörmundur . He also runs into Angela and Solembum , who have arrived in Tronjheim , and visits Murtagh in his prison . He is tested by two magicians , The Twins , as well as Arya .

Eragon and the Varden are then attacked by the Kull , as well as the rest of the Urgal army . Eragon personally battles Durza again , and succeeds in stabbing him in the heart with Zar 'roc , but at a price . Durza manages to slice a deep cut like Murtagh 's on his back . He then passes out , and is visited telepathically by a stranger while he is unconscious who tells Eragon to visit him in the Elven capital , Ellesméra .

= = Reception = =

Eragon received generally mixed reviews and was criticized for its derivative nature . Liz Rosenberg of The New York Times Book Review criticized Eragon for having " clichéd descriptions " , " B @-@

movie dialogue " , " awkward and gangly " prose . " However , she concluded the review by noting that " for all its flaws , it is an authentic work of great talent " . School Library Journal wrote that in Eragon " sometimes the magic solutions are just too convenient for getting out of difficult situations " . Common Sense Media called Eragon 's dialogue " long @-@ winded " and " clichéd " , with a plot " straight out of Star Wars by way of The Lord of the Rings , with bits of other great fantasies thrown in here and there . " The website did concede that the book is a notable achievement for such a young author , and that it would be " appreciated " by younger fans .

Favorable reviews of Eragon often focused on the book 's characters and plot . IGN 's Matt Casamassina called the book " entertaining " , and added that " Paolini demonstrates that he understands how to hold the reader 's eyes and this is what ultimately separates Eragon from countless other me @-@ too fantasy novels . " Chris Lawrence of About.com thought the book had all the " traditional ingredients " that make a fantasy novel " enjoyable " . The book was a " fun read " for him because it is " quick and exciting " and " packed " with action and magic . Lawrence concluded his review by giving the book a rating of 3 @. @ 8 / 5 , commenting that " the characters are interesting , the plot is engrossing , and you know the good guy will win in the end . "

Eragon was the third best @-@ selling children 's hardback book of 2003 , and the second best @-@ selling children 's paperback of 2005 . It placed on the New York Times Children 's Books Best Seller list for 121 weeks . In 2006 , the novel was awarded with a Nene Award by the children of Hawaii . It won the Rebecca Caudill Young Reader 's Book Award and the Young Reader 's Choice Award the same year .

= = Film adaptation = =

A film adaptation of Eragon was released in the United States on December 15 , 2006 . Plans to create the film were first announced in February 2004 , when 20th Century Fox purchased the rights to Eragon . The film was directed by first @-@ timer Stefen Fangmeier , and written by Peter Buchman . Edward Speleers was selected for the role of Eragon . Over the following months , Jeremy Irons , John Malkovich , Chris Egan and Djimon Hounsou were all confirmed as joining the cast . Principal photography for the film took place in Hungary and Slovakia .

The film received mostly negative reviews , garnering a 16 % approval rating at Rotten Tomatoes ; the tenth worst of 2006 . The Seattle Times described it as " technically accomplished , but fairly lifeless and at times a bit silly " . The Hollywood Reporter said the world of Eragon was " without much texture or depth " . The story was labelled " derivative " by The Washington Post , and " generic " by the Las Vegas Weekly . Newsday stressed this point further , asserting that only " nine @-@ year @-@ olds with no knowledge whatsoever of any of the six Star Wars movies " would find the film original . The acting was called " lame " by the Washington Post , as well as " stilted " and " lifeless " by the Orlando Weekly . The dialogue was also criticized : MSNBC labelled it " silly " ; the Las Vegas Weekly called it " wooden " . Positive reviews described the film as " fun " and " the stuff boys ' fantasies are made of " . The CGI work was called " imaginative " and Saphira was called a " magnificent creation " . Paolini stated he enjoyed the film , particularly praising the performances of Jeremy Irons and Ed Speleers .

Eragon grossed approximately \$ 75 million in the United States and \$ 173 @. @ 9 million elsewhere , totaling \$ 249 million worldwide . It is the fourth highest grossing film with a dragon at its focal point , and the sixth highest grossing film of the sword and sorcery subgenre . Eragon was in release for seventeen weeks in the United States , opening on December 15 , 2006 and closing on April 9 , 2007 . It opened in 3 @, @ 020 theaters , earning \$ 8 @. @ 7 million on opening day and \$ 23 @. @ 2 million across opening weekend , ranking second behind The Pursuit of Happyness . Eragon ? s \$ 75 million total United States gross was the thirty @-@ first highest for 2006 . The film earned \$ 150 million in its opening weekend across 76 overseas markets , making it the # 1 film worldwide . The film ? s \$ 249 million total worldwide gross was the sixteenth highest for 2006 .