

Reading guide

Adventures in Oculus: Firedrake

Book Two • Theresa Maria Villarreal

For families, homeschool groups, and book clubs

Keep your book nearby and use scenes to explain your answers. Talk, write, or draw together. Read the named chapter before discussing each question. Pages 2 and 3 contain later revelations, so save them until you finish Firedrake. This guide also discusses events from Book One.

Before you begin

What do you remember about Dominic, Rebecca, Leonard, and Buckle Boots from The Spider Witch's Curse? Choose one unanswered question you hope this adventure will explore.

Pause and talk as you read

1. Chapter 1: Rebecca's drawings include places and people Dominic recognizes from Oculus. Which detail unsettles him most? What might explain what she knows? Keep a prediction to revisit later.
2. Chapter 1: Rebecca wants answers about Buckle Boots and her family, while Barnabus urges caution. What reasons can you find for each position? What would you ask Barnabus?
3. Chapter 7: Leonard introduces himself as Sir Leo and reveals that he can change form. What changes about Dominic's understanding of his companion? What stays the same about their friendship?
4. Chapter 7: Rebecca studies the ruby ring, letters, and journal entries. Separate one thing she knows from one thing she suspects. What would you investigate next?
5. Chapter 7: Dominic wants to act quickly, but Rebecca wants advice before testing the ring. Make the strongest case for each of them. What are the risks of rushing or waiting?

Keep a clue notebook

Divide a sheet into two columns: "What the story tells me" and "What I think it means." Add a clue about the ring or the family mystery. Revisit your interpretation when you learn more.

After you finish the story

Spoilers ahead. Finish the book before discussing these questions. Different interpretations are welcome; explain which scene supports your answer.

6. Chapter 12: Barnabus searches a library full of books with blank pages. Why is this a particularly unsettling trap for him? What weakness do you think the Wizard Dragon is trying to exploit?
7. Chapter 13: The chess pieces resemble Dominic's friends and family. How does that change the meaning of the game? What does Drake's treatment of people as pieces reveal about him?
8. Chapter 13: Dominic tries to understand Morgana's motives despite her betrayal. How can understanding someone's reasons be different from approving their actions or trusting them?
9. Chapter 19: Aurelian offers Drake the possibility of redemption. How does Drake respond? What does their conversation show about their different ideas of power?
10. Chapter 20: Red Cap removes a goblin's cursed medallion, and freed goblins help free others. Why does his experience matter here? What changes when former enemies regain a choice?
11. Chapter 20: Dominic and Rebecca direct their magic toward the medallions and mirror together. How do their allies help make that possible? Choose a contribution besides the twins' magic.

Faith and everyday choices

Optional reflections for readers who want to connect the story with their Christian faith. Explain your own connections rather than assuming every magical detail has one fixed meaning.

12. Chapter 7: Sir Leo connects Dominic's strength with love, kindness, and selflessness. Find a later choice that supports or challenges that idea. How might it connect with serving others?
13. Chapter 19: What does Aurelian's offer to Drake make you think about forgiveness and hope? Can someone offer another person a chance to change without excusing the harm they have done?

For the group leader: Choose three or four questions, allow time to find the scenes, and leave space for readers' own questions. No chess knowledge is needed to discuss the story.

Make something from the story

Finish Firedrake first, then choose an activity. Use a separate sheet for drawings or longer responses.

Build Rebecca's evidence board

Return to Chapter 7. Draw the ruby ring and add three notes about the letters or journal entries. Label each note as a fact, a theory, or an unanswered question. Do not turn a character's guess into a proven fact.

Tell one moment through two voices

Choose the disagreement about waiting for advice in Chapter 7. Write a short diary entry from Dominic's view and another from Rebecca's. Keep the events the same, but show why each believes their choice would help.

Draw a chain of freedom

Return to Chapter 20. Make a four-panel comic showing Red Cap recognizing the medallions, removing one, another goblin becoming free, and the freed goblins helping others. Include two details from the text; label any additions you invent.

Your reading notes

A clue I understood differently by the end

A question I would like to ask Theresa

Keep exploring Oculus

At the end, Buckle Boots entrusts the Wellerman to Jaimie. What does that choice tell you about what matters to him now? Which character would you most like to follow next?

Explore the series at theresamariavillarreal.com