
AUTHOR OF THE BESTSELLING SERIES DRAGONS IN OUR MIDST
BRYAN DAVIS
THE MEMORY STONE
DRAGONS OF CAMELOT
BOOK TWO

Praise for Bryan Davis's Dragon Books

Raising Dragons is an excellent start to a thrilling, inspiring, and faith-building series. Bryan Davis's unique meshing of legends, myths, and truth is incredibly creative. Together with his strong storytelling and thought-provoking themes it makes for an unforgettable ride. Bryan Davis's books exceed any others in the genre for thematic depth and yet are just as gripping and exciting story-wise as other books of the genre (or even more so). Bryan Davis is my favorite author, and I hope he will become yours, too, when you dive into the fascinating world of dragons and slayers, of light and darkness, and of truth and deception in *Raising Dragons*.

JOSEPH B.

If you love fantasy, you NEED this book! You won't be able to put it down! If you love dragons, you'll love this book! Dragons aren't just portrayed as big bad beasties, as in other books—they're actually heroes! Are you a Christian who wants a deeper relationship with God? This book models that too! Are you seeking God, but always afraid of committing? This book models what true faith looks like and shows that you can love and trust God through everything!

NICK B.

Absolutely brilliant. This is not your typical dungeons and dragons book. Even at 28 I find this book/series addicting. Mr. Davis combines faith and fantasy flawlessly. There are books about King Arthur, Merlin, and dragons aplenty, but to find one whose story line spans centuries and also teaches modern Christian values, that is rare. Mr. Davis includes many unexpected twists and turns and a storyline so unique it simply cannot be rivaled. *Raising Dragons* is guaranteed to pique the interest of readers of all ages.

LORI W.

Bryan Davis tells a terrific tale teeming with perilous predicaments, fascinating fantasy features, and likeable, charismatic characters who grow in their faith. The engaging writing style captivates the mind, and the Christian themes captivate the heart. This epic novel is a superb start to a sensational series.

SHANNON

When I first picked up this book, I didn't know what to expect. By the time I finished the first chapter, I couldn't put it down! I love the way Bryan Davis mixes dragons and faith. It is a very touching experience.

ANNABETH

Bryan has a natural flow in his writing that makes his characters come to life through his in-depth description of each character and the way the narrative evolves. I would heartily recommend this book to any fan of the genre regardless of age as the book has a broad appeal to all ages and all walks of life.

JOHN B.

I recently reread the Dragons in Our Midst series and fell in love all over again, probably even more so than the first time. Bryan Davis's writing really makes the story and characters come alive. The Dragons in Our Midst series is a fresh take on the fantasy adventure genre, mixing dragons, knights, and the Arthurian legend with modern day. Even a reread makes you want to keep coming back for more.

MADI T.

Mr. Davis's work *Raising Dragons* and the series that follows are some of the best Christian fantasy I have ever read. They are the perfect example of an author's work that challenges his readers to learn and grow. He also has a great way of leading his readers to Christ and to become more mature Christians. The series is great fun to read, no matter your age.

JEREMY D.

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The Memory Stone

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Cast of Characters

Acacia—an underborn and Oracle of Fire; twin of Sapphira Adi
Arramos—a dragon; mate of Shachar; father of Makaidos; grandfather of Thigocia; after his death, his dead body was possessed by the devil
Brogan—the human name of dragon Hilidan
Clefspeare—a dragon; son of Goliath and Roxil
Conrad—a palace guard
Elaine—a witch and a wraith; sister of Morgan
Fiske—a soldier
Gareth—a soldier
Gartrand—a dragon
Goliath—a dragon; son of Makaidos and Thigocia; mate of Roxil; father of Clefspeare
Hartanna—a dragon
Hawk—an eleven-year-old boy; son of Mirabel
Hilidan—a dragon who goes by the name Brogan while in human form in Dragons' Rest
Iridian—Morgan's magical dog
Jasmine—the human name of dragon Roxil

King Arthur—the king of Camelot
King Nimrod—an ancient king; father of Mardon
Lady Morgan Le Faye—a witch and a wraith; sister of Elaine (Naamah)
Legossi—a dragon who once cared for Sabina
Makaidos—king of the dragons; son of Arramos and Shachar; mate of Thigocia; father of Goliath, Roxil, and Hartanna; grandfather of Clefspeare; as a human, goes by the name Timothy
Mardon—an ancient scientist; son of King Nimrod
Master Andrew—Hawk's master, who was killed by Clefspeare
Maven—a dragon; the new leader of the corrupted dragons after Goliath's death
Merlin—King Arthur's wisest counselor; husband of Sarah
Mirabel—mother of Hawk
Naamah—the true name of Elaine
Newman—a guard
Palin—Sir Devin's scribe
Roxil—a dragon; daughter of Makaidos and Thigocia; mate of Goliath; mother of Clefspeare; as a human, goes by the name Jasmine
Sabina—an eleven-year-old girl who has grown up with dragons
Samson—a horse in Master Andrew's stable
Sapphira Adi—an underborn and Oracle of Fire; twin of Acacia
Sarah—wife of Merlin
Shachar—a dragon; mate of Arramos; mother of Makaidos; grandmother of Thigocia
Sir Devin—a knight; head of the dragon slayers
Sir Winston Barlow of Hickling Manor—a knight of Camelot
Standish—a soldier

Thigocia—a dragon; mate of Makaidos; granddaughter of Arramos and Shachar; mother of Goliath, Roxil, and Hartanna; grandmother of Clefspeare
Timothy—the human name of dragon Makaidos

Places

Bald Top—the highest hill in the area
Camelot—city ruled by King Arthur
Dragons' Rest—the dragon afterlife
Refuge—village where Sabina grew up
Stony Heights—the highest hill in the region
The great tor—a grass-covered hill surrounded by a swamp

CHAPTER 1

THE FINAL TEST

"Ravens are watching." Sabina nodded toward the far side of the outdoor arena, her hand gripping the hilt of a sword in a belt scabbard. Wearing a boy's tunic and trousers and a training helmet that hid her hair, she didn't look much like a girl at all. "Take a look, but do not be obvious about it."

Hawk, wearing a helmet of his own, moved only his eyes to glance that way. A dozen or so of the jet-black birds perched on a six-foot-high stone wall, their stares trained on him and Sabina. To most people in Camelot, it would seem odd that ravens braved the chilly drizzle to watch a couple of kids train for fighting, but to Hawk and Sabina the reason was clear. "Are you wondering if one of them is Morgan?"

"Yes." Sabina took her helmet off, releasing braids that hung down her back, one braid with white hair intertwining with light brown tresses. With her clothes damp and dirty from their warm-up exercises, her hair blended in with her tunic's earthy colors. "Not long ago, she transformed into a raven. She is a powerful witch."

Hawk took his helmet off and kept watching the ravens out of

the corner of his eye. “Not powerful enough to show her real face here. She’s scared of you.”

“Perhaps, but she knows more about my origins and how I got my powers than I do.” With her helmet tucked under her arm, Sabina showed him a tiny fireball on her palm, spinning and sparkling, a small sample of her power to create fire with her hands. “I am concerned that she might find a weakness I do not know about.”

Hawk eyed the sizzling fireball. It seemed to reflect Sabina’s essence—warm, filled with light, but fragile, needing protection. At one time, the dragon Legossi protected her when she escaped from Goliath’s attack on Refuge, her home village. Now that she was with humans, she could protect herself with her fire-making powers, but that might not be enough against Lady Morgan Le Faye and her evil allies. “And watching us train might be a good way for Morgan to learn more about you.”

Sabina let the fireball die away and prodded his arm with a finger. “Or you. She probably does not know about your new abilities.”

“Maybe not, but my abilities are tricks Master Merlin taught me. If Morgan learns about them, I can come up with new tricks. You were born with your abilities. They don’t change.”

“True, at least as far as I know.” She looked him over from head to toe. “How is your back? Are the burn scars causing much pain today?”

Hawk stretched his back a bit. “Not bad. That last healing treatment you gave me worked pretty well.”

“Good. I am glad.” Sabina finished her visual scan of his body. “Are you concealing any tricks for your test? Maybe that powder Master Merlin showed us?”

He touched his left arm’s sleeve and slowed his voice to stretch out his answer. “You’ll see.”

“More secrets.” Sabina detached a flask from her belt and raised it to take a drink.

"Stop!" Sir Barlow's voice boomed from across the arena. "Don't drink that water!"

Hawk and Sabina spun toward him as he ran with a long-legged stride, his dark chain mail jingling and a scabbard swaying at his hip.

Sabina lowered the flask and squinted at it. "Is something wrong?"

Sir Barlow skidded to a halt on the wet grass and took the flask. "Where did you get this water?"

Sabina nodded toward the palace. "From the community cistern. It is fresh rainwater."

"That's what I was afraid of." Sir Barlow dumped the water out, attached the empty flask to his belt, and gave her a different flask. "Here. You and Hawk share this. Don't ask why. I will explain later." While Sabina and Hawk took turns drinking from the flask, Sir Barlow exhaled heavily and spoke with a louder than usual voice. "I apologize for my tardiness. I was hoping the king would come to see your final tests, so I visited his chambers on the way over here. Unfortunately, he has been sick of late, so he decided to hold court this morning instead of risking his health by attending an outside event in the worsening weather."

Hawk blinked at him. "That's a lot of words for 'The king's too sick to show up.'"

"Perhaps." Sir Barlow took Hawk's helmet and looked it over while whispering, "That was a speech for the ears of the ravens." He put the helmet on Hawk's head. "I will say no more about that."

Hawk whispered in return, "Understood. But what about Merlin? Is he coming? And my mother?"

Sir Barlow's low tone continued as he drew Hawk's sword and examined the edge, dulled for training. "Do not react to what I am about to tell you." He paused until Hawk gave him a nod. "Merlin has taken your mother to a safe place. She is not in danger at the moment. Merlin is concerned that she might be a target for

Morgan. Again, I will explain more later. For now, Merlin wants you to go ahead with your test as if nothing unusual is going on."

Hawk took a deep breath and tried to put his mother out of his mind. "I can do that. I can trust Master Merlin. He knows how to deal with Morgan."

Sir Barlow handed the sword back to Hawk and drew his own. "True. He said that Morgan appears to be exacting revenge in an unusual way, though we don't yet know the extent or the source."

Hawk planted his feet and tightened his grip on the hilt of his sword. "Then let's get going. The sooner we finish, the sooner you can tell me what's going on."

"Agreed." Sir Barlow raised his sword. "This is not merely a show for the ravens. It is your final test."

"Give me a second." Hawk set his sword against Sir Barlow's and took a deep breath. Drizzle from the dim sky mixed with sweat beading on his forehead, still warm from his practice bout with Sabina.

"Are you ready?" Sir Barlow asked, no longer whispering.

Hawk nodded. "Ready."

Sir Barlow smiled. "You think you're *ready*, but you're not even *steady*." He lunged forward, grabbed Hawk's wrist, and gave him a shove. Hawk tumbled back several steps and fell. His sword flew from his hand and slid away on the grass.

Sir Barlow stalked toward him, a big smile on his face. "Come now, Hawk. I know you can do better than that."

"You're right." Hawk slid a short bamboo shoot out of his sleeve. Attached by a short string at one end, a pair of flint stones dangled. He flicked them together, making them spark, then aimed the other end to the right of Sir Barlow. As hoped, orange sparks shot past him and zipped toward the ravens. In a flurry of black wings, all but one launched from the fence and flew away.

When Sir Barlow looked in that direction, Hawk leaped to his feet, grabbed his sword, and dove toward Sir Barlow, staying low as he aimed his body at the gap between the knight's legs. Just as

he passed through, he swept his own leg across Sir Barlow's ankle, tripping him.

Sir Barlow toppled forward and fell on his stomach. Hawk scrambled up, ran to him, and set the tip of his sword against his back. Breathing heavily, he smiled. "Are we *agreed* that you should *concede*?"

"*Indeed*." Sir Barlow grunted as he rolled to his back. "I *plead* the *need* to better *heed*." He dabbed at a cut on his nose and looked at his finger. "And now I have begun to *bleed*."

"And I ran out of rhymes." Hawk reached a hand toward him and braced his feet. "Want a boost?"

"Certainly." Sir Barlow grasped Hawk's wrist and climbed to his feet. His clothes now damp, he brushed grass from the seat of his pants. "I see no need to continue your test. You are obviously ready for self-defense."

"Even though I tricked you?"

"Yes." Sir Barlow slid his sword into its scabbard. "Sometimes causing a distraction is better than a direct assault, especially if your foe is larger than you are. And you proved that idea with excellence."

"Thanks."

"You're welcome." Sir Barlow glanced at the remaining raven for a split second. "Hide that sparks shooter. Quickly."

Hawk slid it back up his sleeve. Although quite warm, it wasn't uncomfortable. Still, the warmth spread into his cheeks, the warmth of embarrassment. Apparently, Sir Barlow thought letting the raven see the sparks shooter was a bad idea. Now might be a good time to change the subject. He nodded toward Sabina. "Her turn to test?"

Sir Barlow took his helmet off and spoke at a higher volume as he scraped mud from the visor. "Sabina passed her test in a private exhibition yesterday evening. Since the king is not here, there is no need to retest her for ceremonial purposes. Besides, the weather is fit for neither man nor beast."

While Sir Barlow continued scraping dirt, Hawk took his helmet off and looked at the wall once more. The lone raven continued watching. Could it be Morgan? Obviously, Sir Barlow was again raising his voice so the bird could hear him. Hawk then focused on Sabina. Her blank expression seemed impossible to read. She had returned to their room in Merlin's quarters pretty late last night without saying why. Being secretive was so unusual for her.

Sir Barlow tucked his helmet under his arm. "Come with me." He strode toward a gate in the stone wall.

Hawk and Sabina followed, walking side by side. Hawk whispered, "Why didn't you tell me you already had your test?"

She kept her gaze forward, also whispering. "Because I did not know it was a test. Yesterday, Master Merlin took me to the king's court and asked me to demonstrate some of the moves I had learned, my sword against his staff. King Arthur was the only other person there. It was over in a matter of a couple of minutes, and neither of them said a word about passing a test. I thought it was not worth telling you about."

When they exited through the gate, they continued following Sir Barlow as he walked alongside the curved wall toward the palace, his head swiveling, probably watching for an ambush.

Hawk glanced back and searched for the ravens. They had alighted in a nearby tree, again peering at them with their beady eyes. He refocused on Sabina. "Then Master Merlin must've told Sir Barlow that you passed his test."

"Probably, but if it was a test, it was more about my eyesight than my sword-wielding skills."

"Your eyesight?"

Sabina nodded. "Merlin had all of Shachar's scales laid out on a table, similar to the way Morgan had them on her table, though the scales are no longer attached to anything."

"That makes sense. Merlin had to take the scales off to hide them in separate places."

"Right. And I thought it strange that the scales were still

shimmering dimly, though the portal to the dragon afterlife is no longer open."

"Maybe they're still losing energy. The scales were pretty bright when Shachar spoke to us through them from the afterlife."

"True, but here is the strange part about the test. When I approached the table to look at the scales, Merlin walked to the other side of the courtroom, unrolled a scroll, and asked if I could read it from where I stood. And I *could* read it, though the handwriting was tiny. My eyesight seemed much sharper for some reason. Then when I drew back from the table, my vision returned to normal. I cannot explain it."

"That's really strange."

"True, but Master Merlin seemed unsurprised. Rather stoic, I would say."

"Stoic?"

"Indifferent, I suppose, as if he had not been affected at all. Unlike Sir Barlow when he saw your trick. Do you think he was angry?"

Hawk shook his head. "More like worried. It was probably a mistake to let the ravens see it. Master Merlin said I could experiment with the powder and bamboo, but he didn't say anything about whether or not I should keep it hidden."

"Did he say where he got the powder and bamboo?"

Hawk shrugged. "Just from a far-off land. He said he did a lot of traveling in his younger years."

When they arrived at the palace's front gate, Sir Barlow gave a nod of greeting to Conrad, the guard stationed there. "Have you checked Merlin's quarters lately?" Sir Barlow asked.

Conrad offered Hawk and Sabina a quick smile before responding. "I personally inspected his chambers only moments ago. All is well. And the patrol inside knows to check every half hour."

"Good. Good." Sir Barlow touched his sword's hilt. "I hope you don't mind if I check myself just to be certain."

"Not at all, my friend. Extra precautions are necessary in these

uncertain times." When Conrad opened the gate, the trio passed through and entered the palace's front corridor, heading toward Merlin's quarters. Lanterns hanging on the stone walls provided flickering light as they walked.

Hawk again spoke to Sabina in a whisper. "Back to your test. You must've done well with your sword, or you wouldn't've passed."

Sabina furrowed her brow. "That is part of the mystery. I did not do well. While I was at the table, a heavy sense of sadness nearly overwhelmed me. When I walked away and drew my sword, I felt heavy myself and quite lethargic."

"Lethargic? That means tired, right?"

"Yes. Weary and sluggish. I could barely swing the sword at all."

After taking a lantern from its wall hook, Sir Barlow unlocked Merlin's door, opened it, and ushered Hawk and Sabina inside. While Sir Barlow searched the chambers, including the secret room that required a certain series of knocks on a panel to enter, Hawk removed the bamboo shoot and flint stones from his sleeve and used the stones to ignite a lantern on the wall. Once he turned the wick up to give them plenty of light, he sat on his bed with the bamboo at his side and looked across the small room at Sabina as she sat on her bed.

She nodded toward the bamboo. "I am worried about Morgan finding out about your weapon."

Hawk picked it up. "It's not a weapon. The sparks couldn't hurt anyone. It was just a way to distract my opponent."

"But Morgan might see it as a *potential* weapon. Something that can make a few sparks might be altered to make many."

"You mean, enough to cause damage?"

"Exactly."

Hawk closed one eye and looked into the bamboo shoot. All of the powder had burned away. "Maybe you're right."

"And maybe not. I'm just worried, that's all."

Hawk pointed at her. "You used two contractions. I thought you gave up on those."

Sabina stuck her tongue out, then smiled. "I wanted to see if you would notice."

"Definitely. You've been getting more and more . . . um . . ."

She lifted her brow. "Insufferably verbose and rigidly formal?"

"If that means what I think it means, then yes."

"I will try to be less of a verbal show-off. But back to the powder. How much does Master Merlin have?"

Hawk looked at Sabina through the shoot. "I used all of what he gave me to experiment with, but I got the impression that he has a lot more of it, probably somewhere here in his quarters. We should make sure it's well hidden."

"We could search for it while we do our new assignment."

Hawk set the bamboo shoot on the bed. "You mean organize all of his stuff?"

"Yes. It would require a complete inventory, so I am sure we will find the powder if it is here."

Sir Barlow entered the room and crouched between the two beds, his lantern adding to the light. "All seems safe here. Now I can tell you what I know." He looked at Hawk and Sabina in turn. "Merlin has been investigating some highly unusual activity in and around Camelot. As you might have noticed, we had no rainfall for two weeks until last night, only perfectly clear skies without a wisp of a cloud from horizon to horizon."

"So what's the worry?" Hawk asked. "Everything's back to normal. It's been raining for hours. Just a drizzle now, but everything got soaked overnight."

"Far from normal, I fear. Clefspeare and the other noble dragons have told us that the rain has ushered in a foul wind, something dark and sinister. They sense danger that feels like sorcery."

Sabina scowled. "Morgan's work. Like I was saying to Hawk a little while ago, she is a powerful witch."

"Indeed, which is why Merlin is protecting Hawk's mother. She was already Morgan's target once before. It seems that Morgan

enjoys attacking the loved ones of her real targets. They are your points of vulnerability."

Hawk nodded. "Right. Our soft spots. Morgan knows that we're more likely to do what she wants if she threatens them than if she threatens us."

Sir Barlow pointed at him. "Perfectly stated."

"But why did you dump our water? Did Morgan poison it?"

"I don't think so. I know only that Merlin told me to not drink any water that has been taken from any stream, well, or cistern yesterday or today. The flask I gave you was collected three days ago." Sir Barlow rose and backed a few steps toward the door. "I expect Merlin will come soon to give you an update and tell you what to do. Until then, stay here. The palace is well fortified, and, as you heard, a guard will check on you every half hour."

"Where are you going?" Sabina asked.

"The king himself asked me to locate more water that's safe to drink. I would rather stay with you, but I wasn't given that option."

"We understand." Hawk gave him a reassuring nod. "Don't worry. We'll be fine."

"I trust that you will be." Sir Barlow gave them a partial bow, then turned, marched out of the room, and closed the door. A click sounded, the outside lock fastening in place. Although the lock required a key to enter, the inside latch had a lever they could turn to unfasten the lock if needed.

Sabina squinted at the door. "Does Sir Barlow know that there is a passageway from the dungeon into Merlin's quarters that guards or even escaping prisoners can potentially use?"

"Probably not. The trapdoor is hidden." Hawk nodded toward the panel, now open. "He didn't even close the access."

"We had better secure it, then I need to tell you more about my test."

"Sure." After closing the panel, Hawk sat on his bed again and leaned forward, his elbows on his knees. "Let's hear it."

She copied his pose, their faces separated by only a couple

of feet. "While it is true that I passed my test, I do not think it was designed to be a test of swordsmanship at all. I think Master Merlin hoped to witness exactly what happened to me."

"You mean, your clear vision and feeling tired."

"Right. He believes that they are signs that I have more abilities than we thought."

"Dragon abilities?"

Sabina shrugged. "I do not know, but it must have something to do with Shachar's scales. I assume if Master Merlin wanted me to understand the test, he would have explained it."

"Not necessarily. I've noticed that he gets so focused on a project that he'll forget to explain anything to anyone. I wouldn't be surprised if he doesn't remember to come back here to tell us—"

The door's lock clicked. Merlin burst in and slammed the door behind him. Carrying a walking staff and wearing wet trousers and tunic as well as a stern expression, he pointed at the secret panel with his staff. "Find every empty vessel that can hold water and take it in there. Hurry."