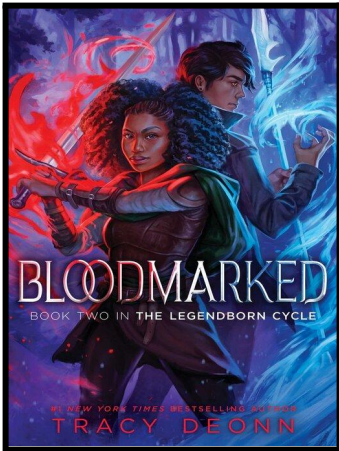




# BOOK BUZZ

## Legendborn Reader's Guide

---



### Legendborn

By Tracy Deonn

Margaret K. McElderry Books

An Imprint of Simon & Schuster

### [A Simon & Schuster Reading Group Guide](#)

---

### About the Book

Sixteen-year-old Bree Matthews changed when she lost her mother in a tragic car accident three months ago. Since then, she's been building a wall, one that blocks her childhood memories and imprisons her emotions. To escape her childhood home, the place where her mother's memories are bound, she attends the early college program at UNC-Chapel Hill. It's the perfect getaway until Bree witnesses a magic attack: a half-corporeal demon feeding on the negative energy of fighting students. Although a mysterious boy, Selwyn Kane, tries to wipe her memory of the event, Bree remembers and resolves to learn the mystery behind what happened that magical night, especially after she discovers she's had her memory wiped once before, on the night her mother died. On a quest to find the truth about her mother and magic, Bree enters a hidden world that lurks right under humanity's nose, a world where demons are a constant threat, and descendants of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table are called on to defeat them. With the help of a self-exiled descendant, Bree is pulled further into this world and must decide how far she is willing to go. She must figure out if she will run from the Legendborn, from the truth, and from her history, or if she is willing to fight a war that isn't her own.



Utah State Library  
250 N 1950 W, Ste A  
Salt Lake City, UT 84116



801-715-6771



bookbuzz@utah.gov

## Discussion Questions

1. After the passing of her mother, Bree puts up an internal wall. How does this wall both help and hinder her throughout the novel? What are some walls you put up to protect yourself? Is there a time when some of those walls have come down?
2. How would you describe Bree's friendship with Alice? Use the text to support your answers.
3. Bree learns that all Arthurian legends can be traced back to the Order, as members had a hand in the stories that spread around the world and a "pen in every text from Geoffrey of Monmouth to Tennyson." What does this statement suggest? What does it tell us about how history is often preserved and recorded? How could this relate to your national history?
4. As the new Pages get the tour of the house, Tor gestures toward Bree while stating that the chapter is welcoming its most diverse Page class. What is the social definition of the word *diversity*? How might Tor's comment suggest a superficial definition of the word?
5. Scions pay a heavy price for their service: because the binding occurred centuries ago, they have no choice but to heed the call, whether they want to or not. Do you think it's fair to be beholden to something your ancestors decided centuries before you were born? Explain your answer.
6. The Unsung Founders Memorial is UNC-Chapel Hill's way of acknowledging the history of enslavement and the slave labor that built the university. What is the history of the land you now occupy?
7. Nick explains that, for a long time, the men in the Order would eliminate daughters to force the Call to the next heir. What does this say about the Order and patriarchy?
8. Patricia takes Bree on a memory walk, a sort of time-travel into the memories of the ancestors. If you had the opportunity to go on a memory walk, who would you walk with and why? What would you want to learn?
9. Patricia says, "Everything has two histories. Especially in the South." What does she mean by this? How does it relate to United States history?



Utah State Library  
250 N 1950 W, Ste A  
Salt Lake City, UT 84116



801-715-6771



bookbuzz@utah.gov

10. Consider the magic of the Legendborn versus the magic of Rootcrafters. How are they similar and different? Do you think one is better than the other? Support your answers with details from the text.
11. Bree walks with her ancestors and eventually houses a few within herself. How is intergenerational connection important to the story? How is intergenerational connection important in your life?
12. Mariah says, “This is the South; there are a lot of unsettled Black folks in the ground.” What does the word *unsettled* mean in this sentence? What do you think Mariah means by this statement?
13. Discuss the chapters’ chant alongside Bree’s heritage, and how some Order members treat her. “When the shadows rise, so will the light, when blood is shed, blood will Call. By the King’s Table, for the Order’s might, by our eternal Oaths, the Line is Law.”
14. Analyze the quarry scenes at the beginning and end of the book. What does the cliff symbolize?
15. Although Bree loves Nick, there is a figurative and literal spark between her and Selwyn. What might this mean for the future of their collective and individual relationships?
16. The southern setting is critical to the narrative’s progression. How does the setting enhance the story? Do you think this story could be as effective if transferred to another university or state? Explain your answers.
17. Who or what is After-Bree and Before-Bree? How are they different? How are they alike?
18. *Legendborn* is infused with magic, but there are also conversations about racism and whiteness, including tokenism, microaggressions, and enslavement. What does this add to the story? What topics did the novel make you think more deeply about?
19. Therapy is an important part of Bree’s journey. How might stories like *Legendborn* be therapeutic?
20. In interviews, the author said she collaborated with a Welsh language and medievalist consultant for the Welsh terms used throughout the book. Do you think the inclusion of this



Utah State Library  
250 N 1950 W, Ste A  
Salt Lake City, UT 84116



801-715-6771



bookbuzz@utah.gov

language enhances or detracts from the story? Explain your answer. If you could collaborate with someone in a specialized field to write your own story, what would it be?

## Extension Activities

1. Black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins says there are controlling images—the Mammy, the Jezebel, the Sapphire—that often confine Black women and girls. Research these images and create a text using a medium of your choice that discusses how the Order attempts to confine Bree and how Bree pushes past those boundaries. Consider creating a written piece, artwork, podcast recording, or other form.

2. Read Arthurian legends and compare them with the mythos of this story. Stories and concepts to consider could include the following: the Knights of the Round Table, the Holy Grail, Excalibur, the Battle of Camlann, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, or *Lancelot and Guinevere*. After reading, use the legends as a foundation for your own short story.

3. Bree winds up on campus through UNC-Chapel Hill's early college program. Although the author acknowledges that there is no such program at the university, these programs do exist across the United States. Find a program that looks interesting and weigh the pros and cons of attending such a program as a high school student. Prepare an argument to present your case.

4. A major part of the story revolves around the racial history of UNC-Chapel Hill. Research the racial history of a local university or a university you want to attend. Some questions to consider:

How has the university grappled with its racial history?

What are the current demographics of the university, and how have those demographics changed over time?

What are the demographics of the faculty and how have they changed over time?

On which Indigenous lands does the university sit? Does the university acknowledge the Indigenous lands they occupy?



Utah State Library  
250 N 1950 W, Ste A  
Salt Lake City, UT 84116



801-715-6771



bookbuzz@utah.gov

5. The Order's hierarchy is arranged like that of the medieval feudal system. With a partner, research the feudal system, and create a chart that shows the hierarchy of the Legendborn characters.

6. The Legendborn belong to a secret society. Explore the history of one secret society and present your findings to the class. For ideas, consider the following societies: the Order of Skull and Bones, Freemasons, Rosicrucians, the Grand Orange Lounge, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias, the Ancient Order of Foresters, the Flat Hat Club, Quill and Dagger, Seven Society, Order of Gimghoul, or Wolf's Head. Consider the differences between society and community when studying one of these groups, and discuss when presenting your findings.

*Guide written by Stephanie R. Toliver, an assistant professor of Literacy and Secondary Humanities at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Her scholarship centers the freedom dreams of Black youth and honors the historical legacy that Black imaginations have had and will have on activism and social change.*

*This guide has been provided by Simon & Schuster for classroom, library, and reading group use. It may be reproduced in its entirety or excerpted for these purposes. For more Simon & Schuster guides and classroom materials, please visit [simonandschuster.net](http://simonandschuster.net) or [simonandschuster.net/thebookpantry](http://simonandschuster.net/thebookpantry).*



Utah State Library  
250 N 1950 W, Ste A  
Salt Lake City, UT 84116



801-715-6771



[bookbuzz@utah.gov](mailto:bookbuzz@utah.gov)