



Dragonharper: A Crossroads Adventure in the world of Anne McCaffrey's Pern

Jody Lynn Nye

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Young Harper Robinton's first odyssey on Pern! With an all-new introductory essay by ANNE McCAFFREY! Crossroads Adventures allow the reader to take the part of the main character and make their decisions for them.

Dragonharper: A Crossroads Adventure in the world of Anne McCaffrey's Pern Details

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From Reader Review Dragonharper: A Crossroads Adventure in the world of Anne McCaffrey's Pern for online ebook

Kaitlynn says

A book that is basically "D&D for One"? I still can't tell if this is incredibly super-awesome or just kinda sad.

Dragonharper is a crossroads adventure, a spin on the Choose-Your-Own-Adventure books, set in the world of Pern with the protagonist/player character being a younger Robinton.

The mechanics were well-done. There were lots of options given, many choices, which I like in any CYOA. There were also multiple situations that were more in-depth and D&D style, requiring dice rolls for skill checks and combat success. In addition to the choices you make, you have to track inventory, hit points, food stores, and money. It's a lot more involved. I really enjoyed that aspect; there were several times that I rolled my dice and was worried I'd fail a dex check and die. It's easy enough for a newbie to pick up, but retains enough D&D feel for campaign veterans.

What a terrible, terrible shame it is, then, that this book is god-awful.

1. The book is not canon. While not a deal-breaker, it decreases re-read value for me, because in the scheme of things, it doesn't matter.
2. The book is inaccurate. It breaks Pern rules, such as not having toy dragons nor naming things after dragons (dragons are about the only thing held sacred in atheist Pern society, and they are revered too much to be invoked so casually). Established characters have different personalities. Names of the signature characters in the series, F'lar and F'nor, are wrong! There were so many errors in Pern setting and continuity I had to check the cover to make sure Todd McCaffery didn't write this.
3. There is no real danger. While there is combat, it's not to the death. While there are dangerous actions, the worst that happens is you black out and go back. It sucks the fun out of the die rolls early on, because all the tension is gone. Even if you fail, the worst that will happen is a blackout scene and then the story resumes. There is also a river of healing potions doled out to you.
4. Your choices have completely no impact on the story whatsoever. At all. Nada. Zip. Zero. Zilch. There is only ONE ending to the book. A D&D has infinite endings. A typical CYOA will have anywhere from 6-12, most of which are 'bad' endings. This book has one. And you get there regardless of your choices. Turn down seeing a Hatching? Guess what, you go anyway. Select the small runner over the large runner? The trip is exactly the same, down to the horse's name. Purchase a puzzle from the vender? No real point, it never comes up again.

I can almost overlook the continuity errors, even if as a Pern fan they jar me out of the story as bad as typos do, because early Pern novels had continuity errors. I'd be a hypocrite to mark it down too heavily.

However, points 3 and 4 completely ruined it for me. Why go through the not-insubstantial amount of additional time and effort rolling dice, flipping pages, writing notes, checking character sheet, etc., when all my choices are meaningless and superficial and the dangers are inconsequential and nonexistent? For a story this linear I might as well read a regular novel.

TL;DRA fun premise ruined by, well, everything.

Cary Spratt says

This book takes place about halfway through "The Masterharper of Pern", but was written 11 years prior to that book. Therefore, there are a number of inconsistencies (especially Robinton's relationship with his father and with F'lon). The main plot of the story is consistent with "Masterharper", at least: as a journeyman, Robinton travels across Pern from the Harper Hall to Benden Hold.

While the story itself is engaging, this book suffers from a lack of proofreading. There were quite a few typos, and at least one instance of a repeated action (a character holds out his hand, then holds it out again in the next paragraph as if he wasn't already doing so). On a more technical pick-a-path complaint, there are 3-4 sections that were split for no reason, making you flip to a new section when it could've all been kept in a single section. And worse, the sections don't always merge very well where different paths come back together. Often one side or the other seem to be missing details that result in a choppy bridge, and several times something is referenced in the merger section that only happened on ONE side of the preceding story. For example, at one point a choice is offered between Robinton traveling with a group or buying a runnerbeast and traveling alone. Where those two storylines come back together, the runnerbeast is mentioned a couple of times, even though Robinton doesn't have him on the 'travel with a group' path.

I can overlook the inconsistencies caused by the existence of "Masterharper", and the story itself is interesting and fun, but the technical problems annoyed me. If you're a huge Pern/McCaffrey fan and a collector (like me), I'd recommend this book in spite of its flaws, but for everyone else: skip it.

Gloomrose says

Although it is said to be science-fiction, I would deem it fantasy, because of the telepathic and teleporting stuff. The wonderful surprise in this book was that the plot and almost entire storyline revolved around ordinary human problems and relationships. I was really surprised by how much it didn't seem like fantasy, even though there are rather otherworldly solutions throughout the story. It has a little bit of romance in it, just enough to spice it up. Very entertaining, and well-paced.

Theresa says

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this book is a hard story to follow, with different choices of how events happen.

Kate says

I will read anything that even tangentially has to do with Anne McCaffrey and so I bought this book off of eBay and it was surprisingly really good. The story added something to the Pern universe and the characters

and the writing engaged me.
