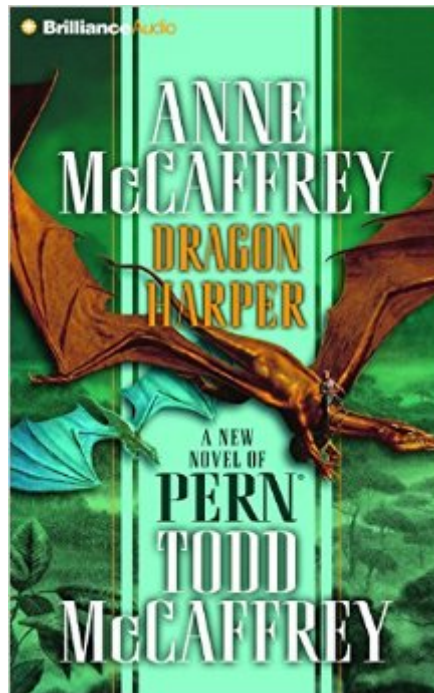


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Dragon Harper (Dragonriders Of Pern Series)



Synopsis

Life in the Harper Hall is busy for best friends Kindan, Nonala, and Kelsa. As the only female apprentices, Nonala and Kelsa are the butt of jokes and easy targets for the bully Vaxoram and his cronies. But when Kindan springs to Kelsa's defense, he winds up in a fight for his life against the older, bigger Vaxoram—a fight that will lead to a surprising friendship. Meanwhile, in nearby Fort Hold, a clutch of fire-lizard eggs is about to hatch, and Lord Bemin's beautiful young daughter, Koriana, is determined to impress one of the delightful creatures. At the hatching, Kindan impresses a fire-lizard of his own and wins the heart of Koriana. But Lord Bemin mistrusts harpers and will not hear of a match between his daughter and the low-born Kindan. Then fate intervenes in the form of a virulent plague as fast-spreading as it is deadly. Arising suddenly, as if out of nowhere, the contagion decimates hold after hold, paying no heed to distinctions of birth. In this feverish crucible, friendship and love will be tested to the breaking point and beyond. For with Threadfall scant years away, the Dragonriders dare not expose themselves to infection, and it will fall to Kindan and his fellow apprentices to bravely search for a cure and save humanity. The price of failure is unthinkable. But the price of success may be even harder to bear.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

To be honest, I don't expect much when I pick up a Pern book anymore. These last few have ranged from middling at best (Dragonsblood) to nearly unreadable (Dragon's Fire). While the eternal

optimist in me keeps me reading the series, the realist in me can't help but note just how long it's been since there's been a good book (I'm not asking for the glory of the great ones). Sadly, Dragon Harper doesn't break that streak. It's not as bad as Dragon's Fire, though that isn't saying much at all, and it's not quite as good as Dragonsblood, which also isn't saying much since that novel was mostly just adequate. Time-wise, the book picks up just after the events of Dragon's Kin and Dragon's Fire. Harper apprentice Kindan is having a tough time at Harper Hall--he can't find something he's good at and he and his friends (Verilan and two girls--Nonala and Kelsa) are tormented by the requisite school bully Vaxoram. Kindan eventually challenges Vaxoram to a duel and Vaxoram becomes his servant and then friend. Soon after Kindan impresses a fire-lizard and at the hatching meets and falls in love with Korianana, daughter of Lord Holder Bemin of Fort Hold (who has Harper "issues" and is no way going to allow his daughter to hook up with one). Then we get the by-now-too familiar plague sweeping across Pern, killing nearly everyone. Kindan and his young friends frantically search the records to find a cure and then gradually take on even more duties as the adults begin to falter before the plague's onslaught. Where does one start when detailing all the problems with the book? How about plot? The biggest problem has already been mentioned--we've seen it all before. The plague. The search through records. The sense of urgency. The exhausted survivors trying to save the others.

This is the first of the collaborations between Anne McCaffrey and her son that I've read and my overall impression is disappointment! I adore the Pern series and have been reading them since they first came out but this is definitely lower quality. In the first place, it is highly inconsistent with the body of the works: 1. If this is supposed to have happened before "Moreta's Ride", why is there no mention of this previous, major plague in that work; if it happens subsequent, why don't the people of Pern have the benefit of that previous experience? 2. Somewhere on Pern, there is a "Healer's Hall". Every other profession has a power base but healers don't? If they exist, as logically they must, where are they? Where is there the group of people trying to find a cure as in Moreta's day? 3. By all accounts, the ability to impress fire lizards is discovered in Lessa's day but here they are, all over the place. PLEASE do not tell me the records were lost! Weyr records were lost when most of the Weyrs of Pern went forward in time leaving their records untended. The rest of Pern, however, went on its merry way and the Harpers kept their records intact. Where are the teaching Sagas about this in Lessa's day? 4. Finally, since when are major tasks, like finding information about plagues, left to the bumbling efforts of adolescents, WITHOUT ANY SUPERVISION? Look at the original Pern books where many adolescents appear as major or minor characters but only under

the direction and supervision of adults. In addition, I find the total concentration on "superteen" Kindan a little lacking in the color and richness of Anne McCaffrey's solo works. Compare this with three novels in "Harper Hall of Pern" and you can see the difference.

It's Pern, and so I had to borrow it from the library, and I will buy it at some time, because I simply must own the complete Pern library, in hardcover. :) But must say that I too am disappointed, for all the same reasons every other review mentions. No more plagues! Enough already! It was great in Moreta and Nerilka's Story, but that's it. I appreciated what someone noted in a comment, that when Anne took a small piece of one book (such as ship-fish) and spun it off into another entire novel, there was genius at work. I for one would really, really like to see such moves again. Please. New things, not recycled old ideas again...and again....and again. And I too agree that the very young apprentices (13-ish, I think?) were given far too much latitude in this story for their age, despite the fact that such a society would have much more mature youngsters than our own does. I missed the adult subtle nuances and interplays, the brilliant conversations and decisions and actions. The leadership of the young people truly was unbelievable, and that honestly made me sorrowful, because I felt so let down. A few things that really intrigued me: I liked the mention of massage as a healing art, and crystals. I liked the pushing of "feminist" ideas, even if it was a little forced, as pointed out by another reviewer. I love Pern. I've loved it since I was 12-years-old and read The White Dragon for the first time. This series had succored me, given my own imagination flight, and allowed me to delve back into it time and again with a sigh of pleasure and familiarity. So whenever a new Pern novel comes out, I am so hopeful, and I read it, because I just have to. And each time, I get a little bummed out. Yes, it's still Pern.

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