

PARAWORLD ZERO: STUDY GUIDE

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About the Author, Matthew Peterson



Matthew Peterson graduated from Brigham Young University in Business Management. He now spends much of his time writing, programming, and maintaining www.ParaWorlds.com (an online community where aspiring authors can critique each other's work and discuss the business of writing).

Matthew served a two-year mission in Alabama for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, received the Eagle Scout award, and earned a second degree black belt in karate. He currently lives in Arizona with his wife, five boys, and a giant African tortoise.

About the Inspiration for *Paraworld Zero*

From dinosaur battles to young wizards in training, Matthew grew up in a “parallel” universe contained only in his mind. At age fourteen he came up with the concept of parallel worlds and wrote about a boy named Simon--a character based on himself. But after six chapters, the project came to a screeching halt because of a computer failure.

Many years passed by until one day Matthew found his manuscript hidden in a box of old keepsakes. He kept it in his briefcase for an entire year in hopes that he might actually finish it. And then something happened. Someone recommended that he read a popular children's series about a certain orphan boy named Harry who attended a magical school (you might be familiar with it). The similarities between this young adult series and Matthew's story were uncanny.

With renewed excitement, Matthew set out to finish his book. But he wasn't a young adult any more, and he no longer related to the insecure Simon he had created so many years before, so he decided to write a parallel story with another protagonist, Griffen, who would be an older reflection of the young Simon. Together, these two heroes are inspired from the childhood and adult life of Matthew Peterson... with some embellishment of course!

About the Story of *Paraworld Zero*

Twelve-year-old earthling, Simon Kent, stumbles upon a secret that thrusts him into a bizarre adventure filled with magic, technology and deadly out-of-this-world creatures. He discovers a true friend, confronts his inner demons and becomes the savior to a peculiar race of people, when all he truly wants is to find his way back home.

While Simon is having his adventures, another conflict is brewing among the paraworlds.

Waves of invisible energy engulf the paraverse, which, among other things, enable inter-dimensional travel. Some use this energy to perform magic, while others use it to enhance technology. The Raiders, a zealous organization of scientists and militants, want the power for themselves and plot to destroy the magic users.

As Simon unravels the mystery that enshrouds him, he discovers that only he can stop the Raiders and save the known paraverse. It's a good thing he has friends by his side to help him along the way.

The Main Characters



Simon Kent: An insecure 12-year-old from Earth who, after being trapped on a parallel world filled with giants, dwarfs, and machines, discovers that he can perform magic.

Tonya: An outspoken teenager from another dimension with hair that changes colors with her mood.

Thornapple Troodle: An intelligent but sometimes annoying dwarf who befriends Simon and Tonya.



Little Har: A young giant who is enslaved by Thornapple's family.

Griffen Lasher: A mighty swordsman with special healing powers.

Tabatha Burke: A space pilot with a catlike appearance and deadly martial arts skills.

Lord Theobolt Vaylen: Brother to the High King, this ultramagic hides many dark secrets.

Questions for Discussion

1. Simon tells Dimitri that he killed his mother. Why does Simon think he killed his mother?
2. What two weapons did Butch bring to school? What would you do if you saw someone bring a weapon to school?
3. Some people feel it's okay to do wrong things under certain circumstances. For instance, Tonya and Simon fled the Hard Rock Café without paying for their meal and stole a car to evade the military. Were their actions justifiable? Why? What would you have done in their situation?

4. If you could go to a Parallel World, what types of people and creatures would you see?
5. What was Simon's first meal on Pudo? What's the most unusual thing you've ever eaten? Did you like it? Why?
6. Tonya belittles Thornapple and says that nobody likes him. What was Simon's reaction to this? Why do you think Simon reacted that way? If one of your friends made fun of another person, what would you do?
7. Jumping to conclusions means that you've made an assumption without first getting all the facts. What are some instances in Paraworld Zero where people jump to conclusions? When is a time that you or someone you know has jumped to a conclusion?
8. Lord Vaylen appears to be good and evil. What are some of his good and bad character traits? What are some of your good and bad character traits?
9. What are some of the limitations the society on Pudo has placed upon Little Har and his people? What limitations (currently or in the past) has your society placed upon certain groups of people?
10. How did Simon's personality change over the course of the book?
11. What events helped Dr. Troodle and Little Har's Father, Harr, to finally become friends?
12. Everyone reacts differently to fear. How did Simon react to the shark, spiders, and dragunos? How would you have reacted?
13. What was your favorite part of the book and why? What makes a good book?
14. What are some differences and similarities between Pudo and Earth?
15. If you could have one of the magical powers in the book, what would it be? Why?
16. Simon didn't have any friends his age on Earth, but on Pudo he found several true friends. How did they show their friendship to him? What makes someone a true friend?
17. Some people use objects or hobbies to escape reality and their problems. What object did Simon use to escape from his problems? What objects or hobbies do you or someone you know use to escape reality?
18. Simon is very concerned about his height. Name a few instances in the book where Simon's short height affects the situation. Later in the book, Simon feels taller for some reason. Why does he feel taller? What are the advantages and disadvantages of being small or of being tall?

19. Simon felt lonely, even when kind people like Mrs. Trimble and Dimitri were close by. Why did Simon feel so lonely? What things could Simon have done to not be so lonely?

20. What were some humorous parts of the book? What were some sad parts? What were some surprising parts?

Topics for Research and Discussion

1. **Slavery:** Find at least three instances in the book where the giants are treated poorly. Write a few paragraphs about your feelings on the topic of slavery. This might include such things as the American Civil War, the African slave traders, slavery in ancient times, or modern-day slavery.

2. **Point of View:** Books are written with specific “points of view” such as first-person, third-person, limited-third-person, or omniscient. Write the definition of each of these four main perspectives. Paraworld Zero uses a combination of perspectives, but which of the four main types is used most frequently? Make a list of ten sentences from the book that clearly demonstrates one of the four main point of view types. Write the name of the point of view type that each sentence uses and, if applicable, the point of view character (who’s doing the thinking or the narrating?).

3. **Point of View Character:** The point of view character is the person who’s telling the story. As if they are holding a video camera, we often see the story through their eyes and mind. Pick an instance in the book involving several characters. Rewrite the passage using a different point of view character.

4. **Book Covers:** “You can’t judge a book by its cover” is a common saying, but we often do judge books by their covers.

- A. Find five young adult books at the library or at a bookstore and compare the differences and similarities between the covers of each book with Paraworld Zero.
- B. Read the back cover of Paraworld Zero as well as five other young adult books and rate the descriptions of each cover with a scale of one through ten, with ten being the best.
- C. With the permission of a parent or guardian, go to www.Amazon.com and look at the covers, descriptions, and reviews/comments of five young adult books and then submit a review for Paraworld Zero.

5. **Parallelism, Symbolism, and Foreshadowing:** Paraworld Zero contains a lot of parallelism, symbolism, and foreshadowing. Write down the definition for parallelism, symbolism, and foreshadowing. Now write three examples from the book for each of these writing techniques.