



## The White Dragon

*Anne McCaffrey*

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## **The White Dragon** Anne McCaffrey

Jaxom, a rebellious young aristocrat, and Ruth, his white dragon, fly into another time to retrieve the queen's stolen egg, thereby averting a dragonrider war, and find their planet threatened once again by a Threadfall.

## **The White Dragon Details**

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Author : Anne McCaffrey

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## From Reader Review The White Dragon for online ebook

### Sotiris Karaikos says

As in the previous book (in chronological order) of this series - Dragondrums - this book supposed to be the last of a trilogy but is actually more a stand-alone novel. Also like the previous book the protagonist is an angry teen thirsty for adult admission and hungry for sex, as most teenagers I think. Of course, this teen is not an ordinary one as he is having many important responsibilities, to which he adds even more as he tends to get involved where he does not have to. With his ally the white dragon, however, he has all the right tools to save the world from trouble and get a girl. An interestingly enough book in which we are also learning about Pern's past. On the other hand, however, I can not say that I found the book particularly exciting, although I definitely find it interesting and definitely better than the previous one I read, I do not put a 4 only for some minor details.

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### Amita says

No extra points in the rating for the awesome dragons and unique world this time around. The shine of Pern has worn off, and all that's left is the author's writing. In that regard, this book was pretty lackluster.

I had a lot of hope for Jaxom and Ruth after Dragonquest. I was pretty much completely disappointed. Jaxom is a whiny, bratty kid that I had absolutely no investment in. In fact, I actively want him to fail. Characters that are special and wonderful at everything just for the sake of it annoy me, and McCaffrey seems to be frequently guilty of this. Jaxom is a Lord Holder AND a dragon rider AND super smart and daring and skilled and blah blah. How was all this getting developed since most of his established history as a youth is him being coddled by the overbearing Lytol? His character development was less *development* than abrupt change. He starts off rather meek, unwilling to assert himself and letting his caretakers fuss over him and his peers tease him. Then one day he throws a hissy fit, and suddenly everyone realizes he's actually a ~man~ and ready for all sorts of responsibilities that they pile on. Because hissy fits are totally the adult way to handle things. He's now ready to fly his dragon, and learn about Hold affairs, and train in all the Craft halls, and also have time to secretly train his dragon and take it upon himself to save the day. He constantly does stupid and reckless things, but instead of being told off, he's praised for being so adventurous and doted on by everyone as he recovers.

His love interests are completely undeveloped and actually rather insulting. First he only wants girl A to use as an alibi, then he kind of likes girl A because she strokes his ego (and more than his ego, if you know what I mean) so he uses her for more than just an alibi, then he completely ignores girl A and doesn't bother to talk to her again (seriously, he casually mentions her a few times, but no actual interactions or attempts at communication for the rest of the book) at all after months away and a near-death experience because suddenly he's in love with girl B for no reason except her voice is pretty. ??? Sure. Even better, when he can't manage to get girl B alone, he contemplates using girl A again. Real Romeo, there.

Ruth is completely uneventful too - apparently the only unique thing about being the only white dragon ever is that fire lizards adore him, and he isn't interested in mating. Hardly worth all the build up of him being so special. We never even learn WHY he's white, or if there's any precedent for him. Unsatisfying follow through here.

A few saving graces character-wise in this book: Master Robinton and Menolly. As I understand it, they are the main characters of the Harper Hall trilogy, so maybe those books will be more interesting for me - but

then I was excited about Jaxom until McCaffrey actually wrote him as a main character. Regardless, Robinton seems to be the only rational person on Pern (except when it comes to his health), and Menolly is rather clever and funny. The glimpses of Brekke were also great, and I wish she could have been developed more. She had a lot of untapped potential, both in her ability to communicate with all dragons and how she dealt with the loss of her own.

Plot-wise, this book has a lot of the same problems that the first two did, in that there doesn't seem to be a solid issue building up to any sort of climax, and no resolution. I was more willing to ignore it in the first two books, but this is the last in a trilogy, so I expected a little more oomph. Mostly the trilogy seems to be about discovering things about dragons or the planet that they mostly had forgotten in the passing of time. Which is fine, but could have included a little more plot structure to keep the reader entertained. Instead it just comes off like a bunch of set up for the next generation to deal with. Like, well now we've got the grubs, and all the Southern continent to explore and we know Thread comes from the Red Star - you guys take it from here! I know these are just three books in a huge collection, but a little payoff would be nice.

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## **Vivian says**

10/2014 Reread. The continuing adventure with Don to rediscover Pern.

I love Ruth. I love Jaxom.

They are pleased to see us in the air together. Ramoth and Mnementh are very happy to see you on my back at last. I am very happy. Are you happier now?

And fire lizards!

I forgot how jam-packed the Pern stories were. Ruth and Jaxom's maturation is only a small portion of what happens as the politics expand, problems inflate and then are resolved, but really the bond between the two is what drove the book for me.

The explorations of the southern continent. The discovery of the Dawn Sisters and the connection to the past is great. F'lar and the others are determined to leave the weyrs in a much better position after the Pass than they entered it. As usual, the adept statesmanship and Robinton's skills are front and center again.

I look forward to the Harper Hall trilogy and more details on Robinton and Menolly.

“I loved you first, Master.”

Favorite quote:

You can, you know, be all and more, without being disloyal to anyone, or yourself.”

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## **Mike (the Paladin) says**

Sometimes the runt is more important than anyone thought.

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### **Jessica says**

Oh, my gosh. I read this over and over in sixth grade, giggling naughtily all the while. Good grief, Jaxom and that buxom farmer's sister!

I think I read this before any of the other Pern books, though I had read DRAGONSINGER. I loved Ruth, and the idea of a dragon who was just big enough to ride, but small enough to be kept at home.

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### **Susan Kennedy says**

Another great story of Pern. This one focuses on Jaxom, the Lord Holder of Ruatha and his white dragon, Ruth.

You learn a lot more of Jaxom and those he interacts with. You learn of his friendships and how he struggles with becoming Lord. His relationship with his dragon is wonderful and they make a great team. They take on some interesting endeavors that have you cheering them on. He is a great character and he interacts with other characters that I have grown to love through this series, like Menolly and Masterharper Robinton.

This is another fantastic book in this series.

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### **Natty says**

Yes by all means, judge a book set in a feudalistic world surrounded by dragon on your personal interpretation of feminism on Earth circa 2013. This makes no sense to me. If you're going to read a book I think you should read a book and suspend your sense of self to really get a feel for the world that's being created. Now yes McCaffrey wrote a lot of these books in the 60's and 70's and she did not write super liberated women, though for her time they would have seemed quite progressive no doubt. However again, the stories are set in a fantasy world that is feudal in nature so how about judging the writing on the writing? The stories are creative, plausible, the science of this world has continuity and logic, the characters are well written. They are great stories meant to be entertaining and distracting, not to be analyzed like you're in 5th period English.

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### **Tinnean says**

This was my favorite of the first three Pern books. I loved Jaxom and Ruth, and the scene where the dragons keep Robinton from leaving always has me in tears. It was a fun way to spend the day.

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### **Karen says**

I think *The White Dragon* is my favorite of *The Dragonriders of Pern* trilogy. In this story, Jaxom, Lord Holder of Ruatha, has impressed Ruth, the only white dragon in existence. Ruth is smaller than a typical dragon, but demonstrates special abilities and more intelligence than a normal dragon.

In *The White Dragon*, more is discovered about the original colonists of Pern. And I'm off to continue my binge re-read of the Pern books! I do this every time!

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### **Jerry says**

*The White Dragon* wraps up the *Dragonriders of Pern* trilogy quite neatly; however, pretty much everyone knows that it isn't the end for Pern. Although the series got off to a slightly rough start, it actually got much better as it went on. If you're a fan of science fiction, and you've never read anything by Anne McCaffrey, what are you waiting for? Give her books a chance!

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### **Starling says**

This is basically a review of the three books that make up the trilogy. There actually was a book between books two and three that I'm not counting, but which do introduce several characters in this book, but I'm not counting it as one of the main books because that book was originally published as YA and it wasn't available at my local library.

I prefer to review the books as they exist, and not the book I'd wished someone had written. I also think that if a book is part of a series that is more than 40 years old, expecting it to follow conventions of the 21st Century is silly.

I've just finished re-reading all three books. I gave all three of them four stars because even with some reservations about the books, I was pulled into reading them one after another and right now! That bit of magic still exists, and it isn't just that this was a favorite series way back when.

One thing that any SF book of that era required was levels of world building that most series don't currently have. I'm pretty sure McCaffrey could have answered questions as to WHY any bit of Pern's culture existed, and in fact there are stories about most of those answers. And the series is SF and not Fantasy because there are stories about how Pern was settled, why Pern was abandoned by its technological parents, and even how the dragons got to be the size they needed to be to fight Thread. Back when these books were written the difference between SF and Fantasy was the ability to explain how things that looked like a fantasy were arrived at.

My biggest reservation always was that her villains are just too one dimensional. They exist only so the hero or heroine can fight against them. Personally I prefer that my hero fight against people and things that are more real.

Outside of that it was a fun read and I do recommend all three books.

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### **William Richards says**

The old saying goes, "You can't judge a book by its cover." I can still remember that summer day when I spotted the Michael Whelan cover on "The White Dragon" and how it caught my eye. I remember picking it up, reading the blurb on the back cover and deciding I wanted to read it. I was fourteen-years old and I liked that the protagonist was around my age. It was the last book of the Dragonriders of Pern series that introduced me to McCaffrey's world.

But it was the story inside that cover that absolutely transfixed me! Easily, this ranks as one of my all-time favorite reads. I read the book so many times, the cover wore out and I had to keep the book held together with cellophane tape! I greatly enjoyed McCaffrey's style of writing and the incredible world she created.

The story follows the life of young Lord Jaxom of Ruatha after impressing the white dragon, Ruth; a runt of a dragon compared to others. How he finds himself caught between two worlds: the life of a dragonrider and that of a Lord Holder, never quite fitting in with either. When a shocking crime is committed, Jaxom has to grow up quickly and face his responsibilities or the world of Pern could be plunged into war. While trying to avert dragonrider fighting against dragonrider, Jaxom uncovers a secret about the world of Pern that no one suspected...

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### **Jon says**

As much as I loved the first two books of the Dragonriders of Pern series, *The White Dragon* remains my favorite. And not because of Jaxom, whom I never liked as a lead character/protagonist. Ruth was my favorite character. Ruth, the stunted runt totally unique White Dragon.

The archaeological discoveries on the Southern Continent at the original landing site are the most memorable and compelling parts of this installment in the saga of Pern. And Ruth's abilities to manipulate time and space are unparalleled in the evolution of the dragons.

As with most of McCaffrey's novels, I tend to skip over the romantic story lines as they bore me to tears. Rarely does she write a romantic subplot that engages me. And her attempts at jealous revenge subplots also grates on me.

But that aside, I enjoy the early Pern novels, and this one, along with *Dragonsong* are my favorites.

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### **Bev says**

I have said this before and I still think it's true, there are some books that are meant to be read at certain times. And if you miss that particular time, then they just won't do it for you the way they might have. I suspect that *The White Dragon* is just such a book. I have found, and it seems to be more often the case with science fiction/fantasy novels, that I seem to have missed the (space) boat with McCaffrey's novel. Back in the 80s, when I was in the midst of my science fiction binge, my best friend got me *Dragonflight*, the first in the Pern series, and I loved it. I immediately grabbed up the next Pern book I could find (this one) and put it on the shelf....and got distracted and never read it--till now.

Which leads me to my first question. If I read *Dragonflight* now, would I discover that it too has no real storyline? Because as far as I can tell, *The White Dragon* doesn't. We have young Lord Jaxom, last of the Ruatha Hold bloodline, who whines and carries on about how nobody treats him like a Lord and yet he's not allowed to be a real dragonrider even though he's got a dragon--albeit an unusual, under-sized one. And he

goes off and teaches his dragon to fly and destroy the deadly Threads in secret. And he has sex along the way. And, oh---this is a good one, his dragon participates in the sex too (No, NOT physically, but he loves right along with Jaxom and his lady-friends....say what? A dragon peeping tom.). And he flits here and he flits there and he saves a dragon egg and finds where the ancient men used to be and....well, it's all this major jumble. And there's no real struggle, no real plot points, and no real resolution. It all just kind of rambles to a close.

Granted, I didn't read every word on every page--mainly because I was not interested and also because when I did I couldn't see that it mattered a whole heaping bunch. And maybe you've noticed that my review style has changed here and my writing isn't exactly full of coherent thoughts? Yeah, we'll blame that on side-effects.

The best part (and what makes this a two-star book instead of a one-star book) is the relationship between Jaxom and his white dragon Ruth--with most of the points going to Ruth. Ruth has a very well-defined personality and I like the way he calms Jaxom down when he (Jaxom) gets off on his "why are they treating me this way?!" jags. I would have enjoyed this book a lot more if there had been more focus on Jaxom and Ruth.

This was first posted on my blog My Reader's Block. Please request permission before reposting. Thanks.

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### **notyourmonkey says**

Okay, wow, I had forgotten how unpleasant I find Jaxom about half the time. He's a sympathetic character in that he gets to do all this cool stuff, but the internal monologue and motivations McCaffrey gives him are kind of tool-y. His distress over having no one real place where he fits is deeply appealing, but the way he whines about it is *not*.

Also, hi dodgy gender issues, how I didn't miss you! They're prevalent enough in the Lessa books and the Menolly books, almost negligible in Piemur's book, but here, where you're deeply wedged into Jaxom's brain, they're even worse. His treatment of Corana, the holder girl he first takes up with in order to have a cover for training Ruth to chew firestone, is abysmal. First he almost-forces her when he's caught up in the mating tensions of the green at Fort (which is brushed away when Ruth says *but she liked it*), then Jaxom is glad to have his attachment to Sharra as an acceptable excuse for ditching her, except for when Sharra doesn't immediately succumb to his charms(?), he considers seeking out Corana "for a little relief", if only in idle contemplation. I suppose that's some of the class wonkiness in these books coming out, too (Sharra is not for 'relief' because she's Toric's sister, but Corana's father is beholden to Jaxom, so that's okay!), but the whole thing is deeply unpleasant.

And don't even get me started on the whole Jaxom-Menolly thing, or Jaxom and Piemur snitting over Sharra, or poor freakin' Mirrim, who has a careless tongue but has had just as rough a deal as Jaxom but is *constantly* slagged on in *all* these books.

Still, though. Still. Like with all these books, above and beyond some of the crappy characters and weird class structure and hopefully-outdated views on women, they are so bloody *compelling*. Like Pern, like Valdemar, I suppose. There remains something inherently attractive about a magical being choosing you and you alone to be their special friend.

I do love the mixing and merging of Craft and Hold and Weyr in this book, as the culmination of the whole trilogy. Or, really, what I consider the six original Pern books - the Dragonrider and Dragonsinger trilogies.

I'm glad there's All the Weyrs of Pern that comes after it, but really this is the close of the heart of Pernese canon for me.

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### **BAM The Bibliomaniac says**

Summer Fantasy Fest read #25

I think many of the ya audience would find the Ruth the white dragon dynamic fitting. He's just not into it. And that's ok. He's absolutely lovely.

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### **Joan says**

This is one of my favorites of the series. Ruth and his rider are just plain nice people. Both are disabled in their own way. Ruth is the only white dragon on the planet Pern and Jaxom was born early from a mother who died at the time of his birth, and whose father died a short time later, making him the lord of Ruatha as an infant. Both will have to prove themselves to the humans of Pern. The dragons accept them as they are.

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### **Cass says**

Okay this is the final book I have read in my recent Pern binge. Definately one of the best books in the series, though it may be a bit confusing as a first read as it requires a knowledge of the personalities of the major players on Pern.

Anne McCaffrey has written some great scenes into the story. I particular love reading as Jaxom develops from a boy into a man and into his role as Lord of Ruatha.

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### **Laura Lemay says**

After Anne Mcaffrey died late 2011 I rooted around in my bookshelves for all my old pern paperbacks from the early 80's. I was utterly obsessed with these books when I was a young teenager, and they were extremely formative in my own history as a writer. The first novel I ever wrote -- longhand, in mead spiralbound notebooks -- was a thin knockoff of Dragonflight (I seem to remember it had unicorns, but I'm so embarrassed by that book I haven't managed to actually read enough of it to check).

I reread all three books in the first Pern trilogy because I was curious to see if they held up to my very fond memories of them. Sadly the answer was no. Sometimes its best to let your fond childhood memories remain memories. :(

(I've duplicated this review across all three books).

Dragonflight: The earliest of the Pern books and the most problematic. It's a fast read and an OK story, but...ugh. My memories of the book were that it was one of the few SF books at the time that revolved around a strong female lead, one that I could identify and aspire to when I was 13. I was appalled to discover

on reread that the gender politics are solidly prefeminist and really, really icky. And the writing is terrible -- terrible characters, terrible descriptions, too many similar confusing names, too many shifts of POV. I was ashamed for my younger self for liking this book so much.

Dragonquest: Similar gender issues in this book to the previous, but better writing and a really compelling plot. I ripped through the book in a few hours. Not great art, but good storytelling. The best of the three.

The White Dragon: I didn't realize that the entire Harper Hall trilogy is supposed to take place in between Dragonquest and TWD, and I should have read those before starting this one. I didn't think much of this book; it felt much more leisurely than the fast-paced plotting of Dragonquest, with many more characters and threads (heh) and not a lot of narrative tensions. Jaxom as a character didn't much appeal to me, and it was just as gross to see the wierd gender politics of Pern from the male point of view. The big reveal as to the origins of Pern seems a sort of deus ex machina letdown (although the extended prologues always explained this, it was never a big part of the plot). It just didn't feel like a satisfying conclusion to me, and after reading this book I just felt all dragonned out.

Also as a side note, everyone is always striding in these books. F'lar strode in to the room! F'nor strode out of the weyr! I mentioned it to my husband about 2/3rds through TWD and then I couldn't help laughing about it every time the word showed up after that. You could make a drinking game out of it and get truly pissed indeed.

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## Jessie Potts says

Oh Pern!!!

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