



Dragon's Code

Gigi McCaffrey

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A new hero emerges in a divided world as one of sci-fi's most beloved series--Anne McCaffrey's Dragonriders of Pern--relaunches with this original adventure from Anne's daughter, Gigi McCaffrey.

In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the Dragonriders of Pern series, Gigi does her mother proud, adding to the family tradition of spinning unputdownable tales that recount the adventures of the brave inhabitants of a distant planet who battle the pitiless adversary known as Thread.

The last time Thread attacked Pern, the world was unprepared for the fight--until the Oldtimers appeared. These courageous dragonriders arrived from the past, traveling four hundred years to help their descendants survive. But the collision of past and present took its toll. While most of the displaced rescuers adapted to their new reality, others could not abide the jarring change and found themselves in soul-crushing exile, where unhappiness and resentment seethed.

Piemur, a journeyman harper, also feels displaced, cast adrift by the loss of his spectacular boyhood voice and uncertain of his future. But when the Masterharper of Pern sees promise in the young man and sends him undercover among the exiled Oldtimers, Piemur senses the looming catastrophe that threatens the balance of power between the Weyrs and Holds of Pern.

When the unthinkable happens, Piemur must rise to the challenge to avert disaster and restore honor to the dragons and dragonriders of Pern. Because now, in a world already beset by Thread, another, more insidious danger looms: For the first time in living memory, dragons may be on the verge of fighting dragons.

Dragon's Code Details

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From Reader Review Dragon's Code for online ebook

Shiloh says

Del Rey provided me with a copy of this book via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I really wanted to like this. I wanted to *love* it. I grew up devouring the Pern books. Menolly is one of my favorite characters of all time. Lessa isn't far behind her. I was vaguely disappointed by the Todd McCaffrey books, so I *really* wanted this to be good.

It . . . was not. I didn't finish it.

The book suffers from showing instead of telling, infodumping, ridiculous dialogue, and shallow characterization. The prose feels very much like it was written for younger audiences (there's nothing wrong with that, but I expect adult novels from Pern). I cringed through the first few chapters and only made it past the first one because I felt like I owed it to Del Rey to *try*. After a few more chapters, though, I gave myself permission not to finish it.

I suppose the only Anne McCaffrey was Anne McCaffrey, and we'll just have to be content with re-reading the original series 75 more times.

Elizabeth says

I am sympathetic towards taking up the mantle of a science fiction great, up to an extent. The legacy Anne McCaffrey left behind is immense- one of the first women to write science fiction, she created a rich world that readers have returned to again and again. On a purely personal note, I have many fond memories of reading the books as I went from middle school to high school and then beyond, up until McCaffrey's death. There are so many tales that could still be told using that framework already established, and unfortunately, Anne McCaffrey's daughter Gigi fails to live up to that sense of keen teenage nostalgia I hold.

The most glaring issue was one of canon. I believe Gigi wanted to make her mother's world her own, which is fair. Again, big shoes to fill etc etc. Unfortunately, in doing so, she completely neglects the established canon, something that established fans of the series aren't going to be happy with. It's not little changes either- it's adding extra limbs to horses, it's changing the titles that are used in dozens of books before. And it's taking beloved characters and rendering them flat and two-dimensional, so unlike her mother's creations.

It's a shame, because the story Gigi wants to tell is one that has a great deal of potential. The Oldtimers have leapt forward from the past to rescue the world of Pern, only to find themselves lacking as strong of a purpose as they thought they would hold. Once regarded as the rescuers, they and their dragons are now fading into a kind of twilight obscurity and they aren't content to live out their lives that way. Were the story to create entirely new characters, I may have been on board, despite Gigi McCaffrey's clumsy prose and tendency to tell, and not show details in long-winded paragraphs that stretch on for what seems like pages and pages.

In taking Robinton and Piemur as significant characters, she's taking perhaps two of the most beloved characters in the series and not doing them any sense of justice. As I said above, they're flat, lacking

everything that made them so memorable before. It almost feels disrespectful to Anne's memory.

That being said, I'm willing to read another book by Gigi if she's willing to write her own characters and if the editors are willing to make her stick to the canon. There's potential there, but extracting the full degree of it may be a difficult process. Time will tell, and I can only hope that Pern still has some tales left in it.

Thank you to NetGalley and to RandomHouse for giving me a copy in exchange for an honest review.

Jennifer says

I was hopeful....but that hope died a slow, painful death by utter boredom and despair as I attempted to make my way through this bland and unoriginal attempt at resurrecting the world of Pern once again. If you absolutely must read it- because Pern (and I totally get that)- check it out of your local public library so at least you don't spend any of your own hard earned money on what is but a half-hearted attempt.

What really bothered me about this book (besides that it was so boring) was that the author had an entire planet full of people and dragons. Surely there are all sorts of new storylines that could be developed while keeping faith with her mother's creations. Instead, we revisit old ground and resolve situations with a lucky discovery made because one of the main characters just happens to be in the right place at the right time- but it reads like the author really didn't know how to finish the story, so hey, let's just find a tonic from the past and lo! problem solved! Stop it! If someone tries this again, I suggest one rule: No more sick dragons. Find something else.

About the only thing interesting was the twins presented at the Impression of the queen egg. That could be a little strange, seeing your identical twin sister Impress a queen dragon. But the dragon made another choice. So should you, unless you are an insomniac and your preferred remedy is reading boring things before bedtime.

Sylvia McIvers says

So... extended fan-fiction, anyone?

Take an incident from The White Dragon, and give us an alternate point of view about what happened at the same time.

It's a nice story, it really is. It was nice to see Piemur again (since when do people call him Pie?) and Menolly (Lolly???) again, and Masterharper Robinton is clever as usual.

Got to page 75 without any women but the old Weyrwoman, crazy about not having babies. Um. That never happened in the main books. Then Silvina is happy to have her wandering children come home to her table, hungry as ever. OK, that's 2 stereotypes until Menolly shows up again.

Way, way too many adjectives and doubled words, this book needed editing.

But I still enjoyed the story more than the series that focused on the watch-whers.

Kaitlynn says

When Todd started writing with his mom, I was cautiously optimistic. I grew up on Pern, loved Pern, and re-read the series every couple years. I knew Anne was aging, and I was hopeful that Todd, having grown up with her and writing with her, would be able to take over and continue to tell stories in a world I loved. Like I said, I was optimistic. Right up until I read the first few books. Todd made radical changes to the canon, used the same repetitive plots over and over, and wrote the flattest, most Mary Sue-ish characters in the series.

Now I realize I was perhaps too hard on Todd. Gigi is by far the weaker of the two and Anne made do with what she had.

Todd played pretty much in his own timeline, picking a pass that wasn't used in his mother's stories. This gave him a lot of freedom while writing - freedom to make his own characters, plots, small adjustments to geography, etc. I thought that was respectful of his mother's creation. Don't get me wrong - he still fucked up canon in ways that didn't make sense (as opposed to the small errs that Anne made, which were largely typos in dragon names or colors), but it was at least temporally isolated from the rest of Pern.

Gigi just dives into some of the most popular, most well-established and well-loved characters of the series to reprise one of the biggest stories in the series. Its a super ballsy move that would take a lot of knowledge and skill to pull off, and Gigi, sadly, does not have either. There's multiple small issues with the canon. For example, Gigi seems to mistake the Terran horses for the Pandoran direhorse. Horses have 4 legs, not 6.

But I can almost, almost ignore those. Like I said, Anne made small typos too. Here, Gigi is writing about Piemur, Sebell, Menolly, and Robinton. None of their personality is captured. The dialogue is stilted and without any character voice (plenty of painful fake accents, though). There is no plot to speak of and what little plot there is is recycled from other Pern books and underdeveloped. Oh no, the dragons are sick again, oh wait here's a convenient, ancient cure. Oh no, we don't have enough dragons to fight Thread oh wait we convinced some to do a time jump. Todd overused these plots to death and Gigi appears to follow the trend.

Piemur lacks any real agency - he just wanders place to place as he's told reporting information people either already knew or don't care about. His biggest contribution is a half-page speech at the end that was painfully cliched and the resulting success doesn't feel earned.

At this point I think I'm done hoping that Pern will continue. Anne gave us over a dozen solid Pern stories. We should be content with that.

TL;DR: This is the Pern equivalent of Star Wars prequels, or the Twilight book Life and Death - a story that *could* be told, but didn't *need* to be told, wasn't told *well*, and contributed *nothing* to the established story/setting.

? BookAddict 🗡️ La Crimson Femme says

Lovers of the young adult trilogy, Harper Hall will enjoy this new perspective from Piemur. This book should be read after reading the original trilogy by Anne McCaffrey to fully appreciate this tale. When I read the original trilogy, I loved the first two books, Dragonsong and Dragonsinger. When it suddenly shifted to

Piemur in Dragondrums, I was severely disappointed. Primarily because I didn't care for Piemur and didn't want to read about a "boy". There were so many stories already with boy leads. As a strong willed twelve year old girl three decades ago, this was a letdown. Returning as an adult to see another perspective from Piemur I am nostalgic for my younger more innocent years.

Piemur is in a tough situation where he is no longer a child yet not quite an adult. Anne McCaffrey's daughter, Gigi gives a slight different flavour than her mother. Gigi's writing is less emotional. As in, Piemur comes across as just a mini adult. Whilst Anne wrote him with child like antics and behaviours to be expected from a pre-teen young adult. It is hard to exactly point my finger on the subtle difference, but as an avid fan of the Original Ms. McCaffrey, there is a little bit of spark that is missing for me.

Still, this story brings back good memories of the original series. It takes us back to a time where there is turmoil and hard feelings. Feelings of resentment that are shown from the losing side. I enjoyed seeing from the other side because it is not so black and white when it comes to the Old timers. They were lauded as saviours and then within a book or two, they became horrid villains. That extreme always troubled me when I read this as a child. I couldn't understand how someone could go so bad and become so evil so quickly. Seeing the old timer's side from Gigi McCaffrey's perspective helped balance the story and made me a bit sad for these people. These people who sacrificed so much to do what they do best. And they are displaced in a modern time where the norm is drastically different then what they are accustomed to living.

Is this a commentary for those who grew up in a different time and now have to adjust to a world they can no longer understand? Where their value is no longer appreciated and instead, they previous benefits are ripped away and labeled as arrogant privilege? And yet not all the Oldtimers have difficult integrating into this new world. Those who can accept change and adopt new practices are thriving. But at what cost? Because now they are considered traitors. It is a quandary which Ms. McCaffrey does a nice job of setting up and letting the reader decide which side they fall on. I think as a teenager, I would have been outraged and sided with the current dragon rider regime. In my older jaded age, I can understand and empathize with the old timers. This is a tough call as there are no winners in this scenario, only losers. It will be interesting to see if Ms. McCaffrey will continue to revisit the old world and reminisce with beloved characters or if she will start fresh and begin where her mother left off. I had hoped for the later and I'm still optimistic we might learn what happens to this world after thread was finally defeated.

**provided by NetGalley*

Judy Lesley says

Thank you to NetGalley and Random House Publishing Group - Ballantine - Del Rey for a digital galley of this novel.

I am proof that it can be done.....I have never read any of the Dragonriders of Pern novels, started with this book written by Anne McCaffrey's daughter Gigi and survived. Not just survived, but actually thrived and understood what was happening. If you are like me, in the evidently small group of fantasy novel readers who have never dipped their toe into a Pern book, take heart and start reading this one. Yes, there is a huge amount of backstory material but I prefer to look on that as an opportunity to read more about this interesting world instead of treating it as an impediment to enjoying this specific book.

I cannot compare the writing skills or fantasy world development skills of Gigi McCaffrey to Anne

McCaffrey so I will dispense with that problem altogether. I definitely enjoyed the story of Piemur as he tries to find his place in this society since his voice has broken leaving him without the wonderful singing talent he had. Now Piemur is seeking his place by filling in time exploring and mapping the lands of Southern Weyr. At seventeen Turns and unable to continue his apprenticeship as a Harper he has no idea in what direction his future may go. This book has a Prologue which effectively encapsulates the main points of the world of Pern along with valuable information about the connections between dragons and humans as well as Thread and what dangers it poses. This was a very helpful section.

I enjoyed this book quite a lot. I would have liked to read more about the interactions between dragonriders and their dragons but with a main character not a dragonrider himself, that wasn't a focus of this book. I would quite like to read another book in this series written by Gigi McCaffrey because she has heightened my interest in the whole Pern subject.

Theresa says

Dragon's Code: Anne McCaffrey's Dragonriders of Pern

by Gigi McCaffrey

By fortune's providence I spent my birthday reading through this book. What a gift. When we lost our dear Anne McCaffrey in November of 2011, I mourned the loss of these stories. Although I read and enjoyed Todd McCaffrey's time in the sandbox, I also mourned the loss of his books when he stopped publishing. Anne McCaffrey has always been my favorite since I was in seventh grade and was given Dragonsinger to try. I have and own all her books in all her series, and her books have gotten me through some pretty hard times. I told Anne McCaffrey her importance in my life and her children have heard in my reviews over the years how this continues with these stories.

Gigi, has followed in her mother's footsteps bring a book not only from Pern but from that first series I read The Harper Hall series to life again. You find life lessons in this book like you do in all her mother's books. You find acceptance, love, compassion and remarkable understanding of the human spirit. Like her mother the reader will walk away with bits of advice, and profound compassion. I can see some differences between her style of writing and her mother's, but like Todd I don't mind the differences. The characters are still genuine to the original characters and the action sequence of events do not change the stories, just open up doors never seen before. This story like Masterharper of Pern looks into more of the characters' background that we knew before. It fleshes out part of the story we did not know and brings things to the forefront that we as fans and avid readers wish we had always known. Three cheers, Please keep writing, and tell Todd to get back in the sand box. Oh and if Rose is still willing, please help her get a chance to play. Your mother was phenomenal, and her books made up the character of my life, not only by inspiring me, but by teaching me. I have missed her voice most of all. Thank you .

Karen's Library says

Let me start out by saying that I have every book of Pern written by both Anne and Todd McCaffrey and have read the first 10 so many times that I had to replace my copy of Dragonriders of Pern because it fell to pieces from being read so many times. Yes, I am a huge fan!

It felt so good to be back in Anne McCaffrey's world of the dragons, riders, and harpers of Pern.

In Dragon's Code, Anne's daughter Gigi takes over the reins from Anne's son, Todd, and brings us Piemur's story during the time of The White Dragon. We even get to see where Piemur came from and meet his family.

I fell back into Pern immediately and at times forgot this book was not written by Anne. (I mourned her passing greatly.) I found myself once again enthralled and teary eyed at an Impression, holding my breath during a journey Between, and on the edge of my seat when Thread fell.

I was so happy to be back with Piemur, Menolly, Masterharper Robinton, and their firelizards. I hope Gigi continues to give us more stories of Pern and the beloved characters I have loved for decades!

Thank you to NetGalley and Del Rey Books for the advance copy!

eyes.2c says

Dragons continue!

Seamless was the word that occurred to me. An avid reader of McCaffrey from when Dragonflight burst onto the scene I was so surprised and delighted by another Pern story told from the perspective of the once singer Piemur. His readjustment to life with the changes to his voice, his disappointments and quest to find a different place within the dragon halls form the background from which the action springs.

The time is in the now but the challenges face date back to the oldtimers living on the Southern continent. A situation is set in motion that could have dragon fighting dragon. Plots are hatched that arise from old situations.

We meet old friends and come more into step with the most recent characters and their doings on Pern. Masterharpers, singers, dragon riders are all represented.

Gigi McCaffrey has certainly echoes the voices of Pern without a hitch.

A pleasurable homecoming indeed!

A NetGalley ARC

Lizzie says

I am having difficulty rating this book. I am a longtime fan of the Pern series. Rereading Anne's books are my book version of eating macaroni and cheese - comfort food. Reading Dragon's Code, I was frustrated and angry at the things that did not follow Anne's iconic series. I actually gained a new found appreciation of Todd's books in the series (despite his books being too sexualized IMO). Gigi giving nicknames of Pie and Lolly to two characters, Piemur and Menolly, that were so much a part of so many of the Pern books grated on me constantly.

The writing was ok. The 2nd half of the book was better story-telling, as to content, than the first. There was definitely too much information dump. The characters were flat. There was no emotional connection for me.

Reviews of this book were mixed from hated it to 5 stars. Therefore, I bought it in hard cover with hopes that the reality would be somewhere in the middle at a minimum. It wasn't. Anne's death made me sad that there

would be no more Pern books. This book says that if there are more, they should be written by someone other than Gigi. It feels so rude to say that, but she doesn't have the depth of understanding of the history of the series and the characters. I am surprisingly wishing that Todd would write another Pern story. My hardcover copy will sit on my shelf with my collection, but I doubt I will ever read it again.

Erin Sky says

If you haven't read any of Anne McCaffrey's Pern series, you really need to start at the beginning. But don't worry, you don't have to read all 20-something titles before you get to this one! Just six: *Dragonflight*, *Dragonquest*, *Dragonson*, *Dragonsinger*, *The White Dragon*, and *Dragondrums*. (Links at the end of the full blog post.) There's a bit of plot overlap between Gigi McCaffrey's new one and the last couple, but if you've read the others, that's part of the charm.

For those of you who have loved this series since it first came out (I'm not old enough to make that claim, but I've loved it since I first discovered it), you'll feel the same way about this one that I do.

5 stars, for bringing me back home.

Those six books are actually two different trilogies. My all-time favorites in the history of ever are *Dragonflight*, *Dragonquest*, and *The White Dragon*, which make up The Dragonriders of Pern series. Read them. Read them all. They started me on the road to becoming a fantasy author. (The *Dragonflight* ebook is just \$2.99, by the way.)

My *second* all-time favorites in the history of ever are *Dragonson*, *Dragonsinger*, and *Dragondrums*, which make up the Harper Hall of Pern series. They're set in the same world, but there's more contact with fire lizards than dragons. Still, I'd gladly take a fire lizard pet if I managed to Impress one. (That's a Pern thing.) And any excuse to visit Pern is a worthwhile venture.

Go read them all. Yes, right now. The review will still be here, I promise.

[The blog post has a gif here for waiting.]

Great! You're back! BEST BOOKS EVER, RIGHT???

Now that you're as big a fan of the series as I am, you'll understand me when I say (without any spoilers) that *Dragon's Code* is like coming back home. The book follows one of the harpers, and while I personally prefer the dragonrider books, I admit I screamed a little every time I saw a familiar name. Reading about these characters was like returning to that one perfect summer from your childhood and seeing all your old friends again.

The story is less traditional than you might expect, in that several scenes are more like side ventures that don't really move the plot along. Normally, I'd dock a star for that, but in this case, they often involved a dragonrider fighting Thread, which made them my favorite chapters!!!! There are also several elements that rely on explanations found in those first six books, but since I've already mentioned that **you should read them all because they're amazing**, that falls in the plus column, too (for avoiding unnecessary infodumping.)

Like most of the harper series, *Dragon's Code* is about a character's internal journey, and it left me profoundly satisfied (and a little teary-eyed.) I hated having to say goodbye all over again, but, hopefully, it won't be too long before the next one. Maybe even about dragons?

Bottom line: Fans of the Harper Hall of Pern series will be delighted by the return of beloved characters in this paradoxically nostalgic story about the importance of letting go.

My thanks to Random House for sending a galley. Receiving an advance copy did not in any way influence my review.

Hans van der Boom says

It wouldn't be fair to compare Gigi McCaffrey with her mother and I will not be doing that. Of course there are little things that you could argue are not canon or should have been caught by a few good and knowledgeable Pern fans. I would have been surprised if there hadn't been. But that isn't what a book review is about, shouldn't be about. Fact is, *Dragon's Code* is a good and finely crafted Pern book. And I, for one, loved being "back in Ninth Pass Pern". Gigi does her mother's legacy proud.

The book belongs right there with the other Pern books and the fact it touches something that has happened and been written about in an earlier Pern book should also furnish admiration for the courage to tackle that particular subject. But not even that is enough recommendation.

This book is about Piemur. Piemur coming of age. From more or less wallowing in self pity to finding his place in life and as a harper on Pern. And a darn good tale it is.

I've read the reviews people put in after reading the advanced readers copy and none of them mentioned the scene about the death and funeral of Piemur's foster mother, Ama. Yeah, Ama... Not ashamed to tell you I cried and I wondered. I wondered how much of it was based on a certain real passing of a loved one. Anne McCaffrey always used her life experiences in her books, obvious if you read about her life. And her daughter clearly has the ability to do the same and spin a good Pernese yarn.

Bottom line: would I recommend this book. Oh yes, I would! I know some Pern fans will be irritated by small things but overall this is a good Pern book and a worthwhile read. Thank you Gigi for giving Ninth Pass Pern a deserved chance. You did well.

Allyson says

Having grown up reading about the dragons of Pern, *Dragon's Code* wasn't a tough sell. However, despite my familiarity with the characters and the background of the world, this book turned out to be one of perhaps 20 books in my life (I read between 200-300 books every year and have done so for the last 25 years) that I did not finish. The writing was so incredibly poor that I simply could not stand to read it after fighting through the first half. Honestly, it deserves less than a star and the publisher should be embarrassed to have this on their lists. Having an author for a mother does not an author make. The characterizations were half-formed at best and the plotting was absolutely plodding. It all comes back to poor writing skills. It felt like I was reading something written for a middle school or high school assignment. Completely missing soul and skill, *Dragon's Code* falls flat on all counts, and would need a complete overhaul by an exceptionally skilled

Thank you to NetGalley for providing this ARC.

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