

## The codex club

Do you have friends and classmates who love to read fantasy books? Start your own book discussion group and call it **The Codex Club**. You might host the group in your classroom or cafeteria, or meet up at a friend's house. Find a time when you can all meet up, bring along your copy of *Red Dragon Codex*, and talk about the story and the characters.

Here are some topics to get your discussion buzzing:

What do you think it would feel like to fly on the back of a dragon?

What did you think of the quest and the tasks?

What was your favorite part of the book?

At the beginning of each meeting, go around the table and have each person introduce himself or herself, then name his or her favorite characters. (In fact, you could even come dressed as your favorite character!)

Talk about what might happen in the next book in the series. Which dragon will Sindri meet next?

You could also find out if book clubs exist through your local public library or your school library. You'll meet new people, make new friends, and read new books—three fantastic ways to have even more amazing adventures!

## Codex club recommended reads: dragons, heroes, and journeys

Once you've discussed the series, you might like to try other books in your Codex Club.

*OutCast* series, by Christopher Golden and Thomas E. Sniegoski

*The Neverending Story* by Michael Ende, illustrated by Roswitha Quadflieg

*The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster, illustrated by Jules Feiffer

*Owlboy* series by Thomas E. Sniegoski, illustrated by Eric Powell

Compare these stories and casts of characters with *Red Dragon Codex*. How did the main characters benefit from the help of their friends? Which story had the most unlikely friendships and alliances?

Which stories had dragons? How are they similar? How are they different?

Which of these quests seemed the most difficult? The most like a dream? Which fictional (made-up) land or city would you most like to visit?

## About the author

R.D. Henham is a scribe in the great library of Palanthas. In the course of transcribing stories of legendary dragons, the author felt a gap existed in the story of the everydragon: ordinary dragons who end up doing extraordinary things. With the help of fellow scribes, R.D. had filled that gap with this companion series to *A Practical Guide to Dragons*.



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For more information about the companion series to *A Practical Guide to Dragons*, additional activities, and upcoming events, visit our website at

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Guide written by Allie Costa, actress, writer, and keeper of the Bildungsroman book blog.

A COMPANION NOVEL TO  
*A Practical Guide to Dragons*

# RED DRAGON CODEX

Teaching and Discussion Guide / Grades 3 and up

## Booktalk *Red Dragon Codex*

When *Red Dragon Codex* begins, Mudd lives a peaceful life in his small town, tinkering with the mill and any mechanical devices that he can find. But his peaceful life soon changes when, out of nowhere, a red dragon attacks, burning the town and kidnapping Shemnara, the village seer. Only one clue is left behind—a cryptic note telling Mudd, “Seek the silver dragon.”

Though Mudd plans to take this journey alone, his sister Hiera trails after him and insists that she accompany him. Along the way, they encounter many other people and creatures—some more trustworthy than others, some threatening, some surprisingly helpful. In order to rescue Shemnara and complete their quest, the siblings strike up some rather unlikely alliances with a dwarf named Drakecutter, a kender named Iroden, and a boy named Kirak.

## About the series

*Red Dragon Codex* by R.D. Henham is the first in a new and exciting companion series to the *New York Times* best-selling book *A Practical Guide to Dragons*. The series will have ten volumes in total.

Each book in the series focuses on a different main dragon, but readers will soon see that many of the dragons, for better or worse, have crossed paths. Familiar faces may reappear throughout the series. Likewise, the books share thematic elements. These tales (not tails!) should be shared with young readers who have a thirst for adventure, a good heart, and a big imagination.

TITLES INCLUDE:

*Red Dragon Codex* (978-0-7869-4925-0)

*Bronze Dragon Codex* (978-0-7869-4930-4)

*Black Dragon Codex* (978-0-7869-4972-4)

Check [mirrorstonebooks.com](http://mirrorstonebooks.com) for release dates and additional information.

*Red Dragon Codex* ISBN: 978-0-7869-4780-5





## Before Reading

What stories do you know in which dragons take part? Are they good or bad, or maybe a little bit of both? In those stories, did the dragons help the human characters or hurt them? Did the dragons have any special powers?

### keywords

Write these words on the board or pass out handouts with this list:

<i>Bravery</i>	<i>Courage</i>
<i>Family</i>	<i>Trust</i>
<i>Adventure</i>	

Read these words aloud, slowly and carefully, one at a time. What do they mean? What (or who) do you picture when you hear them?

What does it mean to be brave? Can you think of a time when you had to be brave?

Who do you trust most of all?

### vocabulary

Red Dragon Codex is not only filled with action and adventure, but with big words too. Note when you come upon the following words in the book:

<i>Blasphemy</i>	<i>Hairsbreadth</i>
<i>Revered</i>	<i>Circumstances</i>
<i>Feral</i>	<i>Consecrated</i>
<i>Diminutive</i>	<i>Illusion</i>
<i>Paralysis</i>	<i>Cleric</i>

Have you heard any of these words before? If not, what do you think they mean just by looking at them or hearing them? If you are familiar with these words, when and where did you hear them before?

Encourage readers to look these and other unfamiliar words up in the dictionary.

### quest

What is a quest? (Think about why the words *quest* and *question* sound so similar.)

Who goes on a quest?

What is the goal of a quest? (Getting something you can see and feel, like a prize, or saving someone else, becoming famous, getting a promotion, learning something, proving yourself...)

What does it mean to “prove yourself?”

## After Reading

Discuss the following:

In this book, Mudd and his companions met up with many different types of creatures. What is a draconian? What are the differences and similarities between gnolls (hyena-human hybrids) and owlbears? What do kender and elves have in common? What about gnomes, dwarves, and trolls?

What could or would have happened to Mudd if he had gone on this journey alone? Would he have been safer all by himself? Should Hiera have come along? Were they in more danger when they were together or when they were apart?

Are there ever times when you want to be all by yourself? Would you rather be with a big group of friends, hang out with your family, or be alone in your room? When you're alone, do you like reading or listening to music or working on any secret projects?

Should Drakecutter have stayed with his father? Why did he go on the quest with Mudd and Hiera? Should he become a gardener or keep pursuing his dream of being a warrior? Were you as suspicious of him as Mudd was at first?

What did you think of Kirak? When did he help the dragons, and why? When and why did he help the humans? What do you think he will do now that he knows his true heritage?

## Curriculum connections

### science and math

In *Red Dragon Codex*, our heroes track for prints to see where other creatures have been and where they are going—and if any enemies are in the same area.

Look around your school, especially in the playground. Can you see sneaker prints in the playing fields? What about the marks left on the floor of the gym, or in the locker room? Measure the prints you find and draw them out on paper in actual size.

Check out the sandbox. Are the prints there smaller or bigger than the prints out in the mud? Who made the smaller footprints, and who made the larger ones?

What if you were in the middle of a forest? Who or what might make tracks there? Whose would be the largest? The smallest? Can you think of any animals that may not leave any tracks behind?

How about *your* footprints? Put your shoe on a piece of paper, and carefully trace around it. Then put your bare foot on another piece of paper and trace around that. How much longer and wider is your shoe than your foot?

### art

During the trials, our heroes must face themselves in a mirror and see themselves “as they truly are.” Is that the same as how they see or think of themselves?

Place a small stand-up or hand-held mirror on your desk and use it to help you draw a self-portrait. Draw in your own style! Maybe you can try realistic figure drawing. Want something funnier? Make yourself look like a Saturday morning cartoon character. If you like reading manga, why not test your anime skills?

Take your self-portrait one step further by making a double vision:

When Hiera looks into the mirror, she sees two sides of herself: a proper lady and a courageous ranger. Meanwhile, Drakecutter struggles to be a warrior while his father wants him to be a farmer.

Fold a piece of blank paper in half. Think about two different things you like to do. Are you a gymnast and a math superstar? Do you love reading books and playing basketball? Draw two sides of yourself, one on each side of the crease on your paper. You may either

draw yourself in the middle of the paper and decorate each side differently—different hair, different clothes, different items in your hands and behind you—or draw yourself twice, once on each side, having fun with each hobby.

Remember that you *can* do both things—and maybe even combine them someday by calculating the geometry of gymnastics or writing a story about a basketball tournament!

### language arts

You may use any of the following prompts to write a short story or an essay.

Think about Silverwing and Redclaw. If you were a dragon, what would you look like? What color skin would you have? Would you have scales? Feathers? Wings? What would your name be? Would you have a special talent, like breathing fire or ice or granting wishes?

If you met a dragon who could grant you one wish, what would it be? Write three to five paragraphs about your wish and how you would use it.

### history

In what time period do you think *Red Dragon Codex* is set? Is it medieval, and if so, what does “medieval” really mean?

Think beyond kings, knights, and dragons, and do some research to find out more about medieval times. When did the Middle Ages take place? What famous books and poems were written back then? (Hints: *Le Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Beowulf*, neither of which has a definite author. In fact, take this opportunity to teach your students the definition and possible applications of the word “anonymous”!)

What technology do we use all of the time now that did not exist back then? What advances have been made in science, in medicine, and in transportation?

Consider architecture and geography, too. How is Mudd's house and hometown different from your own?