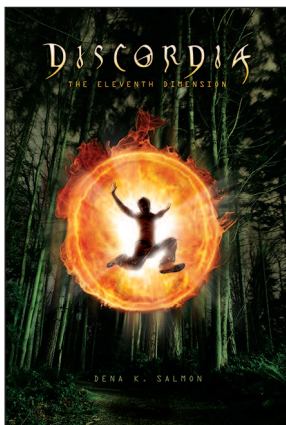


This guide was created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, a reading specialist and award-winning author, visit her Web site at www.tracievaughnzimmer.com to find hundreds of guides to children's and young adult literature.



DISCORDIA
The Eleventh Dimension

By Dena K. Salmon

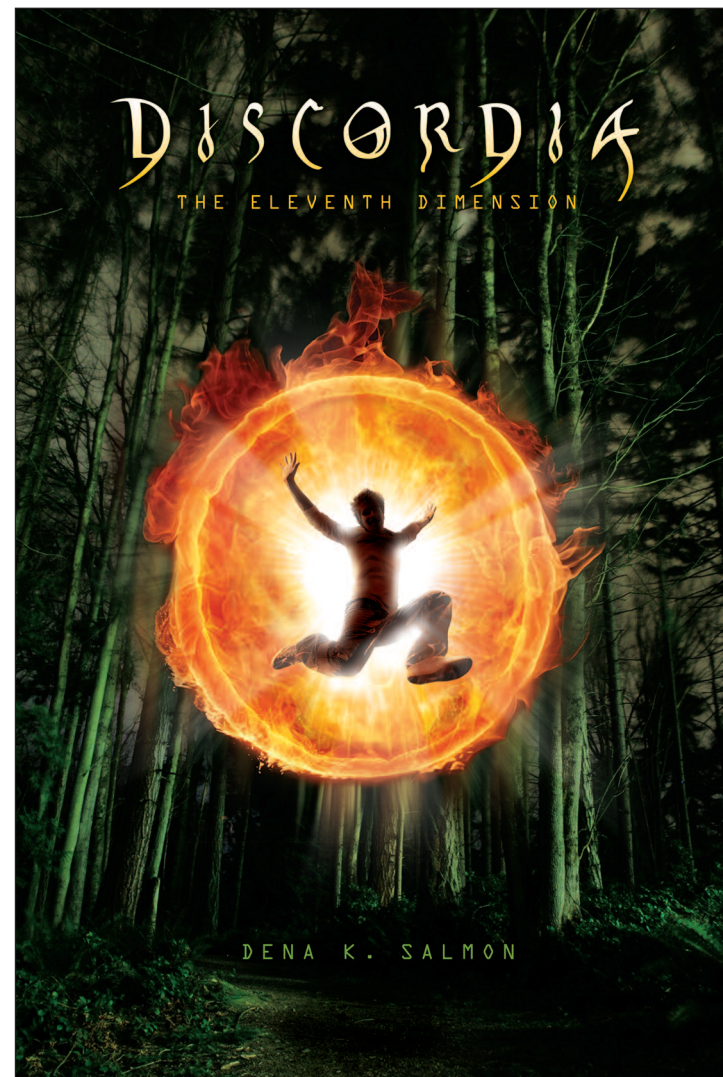
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DISCUSSION GUIDE

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ABOUT THE BOOK

For Lance (level 17 zombie sorcerer) and his friend MrsKeller (level 21 hobgoblin brigand), life's a battle and then you die. And then you rez. And then you battle again. At least that's how it is in Discordia, the addictive online game that makes real life seem dreary in comparison. At his new school, Lance feels weird and out of place, but in beautiful and complex Discordia, his zombie sorcerer is doing great: leveling fast, learning new skills, and making friends. He's even met a level 60 toon, TheGreatOne, who has recruited him and MrsKeller into his guild, Awoken Myths.

Lance wishes he could spend all his time in the game—until TheGreatOne transports Lance and MrsKeller to the real Discordia, the perilous world in the eleventh dimension that inspired the game. Before they're allowed to leave, they must complete a high-level quest that may determine Discordia's survival—and Lance's too.

If they don't get out soon, Lance could permanently mutate into the character he plays in the game: a zombie. The friends accept TheGreatOne's quest and meet Rayva, a runaway who may have been lured into Discordia against her will. The three make their way through a country on the brink of war, fighting monsters, traitors and spies—yet their greatest danger may be Lance himself.



PRE-READING

Have you ever wished you lived inside of a game or movie?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 What are the most important things you must know to survive in Discordia?
- 2 Why does Lance prefer the world of Discordia to real life? Do you play or participate in anything that you prefer to your real life?
- 3 Lance is friends with MrsKeller. Are you friends with anyone online that you don't know in person? Can online friends be real friends? What surprising thing does Lance discover about his friend? As a reader, was it hard to change your notions about MrsKeller too?
- 4 Who is TheGreatOne? Is he a Massive Tool (as MrsKeller believes) or worthy of kissing up to as Lance does? How can you tell the difference? What directions does he give the pair? What will they gain by following his directions? What do they risk?
- 5 What choice does Lance make in order to survive his dungeon run? Is there a morality code in alternative worlds too? Do you think the way a person behaves in a game is a good reflection of that person in real life?
- 6 What becomes Lance and MrsKeller's quest? What is at stake in the quest? Would you accept the quest or not?
- 7 Who is Rayva? What is her position in the town of Seyre? Why are the citizens suddenly afraid there? Have you seen the effects of fear in your own community? How does fear change people?

- 8 What choice must Rayva make on her journey? Do you think murder is justified to acquire freedom? How is she given her opportunity? Does she take it? What happens to her mistress?
- 9 What creatures, obstacles, and advances do MrsKeller and Lance meet along their journey? What is Lance struggling to control inside himself? Are there parts of yourself that you, too, try to control in front of others? Are they as attractive as maggot-ridden eyes?!
- 10 How do Rayva's and Lance's stories intersect? As a reader, did you assume that eventually they would? Would it have annoyed you if they hadn't intersected?
- 11 Describe the city of Liander. Would you like to visit such a place or not? Why? Do they accomplish their goals there?
- 12 In the end, what happens to Lance, MrsKeller, Rayva, and TheGreatOne? Predict what you think will happen next.

Welcome to
DISCORDIA
THE ELEVENTH DIMENSION

PROJECTS

Language Arts

Write an original description of a monster or being who already does or could exist inside the world of Discordia.

Art

Draw, paint, sculpt, or otherwise create one of the settings from *Discordia*. On the back explain your choice in color, shape, form, and texture.

Music

Create a playlist for Lance and MrsKeller's journey into Discordia. Explain your choices.

History

Research the history of gaming. Create a Web page about what you learned.

Design

Develop your own gaming world with unique creatures, rules, quests, and magic.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dena Salmon lives and writes in Montclair, New Jersey, where she is locally renowned as the most inept gamer to have ever wielded a mouse. She enjoys going on solo quests but rarely accepts an invitation to group unless there's someone else at home to play her character during the tricky parts.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

1 Where did the idea for *Discordia* come from?

I hate to admit it, but my inspiration came from an article in the *New York Times*. Not the story itself, mind you—just the concept of online role-playing games. The whole idea of people meeting and questing in a computer-generated world was so sci-fi-crazy-unbelievable that I could hardly wait to learn more, and then turn it into a story.

2 Why did you choose to write this novel for young adult readers?

I wanted to write an adventure for people who'd rather play than read, yet at the same time, tell a story that would interest non-gamers, too. The only difficulty was my complete and utter cluelessness.

Until I started my research, I had never played a video game in my life. I knew nothing—nothing—but I was helped along by two local high school guys. They were very patient with me, and when I finally created a character on their server, we met for the first time in the game itself.

For them, a virtual meeting was no big deal. For me, it was a shattering experience—akin to walking on the moon (minus the years of training, the freeze-dried ice-cream, and those practice spins in the G-force machine).

3 Do you play online role-playing games? If so, do you have favorites?

Only if I haven't fulfilled my daily humiliation requirement. Whenever I try to play, the family gathers round to watch/scream with derisive laughter. Once they actually tried to sell tickets, though I'd rather not go into that. The memory is still painful.

4 Is there another adventure in *Discordia* for Lance and MrsKeller planned?

You think I'd leave Rayva in that precarious situation forever? I'm not that kind of person.

5 Which science fiction/fantasy writers for teens do you admire the most?

In no particular order: Eoin Colfer, Philip Pullman, Jonathan Stroud, Orson Scott Card, Rick Riordan, and of course, Terry Pratchett. Pratchett's books combine fantasy, humor, philosophy, and a touch of theoretical physics. He's the master. If asked, I'd fly to England to do his dusting.

6 What one piece of advice would you like to pass on to budding fantasy writers?

Mark Twain, one of America's top quotable writers, said it best: "Of course truth is stranger than fiction. Fiction has to make sense."

That goes double in a fantasy world.

