

THREE ACCIDENTAL HEROES VERSUS ONE LEGENDARY VILLAIN... AN EPIC ADVENTURE IS BORN

PATCH: is a thirteen-year-old and very talented Piper. He's thrown into jail for playing a forbidden song. He's an idealist who wants to make the world a better place. Now on the run he inspires loyalty from his two friends and, swept up in a story not of his own making, he's determined to seek out truth and justice.



WREN: is a thirteen-year-old girl who has been turned into a rat by a sorcerer. She's searching for a cure so she can become human again. Patch teaches her sign language so they can communicate with each other. She's clever, funny, resourceful, stubborn and ambitious.



BARVER: is a dracogriff – a cross between a dragon and a griffin. Barver appears to be frightening. He's battle hardened, full of strength and fortitude and considers himself to be an outsider because he's neither one creature nor the other. But he's loyal, caring, brave, generous and kind.



Waterstones **Children's**

Book OF THE *Month*

#ADarknessofDragons

A DARKNESS OF DRAGONS



BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

MAIN THEMES:

- ★ An uneasy truce between humans and dragons
- ★ A retelling of the Pied Piper story
- ★ Friendship / Loyalty
- ★ Courage
- ★ Truth and lies
- ★ Enchantment
- ★ Magic
- ★ Music



p5: The villagers of Patterfall fear the Ice Beast – what do you imagine an Ice Beast might look like?

p25: In order to get rid of the rats Patch plays an illegal song. Do you think he should have done that and why?

Patch teaches Wren Merisax Language – can you make up your own sign language and teach it to your friend?

p132: The man in the mask reveals he's not the Piper of Hamelyn. Can you describe how you would feel if you were locked up for years for a crime you didn't commit?

p136: Do you think the dragons were right to come and kill the man they thought was the Piper of Hamelyn? Did your views change as you found out more about what the real Piper of Hamelyn had done?

One of the major themes in the book is about truth and lies. Patch, Wren and the Eight (the group who captured the man they thought to be the Piper of Hamelyn) all withheld the truth. Think about the following:

Why does Patch keep the news that the prisoner is not the Piper of Hamelyn to himself for so long? Should he have done that?

Wren pretends she comes from a wealthy family when in fact her family is poor. Why do you think she does that?

A DARKNESS OF DRAGONS



BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

On p256: We find out the devastating truth about both sets of children. Why did the Eight not tell the truth? Do you think they were right to withhold this information?

P190: Obsidian or black diamond is precious to dragons because it is formed from the bones of their dead loved-ones. To humans it has magical qualities that they desire. Do you think humans were right to try to take it from the dragon-lands?

Throughout the book music is used as a weapon of war and a weapon of destruction. It's also used as a means to help people and to control them. Do you think that's good or bad? Is there a song or piece of music that stirs a strong emotion in you?

P305: How did you feel when Patch knocked Erner off Barver's back and into the lake? Were you surprised? Did Patch do the right thing?

P329: The End of Skies is a legend in which the earth gives up a vast store of black diamond and all life is destroyed in the chaos that follows. Imagine you were the person who has to stand against the End of Skies – how would you feel? If you could take two people or creatures with you to stop the End of Skies who would you take and why?



#ADarknessofDragons

Find more fantastical fiction at [usborne.com/fiction](https://www.usborne.com/fiction)

Cover illustration by George Ermos © Usborne Publishing, 2018

A DARKNESS OF DRAGONS



There is magic in music. Listen.

A NOTE FOR TEACHERS

The Songs of Magic are made up of three recorder parts - Friendship, Magic and Courage.

The three tunes use just a few notes, simple rhythms and repeated phrases. This means they can easily be played by young musicians. They can be performed individually – each one has a backing track – or combined to form an unaccompanied trio.

When combining the three tunes, the quavers in each one must be exactly synchronised. But they are grouped differently: three groups of two quavers ($3/4$) in a bar for “Friendship” and “Courage” – two groups of three quavers ($6/8$) for “Magic”. Young musicians may need a little help with this. If you are organizing a recorder group, try assigning the “Magic” tune to your most confident players who can hold the dotted crotchet pulse against the crotchet pulse of the other parts. Other participants could drum or clap the rhythm of the first bar of “Courage” throughout the piece.

And if you want to set yourself an extra challenge, how about experimenting with different rhythms? Be it on drums, clapping or clicking. The hemiola effect (the duple/triple ambiguity) will be enhanced if some people clap the dotted crotchet pulse while others clap the plain crotchet pulse.

Have fun!

HAVE YOU CAST A MUSICAL SONG OF MAGIC?
Share your recordings with us!
@Usborne #ADarknessofDragons

bit.ly/ListentotheSongsofMagic

Find more fantastical fiction at usborne.com/fiction



A DARKNESS OF DRAGONS



There is magic in music. Listen.

The Songs of Magic

Anthony Marks

Friendship
(Recorder 1)

Magic
(Recorder 2)

Courage
(Recorder 3)

♩ = 120

♩ = 80

♩ = 120

Rec 1.

Rec 2.

Rec 3.

Rec 1.

Rec 2.

Rec 3.

HAVE YOU CAST A MUSICAL SONG OF MAGIC?
Share your recordings with us!
@Usborne #ADarknessofDragons



bit.ly/ListentotheSongsofMagic

Find more fantastical fiction at usborne.com/fiction

A DARKNESS OF DRAGONS

There is magic in music. Listen.

Friendship
(Recorder 1)

The Songs of Magic

Anthony Marks

$\text{♩} = 120$



HAVE YOU CAST A MUSICAL SONG OF MAGIC?
Share your recordings with us!
@Usborne #ADarknessofDragons



bit.ly/ListentotheSongsofMagic

Find more fantastical fiction at usborne.com/fiction

A DARKNESS OF DRAGONS

There is magic in music. Listen.

Magic
(Recorder 2)

The Songs of Magic

Anthony Marks

$\text{♩} = 80$



HAVE YOU CAST A MUSICAL SONG OF MAGIC?
Share your recordings with us!
@Usborne #ADarknessofDragons

bit.ly/ListentotheSongsofMagic

Find more fantastical fiction at usborne.com/fiction



A DARKNESS OF DRAGONS

There is magic in music. Listen.

Courage
(Recorder 3)

The Songs of Magic

Anthony Marks



HAVE YOU CAST A MUSICAL SONG OF MAGIC?
Share your recordings with us!
@Usborne #ADarknessofDragons



bit.ly/ListentotheSongsofMagic

Find more fantastical fiction at usborne.com/fiction

A DARKNESS OF DRAGONS

A DRAGON-SHAPED RETELLING OF
THE DARKEST LEGEND OF THEM ALL...

★ Like the Pied Piper of Hamelyn, Patch Brightwater uses his pipe to cast dangerous spells, can you design your own magical musical instrument? What types of spells would it cast?

Write it down and then draw it in the space below.



THE DRAGONS ARE ATTACKING!
Can you find them all before they cause more harm?!

‘There is magic in music. Listen.’

Find more fantastical fiction at [usborne.com/fiction](https://www.usborne.com/fiction).

Make Your Own A Darkness of Dragons Paper Plane



