



Dragonsword

Gael Baudino

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When a pretty, quiet grad student discovers a door into another world, little does she realize that she is about to set out on the greatest adventure of her life! For the door is the mystical portal to the land of Gryylth, and Suzanne holds the fate of a world in her hands!

Dragonsword Details

Date : Published December 1st 1988 by Lynx Books (first published 1988)

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Author : Gael Baudino

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From Reader Review Dragonsword for online ebook

Christie Ward says

Transported to a land that cannot exist, transformed from Suzanne Helling and Solomon Braithwaite into the Dragonmasters Alouzon and Dythragor, they are the bearers of the Dragonswords, Guardians of Gryylth and defenders of the Circle. The characters of "Dragon Sword" unfold and draw the reader into Suzanne Helling's nightmares, and into her rebirth and healing as Alouzon Dragonmaster, hero of Gryylth. We also plumb deeply into Braithwaite's psyche, discovering his personal demons in more detail than is sometimes comfortable. When the final page is turned, you really do want to find out how the countries of Gryylth and Corrin will evolve, and linger on the question of, "How real is real?"

Readers picking up this book today need to remind themselves of the sociopolitical environment at the date it was originally written--1988--and that this was Gael Baudino's first novel. Times have changed a lot. It was only in 1965 that *Griswold v. Connecticut* made contraception legal. Helen Reddy's feminist anthem "I Am Woman" came out in 1971. Billie Jean King defeated Bobby Riggs in 1973. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) died in 1982 because not enough states would ratify it. Third Wave feminism emerged in the 1990s.

Given this background, *Dragonsword* is actually a time capsule of women's experience of that day. The struggle for equality, or even a simple lack of animosity, was as much a war as all the battles in the world of *Dragonsword*. Baudino is not displaying an exaggerated misandry, but rather accurately capturing a woman's view of the era, then simplifying and clarifying it through the lens of a fantasy world.

The plot moves along at a good pace. The story itself is entertaining. Characterization is a little weak except for that of Simon Braithwaite, whose psyche is plumbed deeply. It's a good story on its own. Better, though, is to compare this work with Ursula K. Leguin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* and Joanna Russ' *The Female Man* as an example of how attitudes about gender, equality, and feminism have evolved in the last century. These three books, with a few others, would make an excellent centerpiece for an academic course on "Exploring 20th c. Feminism via Science Fiction and Fantasy".

T J says

An interesting read of modern day and fantasy. This tale is slow in spots but finishes with a exciting thrill ride.

Rob says

If I recall correctly, my mom picked this one up for me from a bargain basket somewhere. As I was working through the Weis/Hickman *DragonLance* books at the time, I think the connection was made there. This was ... well, an average fantasy effort that seems (in retrospect) like the author's attempt at dissecting the genre's popularity through its own narrative. (Or some such pretentious thing.)

While it wasn't all together *bad*, it was also not particularly memorable.

K.l. Tremaine says

A solid fantasy story with a modern sensibility and much-needed deconstruction of the genre. Unfortunately, other authors did not take the invitation Baudino extended to examine the fundamentals of the genre.

In general I recommend the series for strong transgender themes & characters.

Susan says

re-read Jan 12, 2000

Jewell Moreno says

I liked the idea that a magical word was created out of someone's unconscious. Kind of interesting. Story about a college professor who created the world of Grylth after suffering a personal tragedy, and bringing an unsuspecting assistant along for the crazy ride. I liked the characters, and sympathized with all of their challenges. Slightly more graphic and violent than I like, but the world was at war, and so there were a lot of battles to go through.

Jude says

I enjoyed the depth given to the characters more than the actual story. This really is an up-close-and-personal look at the psyche of the main characters.

Daniel says

This was, I think, the second fantasy book I ever read. I remember starting it, and then looking at all of the pages I had left to read and thinking, Wow, this will take some work.

It did, and looking back now, I'm surprised I finished this book. I didn't like it as much as the first fantasy I'd read - a Dragonlance book - and I was surprised by some of the sexuality in the book. Little did I know that Gael Baudino is much more adult than your average Dragonlance book.

Still, this book has a special place in my memory, since it was one of the first. I'll have to replace it some day.

Rayvern says

Managed to get through it.....just.

I was hoping the sequel would be better, but that's not proving to be the case so far.

Selina Harvey says

Another blast from my past, Baudino once again, toying with emotions in a close-but-not-quite world of almost-real. A master at blending fantasy and reality, she never disappoints in her detailed worlds and rich characters.

Women's lib, run amok... with swords, and dragons!

Enjoy!

Kat says

Lots of cool ideas, not the best execution in the world. I'm a sucker for a good portal fantasy, but the main characters mostly came off as self-involved jerks, especially the rapey male protag, who was the worst kind of caricature. He had his redemptive moment, but it felt like it came out of nowhere. And for a book espousing the ways of peace, the battle scenes sure do take forever. I won't be revisiting this one.
