Critical Praise for Nancy Yi Fan

"This young writer is worth watching."
—*Publishers Weekly*

"An extraordinary accomplishment for a young author."
—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Nancy Yi Fan has done a lot in thirteen years."
—*Time For Kids*

Novels by Nancy Yi Fan

Sword Quest
Tr 978-0-06-124335-6 • $15.99 ($18.99)
Lb 978-0-06-124336-3 • $16.89 ($19.89)
One magical sword. Two rivals. In this story of courage and fate, Wind-voice faces off with Maldeor while the future of birdkind hangs in the balance.

Swordbird
Tr 978-0-06-113099-1 • $15.99 ($19.99)
Lb 978-0-06-113100-4 • $16.89 ($19.89)
Pb 978-0-06-113101-1 • $6.99 ($8.75)
CD 978-0-06-123398-2 • $25.95 ($29.95)
"Would be a standout even if it wasn't written by a twelve-year-old."
—*People* magazine

"Nancy Yi Fan's tightly woven story delivers a manifest message promoting peace and freedom."—*Publishers Weekly*

• *New York Times* Bestseller

Zui'ai Photo Studio

About the Author

Nancy Yi Fan spent the first part of her childhood in China, where she was born in 1993. When she was seven years old, Nancy moved with her parents to the United States and attended American schools through fifth grade. Birds, a lifelong passion of Nancy's, have provided the inspiration for both of her books. After awaking from a vivid dream, Nancy wrote *Swordbird* as a way to convey a message of peace to the world. She currently lives in Florida with her parents. You can visit her online at www.swordbird.googlepages.com.

HarperCollins*Children's Books*

www.harpercollinschildrens.com

For exclusive information on your favorite authors and artists, visit www.authortracker.com.

Prices and availability subject to change without notice.

Guide prepared by Susan Geye, Library Media Specialist, Crowley Ninth Grade Campus, Ft. Worth, Texas.

02/08

Reading Group Guide

Sword Quest and Swordbird

by Nancy Yi Fan

About the Book: *Sword Quest*

In this prequel to *Swordbird,* the phoenix Pepheroh recalls the Great Spirit, who said that a hero will come to guide the world to peace again. The Great Spirit instructs Pepheroh to enlist a blacksmith to craft a sword that will be used to save birdkind. Pepheroh hides the sword, and in order to find it, the hero will have to locate seven gemstones, each with a clue to the sword's location. But the archaeopteryx and their leaders are determined to thwart any attempt by the good birds to discover who the hero is or to help him come to power.

Questions for Discussion: *Sword Quest*

1. When Yin Soul gives Wind-voice a chance at life, why does Wind-voice choose to return to be roasted over the fire? What is the result of his choice?

2. When Morgan, the eagle chieftain, hears word of his son, Fleydur, his heart is touched. How does his attitude change? What effect does the news of Fleydur have on Forlath?

3. What motivates Stormac to return to the cave filled with gems and jewels? What happens to him there? What does his foolishness cost him?

4. Each of the four birds wanted by the archaeopteryx—Wind-voice, Winger, Fleydur, and Stormac—has a special skill to aid him in finding the gems and solving the mystery of the hero's identity. What are these birds' skills? How do their skills help them solve the mystery?

5. What clues does the author give the reader that Wind-voice will be the hero? How do symbolism and foreshadowing play a role in the clues?

About the Book: *Swordbird*

The evil hawk lord Turnatt has gathered together crows and ravens to help him enslave the woodbirds and turn the blue jay and the cardinal tribes against each other. But Miltin, a brave robin enslaved by Turnatt, breaks free to warn the woodbirds. He then turns to the young blue jay Aska for help in assembling the blue jay and cardinal tribes to free the slavebirds from Fortress Glooming. The war is on and only Swordbird, son of the Great Spirit, can bring peace and freedom to the land. As the blue jay Glenagh searches the *Old Scripture* for the song that will bring Swordbird to their aid, Miltin and Aska journey to the White Cap Mountains to retrieve one of the seven jewels that Swordbird requires.

Questions for Discussion: *Swordbird*

1. When the cardinals and the blue jays learn the truth about Turnatt, they join forces to fight evil. What are the advantages of their banding together?

2. When Aska volunteers to go to the White Cap Mountains with Miltin to retrieve the Leasorn gem, why is Glenagh determined to stop her? What does Aska say to convince Glenagh to allow her to go? How do the other birds in their tribes respond?

3. Why do the cardinals and the blue jays refuse to kill their enemies? How does this choice affect them in the future?

4. What leads to Turnatt's decision to lead the attack against the woodbirds himself? What happens during the attack that shows Turnatt to be a coward?

5. Although many birds help to destroy the Fortress Glooming compound and defeat Turnatt, who is the real hero? Why?

Extension Activities: *Sword Quest* and *Swordbird*

1. Quoting Quotations

After reviewing the *Old Scripture* and the *Book of Heresy* epigraphs at the beginning of each chapter, find a quote from another source that would apply to one of Nancy Yi Fan's novels or characters. Copy down the quote and write an explanation of why it is appropriate. Share your quote—but not your written explanation—with others in your discussion group and hear their thoughts on the quote's application to the novels or characters. After everyone has had a chance to respond, read your written explanation and listen to any final thoughts.

2. Word Pictures

The author of *Sword Quest* and *Swordbird* uses imagery and descriptive phrasing to paint pictures with her words. Create your own picture by selecting a descriptive passage from either novel to illustrate in detail using pen and ink, chalk, crayon, watercolor, or collage. Share your illustration with the group. Encourage discussion relating to differences in interpretation, the importance of the scene or character, a possible caption for the scene, or the feelings evoked by both the passage and the illustration.