



Dragon and Judge

Timothy Zahn

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When orphan Jack Morgan 14 is dragged off by Golvins on planet Semaline because he smells like a Jupa (Judge-Paladin), golden Draycos, poet-warrior of K'da dragon symbiotes, tags along in the form of a back tattoo. Alison, host to newly intelligent K'da Taneem, is kidnapped by Braxton Universis mega-corporation renegade Neverlin and mercenary Colonel Frost to open a safe.

The villains who massacred Draycos' scout ships now want the destination of the refugee fleet of surviving K'da dragons and their Shontine hosts, to finish their genocide. Uncle Virge, the artificial intelligence based on Uncle Virgil, the swindler who raised Jack from the age of three, pilots their spaceship *Essenay* (sounds suspiciously like "S and A"), and keeps the secret of who Jack's parents were, and how they died. Danger everywhere, brains and cooperation required.

Dragon and Judge Details

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From Reader Review Dragon and Judge for online ebook

Aelvana says

Jack and Draycos are running out of time, and out of leads. But a minor detour to satisfy Jack's curiosity about a planet Uncle Virgil would never let him explore soon takes an unexpected turn. Jack finds himself in the alien village where his parents died, and Alison finds herself abducted. But both of them see an opportunity: Jack to learn the truth about his parents, and Alison to learn the plans of the enemy. The only problem is, can they stay alive long enough to win?

Like the previous books, this one plunges straight into the action. It had been a while since I read Dragon and Herdsman, so it was a little hard to remember exactly where I'd left off, but soon enough both Jack and Alison are on separate trips once again. Also like the previous books, Jack and Draycos get a chance to learn something new about themselves and what they are to each other as symbionts. And just as Jack found himself growing a set of morals once he picked up Draycos, Alison confronts her own budding conscience as well. Alison refuses to shed all of her mystery, but I get the sense she's starting to change.

What I didn't like so much was how yet again the book pulls a random scene out at the end, in order to leave off on a really bad cliffhanger. Also, it's probably best to read this right after reading all the previous books.

Overall, though, this is a good continuation for the Dragonback series. With only one month left, Jack and Draycos will have to find some miracle to save the day. I rate this book Recommended.

Andrew says

A very good installment of the Dragonback series. I waited quite a while after book 4 to read this. I wanted to have my hands on a copy of the 6th and final book, and then when I was finally able to, I couldn't find my copy of five. So, I was a little out of the loop when I picked this up, but it all came back quickly. That is a nice thing about Zahn's writing. He gives you just enough recap to bring it all back after a long hiatus, but not so much that it gets repetitive and annoying if you are reading them one after another.

I liked that this book was shown from two different perspectives. Half the book from Jack's, half the book from Alison's. Zahn does a nice job of distinguishing each person's voice as he writes, and even though the book is told third person, he carries that through not only to the dialogue, but to some extent, to the narration.

This book also seemed to go by faster than the previous four, not that it was any shorter. Just had a very nice pace to it. Can't wait to read the last one.

Tyler says

Please vote on list Best Timothy Zahn novel.

This is my favorite one in the series so far. The plot was great, as was the character development. I liked getting the perspective of Alison and Taneem also. I didn't enjoy their chapters as much as Jack and

Draycos's, but they were still very good. The backstory for Jack was interesting, and I also enjoyed the new development in the relationship between Jack and Draycos. I was a little disappointed that there was nothing in the book from the twist at the end of book 4. Still a great read and my favorite in the series. Looking forward to the conclusion in book 6.

An Odd1 says

Jack 14, human host to golden dragon Draycos, K'da poet-warrior, is dragged off by Golvins, aliens on planet Semaline, named by numbers's first two initials (Nionei = 918), who recognize his "Jupa" scent from their last two circuit judge-paladins, Stuart and Ariel Palmer p211. Meanwhile Alison and her newly intelligent grey symbiote Taneem are kidnapped (by Mustache and Sideburns) with the contents of Uncle Virgil's safety deposit box, to crack safes held at the Patri Chookoock Brummgas family compound (where Jack freed slaves before). Braxton Universis renegade Neverlin and mercenary Colonel Frost have joined the Veluhgas, who massacred the K'da and Shontine hosts in their home galaxy and want the refugees's destination in the Orion Arm to finish the genocide. On their quest to save their people and worlds, the wounds our heroes suffer are painfully believable. (view spoiler)

Around every corner is another surprise. Every puzzle gets a clever answer. We can try to apply the wisdom of Solomon as Jack does for the Golvin quarrels. Just when we solve a secret, the solution is confirmed, no waiting in suspense. Our team gets justice, grow up together while approaching their goal - to save approaching K'da. I will be sorry when I finish the next and last book in the series.

Catchy morals come across with humor. "A K'da warrior strives always to do what is right. But that doesn't mean a K'da warrior is stupid" p307. Taneem, aspiring to K'da virtuous ethics, seriously works on decisions, while learning English slang adds fun "either trusts the other any farther than he can throw him" p152, or the word picture from "throw him to the wolves" p153. Jack says Alison is smart, not as a compliment, but when he is annoyed, again.

We still have plenty of questions. Alison's father "is one of the best in the business.. of theft. But there was no reason to burden Taneem with any more truth than she was already stuck with" p116. When our heroes feel lonely, fearful, discouraged, just as we do, we can hear the advice, even learn an easy K'da poem, about truth, or hope. Spending time in worlds with people of Zahn is rewarding. A clear double track plot line speedily tumbles us down a mountain avalanche of adventures to the edge of a cliff, series finale next.

Typo:

p152 "Alison's grasp of English was remarkably good" is "Taneem's grasp"

John Loyd says

Dragon and Judge (2007) 312 pages by Timothy Zahn.

Jack Morgan is a fourteen year old boy. Orphaned at three, brought up by his Uncle Virge a con man who teaches Jack how to open safes, trick and swindle people, etc. Virge died when Jack was thirteen, before he died he programmed the computer in the Essanay with his personality. Jack was hiding out on Iota Klestis when the advance party for the Shontine and K'da was ambushed and Draycos, a K'da poet warrior, was the sole survivor. Without a host for six hours, a K'da will die. Jack happened upon Draycos' crashed ship and it turned out the human was a suitable host for him.

In the fifth Dragonback book, Jack heads for Semaline, the planet where his parents died, and where Uncle Virge has a safe deposit box. Before Jack can get to the bank he is picked up by some Golbins and taken to a secluded valley. Taken there to be their Judge-Paladin, jupa. When Jack's comm goes silent, Alison takes it upon herself to go after him, and while she's at the bank, she might as well get the contents of the safe deposit box.

Now we really get to see some of the changes in Jack, how the influence of Draycos and his K'da warrior ethic have made Jack almost noble. Putting him in the position of Judge allows Zahn to demonstrate Jack's maturity. Plus while he's there he learns this is where his parents died. A lot of mysteries of Jack's past are unraveled.

Meanwhile Alison was taken by Frost and Neverlin back to Brum-a-dum and the Chookoock compound (the setting for book 3, Dragon and Slave) to open a safe from one of the Shontine/K'da ships. They have no idea who she is other than being a thief who broke into Virgil Morgan's safe deposit box. That doesn't make her safe, but it kept her from being killed right away.

This is another great Zahn story. Fast paced, fluid reading, plot hangs together, and characters that we can really care about.

Charles Streams says

A very solid book in the fifth of the dragonback series. Different secrets are finally revealed, including more about Jack's history and what happened to his parents. I very much like books that jump between different characters, but I definitely didn't like the chapters that dealt with Alison as much. The ones with Jack and Draycos were much better and what really kept me interested.

Rebecca says

The plot both thickens and expands as we careen ever closer to the fateful time of the K'da and Shontine refugee fleet arrival! Jack and Draycos get kidnapped by an alien group, and when Alison and Taneem head out to look for them, they're kidnapped by some mercenaries. They wind up on different planets, but each pair has their own part to play in the grand tangle of events as the past and the present collide. Delightful book, setting the stage for the sweeping conclusion of the Dragonback series in Dragon and Liberator.

Denae Christine says

Reader thoughts: So many clues! There may be a bit more about international law and ownership disputes

than some young readers will care for, but they don't have to understand them to get the story (and there aren't many, but even a couple mentions might be boring to some).

Jupa Jack finds out his Uncle Virgil isn't *really* his uncle, and he learns who his parents really were. Draycos nearly dies, they stop an arsonist, Jack gains wisdom over alien disputes, and Draycos and Jack get a new skill (telepathy FTW!). They encounter a society where numbers are names, and they help prisoner zero escape (doesn't that sound like a Dr. Who thing?).

I love that Alison becomes a full pov character and that she and Taneem return to the slave compound on the Brummga planet where Jack was a slave. Her work there is at least as important as Jack's work undercover as Jupa. I love that some female characters get to be just as clever as the males, too.

Writer thoughts: Splitting the book into Jack and Alison's povs (and Draycos's and Taneem's) was a great idea. I do think it would have benefited had this happened sooner, though. Some young girl readers may never make it to book 5 just because they don't see a prominent female early on. Actually, I recommended this series to a young friend who loved to read (she was about 12 at the time), and she couldn't get into the first book. I wonder if it was because there weren't enough female characters.

Still, I love the story, and better late than never.

Jim says

This book bumps from three stars to four starts because the ending is so strong. The entire book moves pretty well, and furthers the overall story, but the ending is clearly a cliff-hanger for the next (final) in the series.

As for what it's about, the series is about a young boy that teams up with a "dragon" (symbiotic relation, although since the dragon would die without being able to be absorbed by the boy, symbiotic may not be quite right). Initially I didn't think this would work, but it has developed well. They need to save the "dragon's" race. He finds out along the way, what happened to his parents. Another character is added and you're never quite sure what her goal is. But one more book and everything will be revealed and answered, hopefully.

Jake says

Dragon and Judge takes the series for an interesting turn of events, when Jack decides, against the advice of Uncle Virge, to go investigate something on the planet where his parents died. Naturally, the circumstances of his parents' death are a bit more mysterious than Jack was initially lead to believe, and he quickly finds himself drawn into that mystery. Allison, for her part, is separated from Jack through unforeseen circumstances, bringing her back into contact with some old villains, and allowing her to dig up some clues about the big plot that has hovered in the background of the series for so long.

Like the other Dragonback books, this one is filled with a lot of intrigue and suspense; despite the title, there's surprisingly little "judging" done by Jack, at least, not in a literal sense. Frankly, I was fine with that—Zahn shows enough of the judging Jack has to do to make it clear what his role is, and then backburners those scenes in favor of moving the action and story forward. The main characters all get to do

some interesting personal evolution along the way. It's not perfect—there's a character introduced in the middle that takes an odd turn in the cliffhanger—but overall, I think it's a solid, fun, space-opera kind of romp. I'm having fun reading it, and it's the sort of thing I'd be happy to read with a kid, if I had one to read it too.

Aerine says

We finally find out a bit more about Jack's parents. Alison remains a mystery. I really love the names of the race he ends up being judge for. Explains the ship name as well.

Overall, I'm thoroughly enjoying this space opera, though it is likely suited for the teen rather than the full adult sci fi. However, it doesn't talk down to you, or re explain too much.

If you like this series, check out the Quadrail series....

Rachel says

Another very enjoyable installment. I love all the story threads that are coming together here. It was also great to get so much of Alison and Taneem! Plus, I realized how much I love the little made-up phrases Zahn sprinkles in--"out of your apple-buttered mind," "spinning soap"--those can sound contrived but they were funny and natural to me.

Jenny says

Jack Morgan, Draycos, Alison, and Taneem continue to struggle to discover when the K'da and Shontine will arrive in our galaxy. Jack and Draycos search out info on Jack's parents' deaths, and become judge for an obscure people. Meanwhile, Alison and Taneem are kidnapped to crack a safe for the criminals hunting the K'da and Shontine. It may hold the answers they need, but in the wrong hands the info could be deadly.

Jesse Whitehead says

Zahn never really gets better which would be disappointing if he wasn't so good to begin with. He's never going to change your life with brilliant writing but he will keep you turning pages with brilliant story telling. Jack Morgan and Draycos continue their quest to save Draycos's people from extinction and get trapped on the planet where Jack's parents died – or were murdered. Great adventure. I would recommend this series to anybody especially young adults and children.

Joe Santoro says

I definitely think this series probably is just a bit too long. While we learn a lot of answers to mysteries here...

the story wasn't clamoring for them... settling the mystery of Jack's parents could easily have been undiscovered, or even been a side book. Tying it in to the bad guys of the K'da story is just a little much, it's a big universe, all the evil in it shouldn't come from one guy.

Also, there's a lot of Allison in this book, and she's completely uninteresting, IMO, and I'll be a monkey's uncle if she doesn't turn out to save the day in the end. Hopefully I'm wrong, since that'll be disappointing, but we'll see.
