BRYAN DAVIS

THE DRAGON'S NEW GROOVE

NOT SO FAMOUS DRAGON TALES - BOOK #5

Books by Bryan Davis

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The Dragon's New Groove

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CHAPTER 1

A Surprise Visitor

Dozens of dragons watched from their caves in the massive underground chamber as I held the green sunheart crystal on my palm. A couple of steps away, Jasper played the Auralith Harp with my guitar pick in his clawed hand.

With every string he played, I mentally begged the crystal to create an aura that would strengthen the dragons. Yet, even with Mom standing close by to give Jasper playing pointers, his notes sounded way off, and the crystal's minimal glow refused to increase.

While Jasper practiced, I sent him encouraging thoughts, like *You can do this* and *One more try*. With each thought, the scale Jubilee had given him glowed more brightly. Our mind connection was still working.

Finally, Jasper heaved a sigh, spewing sparks through his draconic nostrils. "I failed again. I am a pathetically poor plucker."

"No," Mom said as she patted him on the shoulder. "You're a dauntless, determined dragon. A bold, brave beginner. It takes time to train talent."

I slid the sunheart shard into my pocket and grasped his other shoulder. "Take a break. You'll eventually get it."

"Not with me as his teacher," Mom said. "When I played the melody in reverse to weaken the rebel dragons, it worked great, but when I play it forward, nothing happens. I can't teach a technique without true talent."

"Can *anyone* teach me?" Jasper asked. "Was my father the only one who could play the harp?"

"No." Seraphyx shuffled slowly closer, still weak from Mom's earlier harp playing. "My daughter Nyxara knows how to play it. She watched Torch many times while he created the aura, and he gave her lessons. Since she is not genetically gifted, she could never create the aura, but she is quite talented musically and would be a good teacher."

I resisted the urge to roll my eyes. If Nyxara was our only hope to get lessons for Jasper, we were in trouble.

"I'm not surprised," Mom said. "Nyxara is clearly intelligent—"

A splashing noise interrupted, announcing Dad's arrival as he walked through the open double doors and waded calf-deep through the stream that flowed out through the gap.

For now, the doors had to stay open while Jubilee and Rexan worked on repairing damage to the door's closing motor. Since they had worn earplugs while Mom played the weakening music, they weren't affected as much as the other dragons were.

When Dad arrived, he showed us the photos of our little sunheart shard on his phone. "I got a decent phone signal outside. Dr. Higgins is studying the shard, and he'll search for a crystal that's similar, but he won't have a way to test any candidates unless he has the harp and a gifted dragon to play it."

"That's the prickly part," Mom said. "I don't think I'm qualified to teach our gifted dragon how to play the Auralith."

Jubilee flew into the chamber, landed next to Mom, and drew in her lavender wings. "I heard what you said, and it is not your fault. Torch made the Auraliths, and he said only a dragon can teach the strengthening melody properly."

I lifted a hand. "I have a question. If you need the sunheart aura to strengthen you, were you always weak before Torch made the harps?"

"Not at all. At one time, shards created the aura without need of music, as natural for our health as air and sunshine are to you. But when the temperature rose, the crystals fell dormant. We tried cooling them in various ways, but nothing helped. The damage seemed permanent. Torch knew of an old prophecy that foretold of a crisis with a musical remedy, leading him to try playing the harp. And it worked."

Rexan waded up the stream, a pensive frown on his face. "To repair the door motor, I will have to fire-polish more pebbles to replace damaged ones in the gears. That will take all day, at least. For now, it will have to remain in a half-closed position."

Jubilee patted his back with a wing. "Nyxara's allies are still weak and can no longer help her.

I think our enclave will be secure until the door is repaired. Take whatever time you need."

Dad pushed his phone into his pocket. "Since the sunheart shards seem to be enhanced by a divine draconic gift, I don't think we'll find anything on Earth that can replace them."

I gazed at Jasper, still moping next to the harp. "I'm wondering if the shard that we have can strengthen one dragon at a time. They could take turns."

Mom pursed her lips in a doubtful way. "With so many dragons, Jasper would become exhausted, and we still don't have a teacher."

A shout came from the open door. "I will teach him."

Everyone looked that way. Nyxara stood at the gap between the two doors. Her chest scales bore black smears, as if she had tried to scrub away the lightning bolt.

With her head tilted downward but her eyes hopeful, she seemed tired, still weakened by the reverse melody. "I am truly sorry for what I have done. I hope you will forgive me and accept me as Jasper's teacher. In this way, maybe we can end all of our quarrels and be a family again."

