



The Chronicles of Pern: First Fall

Anne McCaffrey

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Here are five gripping episodes of early Pern -- from the very first space survey recommending colonisation, to the last, where the early world, its young dragon culture undetected, is condemned to be isolated in space.

Here is the saga of the mass evacuation from the volcanic southern continent, an entire group of people moved across the dangerous seas, guarded and guided by a flotilla of dolphins. Here, too, is the story of the creation of Ruatha Hold -- a mammoth undertaking in the early days of Pern.

And here is one of the most fascinating dragon tales ever written by Anne McCaffrey, when Fort Weyr was the only weyr, and when dragonriders and dragons were overcrowded to danger point. As the news broke of three fresh weyrs to be established, a young girl, Torene, came to realize that her dragon could be the next Queen of the newly formed Benden Weyr.

The Chronicles of Pern: First Fall Details

Date : Published November 10th 1994 by Corgi (first published October 1993)

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Author : Anne McCaffrey

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From Reader Review The Chronicles of Pern: First Fall for online ebook

Joan says

This includes the following short stories:

The Survey: P.E.R.N. (superscript c, don't know how to type it...)

The Dolphin's Bell

The Ford of Red Hanrahan

The Second Weyr

Rescue Run

While this wasn't my favorite Pern book since I think McCaffrey needs a book length space to develop her characters, I did enjoy it. My favorites were the ones that included Sean and Sorka, who were already well developed characters, so they were The Ford of Red Hanrahan and The Second Weyr. The Dolphin's Bell was a bit tedious, except when the dolphins leaped into the story. They are always fun to read!

I'm glad I could get this from the library since I don't want to buy a copy.

Suz says

2015 audiobook re-read

I'd probably go with a 3.5 with this one. The entire anthology of novellas had lovely stories about the first settlers of Pern, but it was a bit jarring listening to some of the characters without the accents that they had in the previous book that was narrated by a male, this book being narrated by a woman.

Still, Pern is a nice world to escape to.

Erika says

Bunch of fun stories about a wonderful world. It ties a lot of the full novels together and answers some of the unanswered questions. Great book for Pern fans.

Dawnetta says

I really enjoy the Dragonriders of Pern books. Some of the later books get into some homosexual references, which I don't enjoy reading about. It is a side element and not a main plot line. But because of this I would caution the young reader from getting into this series, until they can clearly think through this issue.

Dj says

So after the elegant wrap up to the series this book came out. Not a single story, but a series of short stories. All of the stories in this book take place prior to the original start of the series and involve things like why Dragon Riders have their names contracted, How Ruatha Hold got its name, as well as an actual rescue attempt by the civilized part of the galaxy.

A nice read, fun and worth taking a look at.

Carolyn says

The Chronicles of Pern: First Fall is actually a collection of 5 short stories that take place around the time of Dragonsdawn.

The Survey: P.E.R.N - This is the shortest story of the collection and it deals with the original surveyors who were mapping that part of the galaxy and recommended Pern for colonization.

The Dolphin's Bell - This story takes place concurrently with the end of Dragonsdawn, but from the perspective of the dolphins and their caretakers. It was interesting to see the story from a different perspective and to experience what the colonists had to go through as they braved the treacherous ocean voyage to the northern continent. The story centers around Jim Tillek (of the later Tillek Hold), his love of the sea and his growing love for a courageous young woman named Theo.

The Ford of Red Hanrahan - After the colonists had settled in the Northern Continent at Fort Hold, there was plenty of room for their greatly diminished numbers in the cavernous space. However, after some time, space is getting tight and there are those who are ready to venture forth and create new holds. One of them is Red Hanrahan, whom readers will recognize from Dragonsdawn (as a character and as Sorka's father). He journeys quite a distance from Fort Hold and finds what will become known as Ruatha Hold. This story was quite interesting because it addressed the history of the plague that took so many lives in Moreta's time and how the colonists started fostering their children out to live with other families.

The Second Weyr - Sean and Sorka have done a wonderful job training all of the other dragonriders and are the best weyrleaders that any dragonrider could hope for, but Fort Weyr just doesn't have enough space for them all! Torene, with her maturing queen, has dreams of settling a new weyr and has even found the perfect location, but is afraid to say anything to Sean. When Sean makes the surprise announcement that the dragonriders will be expanding into not just one weyr - but three! Torene is thrilled. She dreams of becoming new weyrfemale at one of the weyrs and waits in eager anticipation to see who will fly her queen in her first mating flight, for they will become the new leaders of the newly named Benden Weyr.

Rescue Run - When Lieutenant Ross Benden's ship comes upon a distress signal around the Rukbat system, he cannot help but think of his uncle, who set off 50 years previously to colonize a planet there. He cannot believe that his uncle, hero of so many battles, would have panicked and set off a signal for help, not 7 years after starting colonization. Still, he is duty bound to explore the area and see if there are any survivors. The biologist on board is fascinated by the organisms that seem to come from the Oort cloud circling so close to the planet. A small team leaves the ship to take a shuttle down to Pern and are surprised to encounter a small band of survivors: Stev Kimmer (whom readers will recognize from Dragonsdawn as being one of Avril's

group) and Kenjo & Ito Fusaiyuki's (whom readers will also recognize as being the pilot in Dragonsdawn) children. They insist that there are no other survivors and, though Benden does a sweep of the area, he has no other choice but to believe that his uncle is gone, killed in the Thread attack and leave with the few survivors that remain. This story was interesting because it explains why no one else has ever gone to Pern and why that area of space is simply avoided.

Gere Lewis says

As this is another book of short stories, I will do a review of each story.

1. THE SURVEY: P.E.R.N. (2 stars)

This is the story of the survey team that first evaluated the planet now known as Pern for human colonization. It explains how such a major threat (thread) was missed. Not bad. Not good either.

2. THE DOLPHIN'S BELL (1 star)

This was over 40 pages of an incredibly slow moving and boring story. It chronicles the sea voyage to move people and supplies from the southern continent to the north to escape the volcanic eruption. This voyage is aided by talking dolphins.

3. THE FORD OF RED HANRAHAN (5 stars)

This was a longer short story telling of a group of settlers headed by Red Hanrahan leaving Fort Hold to establish a Hold of their own. There is a river and a difficult to locate ford involved, as well as some contact with dragons and dragonriders. I adored this story.

4. THE SECOND WEYR (5 stars)

Fort Weyr has full to the rafters and beyond. The dragons have bred true and now new weyrs need to be established to accommodate them all. This story tells how that came to be, how weyrleaders and weyrwomen are chosen, as well as the second weyr being established.

5. RESCUE RUN (3 stars)

Remember Ted Tubberman, the cowardly moron from Dragonsdawn that send out the distress beacon? This is the story of that beacon being found and the rescue mission to save the "only survivors" left on Pern.

Amanda R says

Man, I love Pernese history. Especially from back in the day when Anne was still good at it.

Update, 4/11/17: Two great stories, two mediocre ones. Also, Anne McCaffrey was *terrible* at continuity. But I love her anyway.

Cheshirka says

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Casey says

Overall, I liked the stories that focused on space rather than the dragonriders. The collection gives backstory and some additional information on the first and second generations on Pern.

The dragonrider stories are becoming so repetitive at this point.

PERN-C: Background as to how the planet got the name of Pern. Surveys by the first scientists from space.

Dolphin's Bell: The evacuation of the Southern continent. The dolphins, who have been genetically enhanced and can communicate with humans, help with the transport of items across the water. There is a Threadfall and the colonists adapt to the danger out in an open area. A romance develops between two characters, which complements the evacuation.

The Fort of Red Hanrahan: Sorka's family travels to an uninhabited location for a new Fort. Other forts and cave areas are overcrowding at this point with the population growth. It read kind of like a western during the travel portion, as the family has to ford rivers and journey across the land. The new fort ends up named Fort Ruatha.

The Second Weyr: As with the previous story, the population has grown, and the weyr is overcrowded. The dragonriders discuss new weyr locations and who should be queens and weyrleaders. At the end, Benden Weyr is established. There is one steamy sex scene in this, which as is typical of the Pern stories, is kind of strange and rapey.

Rescue Run: A spaceship exploring in the area gets a distress signal from Pern. The crew goes down to investigate and finds a group of Pernese, who swear there are no other survivors, and want to be taken back to the ship.(view spoiler)

Rescue Run was my favorite, as there was some space involved, as well as an actual conflict. It's kind of funny at this point that the bad guy is so easily disposed of in every Pern story, but then it's a hallmark of the series now.

The Second Weyr bored me. I'm kind of over the dragonriders sitting around and talking for hours, without much happening. And then they all agree so wholeheartedly to a decision, and are just so chipper and cheery!

Since these are stories focused on the early days, there are no Harpers or any of the most popular Pern characters.

Linda says

A collection of short stories/novellas that expand on the early history of Pern. Some of the history is fun and a great display of McCaffrey's verdant imagination but a couple of the stories are overly long and not

particularly interesting. This was a reread. I hadn't read it since first buying it years ago. It's not a bad book by any means but it will not retain a place in my permanent library.

Deborah Ideosepius says

While I suspect I read this years ago - or at least some of it, as at times it felt like a re-read - mostly it was long enough ago that I did not remember the stories.

This book has five stories, sequentially placed in the Pern saga that McCaffrey so magnificently gifted us with in the 1970's -1980's. These were years in which 'fantasy' and 'science-fiction' were generally thought of as interchangeable and in which strong female authors and characters were hardly the norm. I feel the historic context is very important when reading this book which was written in the 90's at the height of the fandom; it is totally unsuited for someone who is not very familiar with the original Pern books and longing for more.

Dragonflight, published in 1968 was the first in the Pern series. It was ground breaking for its time and was based on two novellas which won McCaffrey the Hugo and nebula awards. She was, I believe the first woman to do so. When I first read it there was very little fantasy or sci-fi by women for women. It was a writing era where men were REAL men, women were REAL women (with huge busts and yearning for the real men...) and small green creatures from Alpha Centauri were REAL small green..... oops.. sorry Douglas Adams got carried away there.

So, pardon the small rant, but Pern was amazing for its time, it spawned fan clubs, devoted followers of the author and the genera and ultimately more than twenty novels and associated stories. Anne stopped writing eventually, but her son Todd keeps up the Pern tradition.

What I am trying to work my way around to explaining is why I only gave this one two stars. The stories were ok, but not inspiring, not the I-can't-put-you-down experience I had with the early novels.

Set hundreds of years before the first novel, these five stories explain how the colonists came to abandon the Southern continent where they first settled, how the holds and wyers were established and named and how come no one from Earth never came to check on the Pern settlement. And that is what it reads like; history laboriously written to 'explain' to clamoring fans who wanted more and wanted to know 'how it happened'. Personally, I never needed to know, not everything needs to be explained to the last molecule, a story can be just a story, without having to know all the history of an event.

This first story (The P.E.R.N. survey) was about the ship who first found the planet, it is a pretty nothing sort of story, instantly forgettable and I really don't see why it was written. The only reason a publisher ever looked at it, I am sure, is because it was part of the Pern franchise.

The second story (The Dolphin's Bell) was set after the first threads fell and a volcano erupted, ok if you like sailing stories, it kind of follows on from The Dolphins of Pern, you see more of the Dolphineers. The characters never really take off, the romance is cumbersome and has no conclusion but it is not the worst story I ever read.

The Ford of Red Hanrahan, set some years after the last one, is not a bad yarn in its own right. Nothing special, but a small group of settlers breaking away on their own, kind of a nice story. No dynamic tension,

but not bad.

The Second Weyr, is probably the best story in the book for me; it tells the story of Torene and the establishment of Benden Weyr, it is the first one where I actually felt like the author was fully engaged in the story and characters. Not as vivid as some of McCaffrey's early characters, not groundbreaking or distinctive, but still quite enjoyable to read.

The last one, I am pretty sure I read before, I don't think I much cared for it then either. About forty years after first thread-fall, a spaceship picks up a rescue beacon and comes to check it out. Finding an isolated pocket on less than a dozen survivors ruled by a madman. The trained, experienced, commanding officer then proceeds to make a long line of ridiculous, idiotic choices and decisions culminating in a conclusion that the planet is abandoned. A five year old has a better command of logic than this story does. I read it through, but my main emotive connection to it was wanting to hit the commander over the head to see if there were actually any brains inside.

So, a collection of stories, fine for fans, best suited for the uncritical and probably not much fun for anyone who has not read any other Pern books.

Swallowfeather says

It was when I read this collection of stories right on the heels of re-reading Dragonsdawn that I started to understand how much Anne McCaffrey loves logistics.

Seriously. She loves to give her characters a huge urgent practical problem, and then set the most practical among them to solving it. Whether it's dramatic or not. She wants to tell you all about how they dug the caves with rock-cutters to make Holds and Weyrs and they had to make the cutters last as long as they could, how they made hypocaust systems using underground heat, how they did this big push to move everything to the northern continent and there was all this vital materiel they had to move and they labeled it in different colors according to its priority, and the dolphins helped carry the smallest packages, how oxen that were reluctant to ford a swollen stream could be pushed along by a dragon flying behind them at exactly the right angle... etc, etc, etc...

I know it might sound like I'm criticizing, but I'm not. I re-read a whole lot of McCaffrey's books recently when my mom gave me a bunch of books she didn't want anymore, and this was the one aspect of them that I fell in love with on the re-read. It's something I wouldn't have appreciated as a teen, which is when I originally read her stuff. But now I live in the country in a place where we do a lot of stuff for ourselves (no stone-cutters, but, y'know, chainsaws and stuff) and I am finally understanding physical logistics. The focus you snap into when a real necessity presents itself ("OK, we have to make this work, how do we do it?"), and the joy of seeing it done right.

So, I like that. I'm not always crazy about the way she handles characters (the Chosen and the Not--but she doesn't do this as much when she's busy doing logistics, anyhow!) but I sure do like the logistics.

Amalia Dillin says

I love and reread regularly the story of the founding of the second weyr, and the founding of Red Hanrahan's hold. The other three short stories are interesting enough the first time, but I've never felt compelled to read them again, since. Not that I didn't enjoy them, because I did, absolutely -- just they weren't the characters I loved the most.

Update 9/14/2017:

Reread start to finish for the first time in years, immediately following Dragonsdawn, and while the first story (about the survey of the planet) felt pretty forgettable and bland, I have to admit that I enjoyed all the rest of the stories in addition to my two favorites mentioned above. More than I remembered having enjoyed them previously! Though, (view spoiler) I forgot that there was a Benden relative in that Rescue Run story.

Lianne Pheno says

<http://delivreenlivres.blogspot.fr/20...>

Ce tome est en fait un recueil de nouvelles se déroulant dans le tout début de l'univers de Pern.

Il contient :

- Première reconnaissance : P.E.R.N. (#0.5), traduction de The Survey: P.E.R.N. (1993)
- La Cloche des Dauphins (#1.1), traduction de The Dolphins' Bell (1993)
- Le Fort de Red Hanrahan (#1.2), traduction de The Ford of Red Hanrahan (1993)
- Le Deuxième Weyr (#1.3), traduction de The Second Weyr (1993)
- Mission sauvetage (#1.4), traduction de Rescue Run (1991)

La première nouvelle se déroule donc avant l'Aube des dragons alors que les secondes se déroulent après. Chacune nous raconte les tout début de l'arrivée des hommes et l'expansion sur la planète.

Les nouvelles :

Première reconnaissance : P.E.R.N. : Une nouvelle très courte qui nous fait découvrir d'où viens le mot "Pern". Du coup c'est vrai qu'on se demande quel sont les autres acronymes et combien d'autres PERN sont dispersées dans l'univers. On remarque aussi que pour des raisons de budget les explorateurs passent juste à côté de découvrir le vrai danger mais ils ne cherchent pas à en savoir plus, dommage pour la suite.

La Cloche des Dauphins : On découvre pour la première fois les fameux dauphins. Cette nouvelle me donne vraiment envie d'en savoir plus sur eux, et donc de lire le tome suivant. La relation entre humains et dauphins n'est peut-être pas aussi forte que celles avec les dragons mais elle reste puissante et c'est fascinant. L'histoire est celle de l'évacuation brutale et rapide du continent à cause de l'éruption d'un volcan. On avait déjà eu l'info dans les tomes précédents mais c'était bien mieux de la vivre en direct. Surtout vu la façon dont ça c'est déroulé et le rôle des dauphins dedans !

Mais sinon en dehors de ça j'avoue que ce n'était pas mon histoire préférée.

Le Fort de Red Hanrahan : Je ne vous dévoilerais pas la chute de cette nouvelle parce que je trouve que c'est mieux de découvrir comme je l'ai fait que de le savoir dès le départ. J'ai vraiment adoré cette nouvelle. On nous raconte la surpopulation du à l'évacuation et les problèmes que ça pose un peu partout. En fait cette nouvelle est vraiment au centre de plein de sujets importants pour le futur de Pern, notamment le système des placement d'enfants.

L'histoire suis Red Hanrahan qui pars pour créer son propre fort, malgré tout les soucis sur la route.

Et quand la chute arrive et qu'on comprends ce que c'était, c'est génial.

Le Deuxième Weyr : Encore une nouvelle vraiment excellente, qui raconte cette fois ci pourquoi et comment est créer le second Weyr, parce que celui de Fort est bien trop plein et que ça provoque pas mal de problèmes notamment à cause de la surpopulation de reines.

C'est mon histoire préférée des cinq, je me suis vraiment bien attaché aux personnages et j'ai adoré la fin.

C'était vraiment l'histoire la plus complète et celle qui tiens le mieux individuellement.

L'élément important de l'histoire et la façon dont sont finalement choisis les chef de Weyrs, méthode qui persistera jusqu'au bout.

En tout cas une vrai réussite !

Mission sauvetage : C'est la nouvelle que j'ai le moins aimé. Mais c'est surtout qu'on suis un personnage exécrable de l'Aube des dragons, à savoir le lâche Ted Tubberman, celui qui avait envoyé le signal de détresse sans l'avis de personne et qui voulait devenir riche grâce aux diamants présents sur la planète tout en revenant à la vie civilisée ensuite.

Nous voyons donc l'équipe chargée d'aller voir pourquoi ce signal a été lancé et qui découvre à son tour les fils et les dommages qu'ils ont provoqués sur la planète. Ted les embobine pour leur faire croire que lui et sa famille sont les derniers survivants ...

Même si j'ai eu pitié de la famille en question (surtout vu les soupçons sur qui est le père des enfants de ses filles), j'avoue que ça ne donne pas du tout envie de les apprécier vu tout ce qu'ils mettent en place pour favoriser leur richesses au détriment des humains et en mettant tout le monde en danger.

Bref, pas une réussite même si j'étais contente quand même d'avoir le fin mot de l'histoire !

Au final un recueil de nouvelles plutôt très sympa si on exclu la dernière nouvelle. Deux des nouvelles ont quasiment été des coups de coeur et m'ont vraiment bien plus. Je considère que c'est une réussite.

16.5/20

Ron says

Unlike many other creators of alternate worlds, Anne McCaffery continues to mine fresh ore from the soil of her imagined reality. Her storytelling is good, too.

Kathy Davie says

Five short stories in the Pern science fiction / fantasy series and revolving around dragons and their riders fighting for the survival of their colony.

Chronology

"The Survey: P.E.R.N." (0.5)

"The Dolphins' Bell" (1.1)

"The Ford of Red Hanrahan" (1.2)

"The Second Weyr" (1.3)

"Rescue Run" (1.4)

The Stories

"**The Survey: P.E.R.N.**" is useful for explaining where the name for the planet came from and was very clever of McCaffrey. It makes me wonder how many other words have evolved from acronyms. It's also a fascinating account of how the danger the colonists will face was missed — even in books, people suffer from the accountants! McCaffrey also was a horrible tease, giving me just a taste of what might be causing Thread.

"**The Dolphins' Bell**" recounts the dolphins', dolphineers', and sailors' perspectives on the evacuation of Landing when Garben is getting ready to blow. I loved the interaction of the dolphins with their human counterparts! They love this new game the humans thought up for them.

"**The Ford of Red Hanrahan**" is about the establishment of Ruatha Hold and includes the origin of its name as well as the truth behind that "front door". An event that's discussed in here triggers the start of the fostering system and the basis for the Harper Hall.

There are 500 dragonriders now with Sorka and Sean as the weyrleaders at Fort.

"**The Second Weyr**" occurs 28 years after their landing and sees the establishment of Benden Weyr and how dragonriders are sorted out. It also sees the tradition of how a weyrleader is chosen established. It's fascinating to read of how they plan this weyr out and decide what will go where. Although, I felt McCaffrey spent too much time on Torene's whining on about wanting to grab that bit of land for the weyr. This story sets up the tithing process as well.

"**Rescue Run**" is in answer to Ted Tubberman's beacon and exploration and experimentation discovers the source of Thread. But it's that nasty Stev Kimmer and his "family's" beliefs that will leave the rest of the colonists abandoned.

It doesn't sound as if the spaceships of this time period are all that sophisticated if they have to be so careful about lining up their shuttle with the ship or be left behind. They certainly did a lousy job of exploring the planet. I mean, hullo, if the Kimmer "family" has been reduced to a pre-tech lifestyle, how would young Benden expect to get radio signals from any survivors? Nor can I believe that Benden and crew could possibly not consider the possibility that Kimmer and company are smuggling more aboard on their persons. I mean, duhhh. A fascinating story with one aspect of the ending that pleased me (eek!) but it primarily left me annoyed.

The Cover and Title

The cover is a golden yellow sky with purple cliffs and a purple and orange dragon mixed with futuristic stonecutters and flying suits. A blend of Pern's past and its future.

The title is about the early records of the events that shaped the future of Pern and its stranded colonists, *The Chronicles of Pern: First Fall*.

Angie says

These five short stories that fill in the gaps of the early Pern years. The first story is the original survey team who came to Pern and declared it a planet worthy of settlement. Another story deals with the evacuation of Landing after the volcanic eruptions. Then there are stories about how the new settlements and weyrs are chosen in the North. The final story is about the rescue of a few settlers that didn't make it to the North but

had been stuck in the south without dragon help during threadfall. I am not sure you would get much out of these stories if you weren't familiar with the overall story of Pern.

Susan Kennedy says

Another fantastic book. This book contains several stories. It begins with the Survey team that discovers the planet, Pern. They mark this planet as habitable. It goes through what they discover on Pern and that it is much like the older Earth from their histories.

Then the story moves into the landing party and how they begin to move onto their new planet. It delves into the first Thread as it falls onto them killing many and destroying so much. You learn more about the dragonets and how they are used to create the Dragons that will protect them all from Thread. Then there is the active volcanoes which require the settlement to evacuate their current location in search of new areas of Pern to populate.

You learn of the first Hold that is created. Then as people settle into their lives, they want to yearn to spread out so that they are not as contained and crowded. You glimpse into the history of the new Holds that are created and how and who took the reins to go out and create these.

You get to witness the very first hatching of dragons and impressions. As they grow and get stronger they seem to be useless; not what they were created for. Then there emerges a leader who teaches them and makes them strong. He teaches them to fight as a unit. They learn to fly and fight Thread and become useful. They become what they were created to be, The Dragonriders of Pern.

The stories are exciting. You are seeing the history of Pern and how it began and how it transformed into what you read later. Again, I would not recommend reading in the chronological order that I am reading these books in if you have never read the Pern series. I am really glad I am reading it like this after having read the series several times prior. I am enjoying these early histories more than I did when I read in the suggested order. However, as a new reader of Pern, reading in the suggested order is highly recommended.

This is such a fantastic world. It spawned my absolute love of dragons so long ago. I would highly recommend this series to any dragon and fantasy lover.

Katie says

I am not entirely sure how I got on this streak of nostalgic re-reads, but of course I had to re-read this after *Dragonsdawn*.

As a kid, I looooooved Torene/Mihall's story. I used to check this out from the library and re-read it all the time. (It didn't entirely hold up, I suppose. I think maybe I was better at filling in the blanks as a kid. I wanted more this time. Loved the Sean/Sorka glimpses!)

I don't think I liked the second and third story much, judging by my lack of memory of them! (They were fine on re-read, but still not remarkable to me.) The first and last are really interesting bookends. I liked the glimpses of the rest of the universe.

And this is just interesting in general. I do love getting to see how so much of Pern became what it was.

A very good nostalgia re-read.
