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***RED RISING***

by Pierce Brown

**Louisiana Teen Readers’ Choice Nominee 2017**

**Grade 9-12**

*Submitted by MLIS Student*

*School of Library and Information Science, LSU, Baton Rouge*

**Title:** *Red Rising*

**Author:** Pierce Brown

**Publisher:** Del Ray

**Pages:** 382

**SUMMARY**

Darrow, a member of the lowest class, the Red clan, works as do all members of his clan, as a miner under the surface of Mars, preparing the planet to one day support human life. After a short period of insubordination and a series of reckless decisions, he is sentenced to execution in the town square, but when he later wakes and realizes that he is not dead, Darrow’s life completely changes course.

Darrow learns that he has been rescued by the underground rebel group known as the Sons of Ares, and they reveal to him that Mars is habitable for humans and has been for centuries; the highest class, the Golds, have simply been exploiting and working the Reds to death as slave labor. The Sons of Ares have a plan, with Darrow at its center, to infiltrate the Gold class, and they are prepared to transform Darrow physically and mentally in order enroll him in the Golds’ command school. However, once he arrives at the Institute, Darrow realizes that the program is more vicious and challenging than he ever could have imagined. He forms several friendships when the program begins, but are these relationships real? Can they survive the Institute? Will Darrow fulfill his mission? Brown slowly develops the society and the laws and customs that govern it before diving into an action-packed, gripping saga and ending with a cliffhanger that will leave readers anxiously awaiting the sequel.

**AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY**

Pierce Brown is an American writer who currently lives in Los Angeles, California. He graduated from Pepperdine University in 2010 and worked a series of odd jobs for several years until the publication of his first novel *Red Rising* in 2014. Though he wrote several unpublished novels before the *Red Rising* trilogy, Brown has since focused his writing on science fiction.

Biographical information taken from the author’s website:

<http://www.pierce-brown.com/>

Accessed October 17, 2015

**AWARDS**

2015 ALA/YALSA Alex Award nominee

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Red Rising series website <http://www.redrisingbook.com/index.php>

Publisher’s *Red Rising* page <http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/221552/red-rising-by-pierce-brown/9780345539809/>

**OTHER TITLES BY AUTHOR**

*Golden Son* (2015)

*Morning Star* (2016)

**RELATED TITLES**

*The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury

*Survival: Colony 9* by Joshua David Bellin

*Black Hole Sun* by David Macinnis Gill

*Apollo’s Outcasts* by Allen M. Steele

**CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS**

**Language Arts:**

* Students will demonstrate knowledge of the author’s style and understanding of the characters by writing a short piece of fan fiction in which they create their own version of the first chapter of *Golden Son*, the sequel to *Red Rising*. Students should then read the excerpt of *Golden Son* provided by Random House at <http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/221583/golden-son-by-pierce-brown/9780345539830/>. Follow up with a class discussion comparing the fan fiction writing and the excerpt. This *School Library Journal* blog post at <http://blogs.slj.com/connect-the-pop/2012/11/comics/guest-post-by-christopher-shamburg-when-the-lit-hits-the-fan-in-teacher-education/> about utilizing fan fiction in the classroom also offers suggestions and resources for Language Arts teachers.
* Students will work in groups to research Roman mythology, particularly those gods and goddesses associated with the Houses of the Institute. Using their research and knowledge gathered from the novel, students will select a House to join and write an essay explaining why they believe they would be a good fit. Possible student resources include <http://www.redrisingbook.com/thedraft/>, <http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/gods.html>,

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22381/22381-h/22381-h.htm#page26>,

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/romans/religion/>, and

<http://www.uncg.edu/cla/myth/romgods.html>.

**Social Studies:**

* Students will work in small groups to research and present information about the organization of societies in world history, i.e. feudalism in the Middle Ages, caste system in India, or slavery in the United States. Their presentations must also compare and contrast the societal organization of Mars in *Red Rising* to their research. Possible student resources include:
	+ <http://www.learner.org/interactives/middleages/>,
	+ [http](file:///%5C%5CFILEPRINT%5CStateLibrary%5CLibraryDevelopment%5CStudent%5CLYRC%20Projects%5CStudy%20Guides%5C2017%5CSLIS%20Student%20Guides%5C9-12%5Chttp)[://www.ushistory.org/civ/8b.asp](http://www.ushistory.org/civ/8b.asp),
	+ <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=socssp>,
	+ <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery>,
	+ <http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/civil-war-overview/slavery.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>
	+ <http://www.redrisingbook.com/world.php>.
* Students will research the colonization and development of Louisiana, particularly the slave trade and the mixing of races. Then they will compare and contrast the societal organization of Mars in *Red Rising* to their research. Students may find more information on creole history at:
	+ [http://www.knowla.org/entry/627](http://www.knowla.org/entry/627/)
	+ <http://www.crt.state.la.us/Assets/OCD/hp/nationalregister/historic_contexts/The_African_American_Experience_in_Louisiana.pdf>
	+ <http://www.redrisingbook.com/world.php>.
* Students will research natural resources of the United States, specifically those resources that are obtained through mining. Students should consider the uses of the extracted resources, the processes used to obtain them, risks for the environment and the miners, and the history of the industry. Possible resources include:
	+ <http://www.nma.org/>
	+ <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/statistics/allmining.html>
	+ <http://education.nationalgeographic.com/encyclopedia/north-america-resources/>
	+ <http://naturalresources.house.gov/>.

**Fine Arts:**

* Students will analyze the plot, mood, and tone of *Red Rising* by creating a soundtrack of ten songs to accompany the novel. Songs must cover the mood of the beginning, middle, and end of the novel, as well as reflect specific characters or events. Students will also submit “liner notes” explaining their song selections using analysis and evidence from the text and provide a correct MLA citation for each song. Students may use a guide, such as the Perdue Online Writing Lab found at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/09/>, or a citation generator, such as EasyBib found at <http://www.easybib.com/mla-format/musical-recording-citation>. The library may also have copies of the *MLA Handbook*. (Modern Language Association of America. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009. 978-1-60329-024-1).
* Students will consider the occupations and role of each color level in the society of *Red Rising*. Using their knowledge of art and research on the symbolism of colors, they will develop a work of art indicative of one of the classes. Students will then present their work, explaining the technique(s) utilized and providing evidence from the text to support their choices. Students may also consider <http://www.redrisingbook.com/world.php>.
* The Standard is an iron staff associated with each House’s god or goddess. The head of the staff is shaped into the symbol of the House. The Standard represents the honor of the house and is also used to mark the foreheads of conquered houses to enslave them. Students will research the god or goddess of a particular House and develop a design for the staff’s head based on their research and knowledge gained from reading the novel. Student resources include:
	+ <http://www.redrisingbook.com/thedraft/>
	+ <http://carlos.emory.edu/ODYSSEY/ROME/homepg.html>
	+ <http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/gods.html>
	+ <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22381/22381-h/22381-h.htm#page26>,
	+ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/romans/religion/>
	+ <http://www.uncg.edu/cla/myth/romgods.html>.

**Science:**

* Students will research the components of Earth and of Mars, the planet which serves as the setting for *Red Rising*, including atmosphere, subterranean makeup, water, climate, etc. A class discussion would follow regarding the feasibility of life on Mars. Possible resources include <http://www.dmns.org/main/minisites/mars/index.html>, [http://www.npr.org/2014/09/21/](http://www.npr.org/2014/09/21/350364826/mission-to-study-mars-climate-reaches-next-step)

[350364826/mission-to-study-mars-climate-reaches-next-step](http://www.npr.org/2014/09/21/350364826/mission-to-study-mars-climate-reaches-next-step), and

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/eye/mars/mars.html>.

* Students will research the terrain and soil composition of Mars. Using their newly gained knowledge about these harsh conditions, they will then research similar places on Earth and the type of plants that are cultivated there. Do any of these plants grow in Louisiana? As a class, discuss ways to simulate the environment of Mars and test your theories of plants that might grow there through experimentation. Possible resources include:
	+ [students/projects/martiansuntimes/docs/mars\_stats.html](http://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/students/projects/martiansuntimes/docs/mars_stats.html), [http://www.vox.com/](http://www.vox.com/2014/9/20/6532299/mars-farming-soil)
	+ [2014/9/20/6532299/mars-farming-soil](http://www.vox.com/2014/9/20/6532299/mars-farming-soil), [http://www.thompson-morgan.com/](http://www.thompson-morgan.com/plants-for-soil-types)
	+ [plants-for-soil-types](http://www.thompson-morgan.com/plants-for-soil-types) <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=397>
	+ <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=786>
	+ [http://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/](http://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/students/projects/martiansuntimes/docs/mars_stats.html)
* The Mars Space Flight Facility at Arizona State University has a website filled with resources, lesson plans, activities, etc. related to Mars - <http://marsed.mars.asu.edu/>.

**Vocabulary:**

Advocate

Bazaar

Cauterize

Decadence

Epigram

Eugenics

Fortress

Magistrate

Obsidian

Paradigm

Parapet

Retinue

Savagery

Scythe

Usurp

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What genre would you assign to this book? Why? Is only one sufficient or correct? Why or why not?
2. Darrow’s wife, Eo, is very important to him. As a reader, how do you know this even though she is not part of the action of the story after Part 1?
3. Why does Darrow fall in love with Mustang? Is he right to trust her again after discovering her true identity? Why or why not?
4. Near the end of the novel, the ArchGovernor cautions Darrow, “But of all the things in all the worlds, words are power.” Consider Darrow’s speeches, his native dialect, and the words that the author has created for the book. Which words are most important? Why?
5. The title of the book is *Red Rising*. Do you think this is indicative of Darrow and his journey? Is he still a Red, or has more than his physical appearance changed? If not, what might you retitle the book? Explain your answer.
6. The entire novel is told from Darrow’s first person point of view. Choose another character and explain how and why the story would change if told from this character’s point of view.
7. After the Sons of Ares send Darrow to the Institute, the author does not mention the organization for the rest of the novel. What do you think they have been doing for that period of time? Why? How might this be significant in the sequel?
8. Darrow makes strategic decisions regarding his relationship with the members of House Mars and the houses they conquer. Based on your reading of the novel, who do you think makes a better leader: someone who is loved or someone who is feared? Use evidence from *Red Rising* in addition to any other texts to support your response.
9. If Julian au Bellona had not been matched against Darrow at the Institute, how might Cassius au Bellona and Darrow’s friendship have turned out? Do you believe they still would have become bitter rivals, both wanting to win? Why or why not? Use evidence from the book to support your answer.
10. Of the cast of characters that Darrow is friends with at the end of *Red Rising*, which ones do you believe will continue to be trusted friends in the sequels? Why or why not?

**RELATED WEBSITES**

**Encyclopædia Britannica: “Mars | Roman god”**

<http://www.britannica.com/topic/Mars-Roman-god>

This encyclopedia article tells about the Roman god of war. It considers his role in the larger Roman mythology and in ancient Roman culture.

**Entertainment Weekly:** **“Pierce Brown talks 'Red Rising' trilogy, reveals the cover of book 3 -- exclusive”**

<http://www.ew.com/article/2015/01/22/pierce-brown-red-rising-golden-son-morning-star>

This is an interview with the author about the series. This does contain spoilers for both *Golden Son* and *Morning Star* (Books 2 and 3).

**NASA: Mars Exploration**

<http://mars.nasa.gov/>

This is NASA’s official site for the red planet. It features recent news articles, videos and images, interactive maps, science and technology lessons/explanations, NASA missions, basic facts, pop culture references, and much more.

**National Air and Space Museum: “Exploring the Planets | Mars”**

<https://airandspace.si.edu/exhibitions/exploring-the-planets/online/solar-system/mars/>

This is the Smithsonian Institute’s page on Mars. It considers the environment and natural phenomena of the planet and allows the user to compare these various factors to those of other planets. It also discusses the scientific exploration and study of Mars.

**Planet Red Rising**

<http://www.planetredrising.com/>

This is a fan site for the *Red Rising* trilogy that allows readers to discuss the books and also posts about any news on the series or author Pierce Brown.

**University of Pennsylvania: Greek and Roman Mythology Dictionary “Mars”**

<http://www.classics.upenn.edu/myth/php/tools/dictionary.php?regexp=MARS&method=standard>

This tool created by a University of Pennsylvania professor of classical studies not only contains articles on major figures in Greek and Roman mythology but also articles on figures and events related to the search time, providing the user with an expanded base of knowledge.