



DRAGON SEED

MARTY MACHOWSKI

“Dragon Seed unmask and disarms the pride that so easily takes root in the heart. In the tradition of Lewis’s *The Screwtape Letters*, Machowski retells the ancient saga of our defeated Enemy, through one family’s spiritual battle. Between the page-turning plot and thought-provoking studies, teens and their parents will find much to discuss. It’s divine truth through good story—one might even say, diabolically good.”

Champ Thornton, Author of *The Radical Book for Kids*

“In *Dragon Seed*, Marty Machowski pulls back the curtain to give us a creative and sobering look at the ‘cosmic powers and spiritual forces of evil.’ While the story is aimed at teenagers, adults would do well to reflect on its pages and the insidious nature of pride. I hope that readers young and old will pick up a copy of *Dragon Seed* to help them prayerfully consider the pride at work in their own hearts and give thanks to the One who ransomed those stony hearts.”

John Perritt, Resource Coordinator at Reformed Youth Ministries (rymonline.org); author of *Your Days Are Numbered* and *What Would Judas Do?*

“I gave my ten-year-old daughter a copy of *Dragon Seed*. Her mother caught her up an hour and a half past her bedtime still reading. When asked ‘Why are you still up?’ she replied, ‘I couldn’t put it down! I wanted to find out what happens next.’ Need I say more? *Dragon Seed* captivated my daughter’s imagination, as I’m sure it will with your own children.

In a day and age where Christian allegories are uncommon, Marty Machowski’s *Dragon Seed* is a very welcome addition to our library. If you have a teen who shows you attitude, disrespect, and disregard, then *Dragon Seed* will be a help you and your kid. We all need help with fighting pride and cultivating humility. So read Marty’s book along with your teen, so you can deal with the roots of pride taking over your own heart!”

Deepak Reju, Pastor of Biblical Counseling and Family Ministry, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, DC; author of *On Guard: Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse at Church* and *Preparing for Fatherhood*

"I recently read *Dragon Seed* together with three of my grandsons, Daniel (12), Silas (13), and Matthew (14). Through this fascinating story, the boys gained a renewed understanding of the gospel and the horror of pride. I strongly recommend *Dragon Seed* for teens and young adults."

William Farley, Author of *Gospel Powered Parenting*

"My two boys and I loved *Dragon Seed*. Our imaginations and hearts have been stirred by its distinct message so creatively wrapped in a great story. It has led to significant conversations about the awfulness of rebellion against God and the dangers of letting the 'seed' take root in our hearts. Parents, don't hesitate! Read this together with your adolescent . . . indeed, Nick's struggles are familiar to all of us."

Barry Joslin, Professor of Christian Theology, Boyce College,
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

Dragon Seed

Marty Machowski



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*I would like to dedicate this book to my children
and offer it as a gift to the generations who follow in their footsteps.
May they pass it down to their children,
and their children's children after them.*

To: Nathan and Lauren, Emma and Destin, Martha, Noah, Anna,
and Amelia

*"Things that we have heard and known,
that our fathers have told us.
We will not hide them from their children,
but tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might,
and the wonders that he has done." (Psalms 78:3–4)*

*Yours truly,
Tymar*

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Introduction

An allegory is a story that contains a hidden meaning. The following story is my idea of how the angels' mutiny in heaven against God and the spread of evil through the earth below might have happened. In presenting this fictional tale, I do not want to contradict anything the Bible teaches, but rather use the creative genre of allegory to capture your imagination. The Bible itself uses an apocalyptic allegory in presenting Satan as a dragon, bent on devouring the Christ child (Revelation 12:4). It is this imagery that I borrow from and expand on in *Dragon Seed*. It is critical that we learn to recognize the dragon's scheming ways and his temptations, for they are the greatest danger we will ever face.

Artists paint with oil on canvas. Writers paint with words on a page—stirring the imagination. While we remain anchored to Scripture as our final authority, I invite you to join me on an allegorical journey. Within these pages, we will imagine what it might have been like to see the cherubim of heaven go to war against the throne and watch the dragon rise to power to seek his full revenge against the King.

Chapter 1

The Voice of the Shadow

“**Y**ou can’t tell me what to do!”

Nick Freeman thundered past a pile of books at the edge of the living room, his stride sending the stack flying as he stormed down the hall. “I already said I was just down the street at Tony’s. I’m not a baby, Mom!”

A faint shadow swirled above him, but only his grandmother, who sat just out of the way in the corner rocker, noticed.

Mary shouted back at her son, “You know better than to speak to me that way, Nick! This conversation is far from over. If you think it’s okay to just leave the house at all hours of the night, you’ve got another think coming!”

“I can leave if I want. Don’t try to stop me!”

As the door to his room slammed shut and cut off his words, she sank to the couch with hands shaking. Breathing rapidly, she closed her eyes.

“Lord! I don’t know how many more of these fights I can take! Why do I have to face these teenage years alone?”

“Oh, sweetie,” a soft voice broke through Mary’s stormy thoughts. “I’m so sorry this hurts so bad. But honey, you are the opposite of alone in this.” Anna Cummings had been quietly praying as her daughter woke up that Saturday morning in a frenzy

after not finding Nick in his bed. It had taken her an hour of calling friends and neighbors to figure out where he was. And the argument that had followed his indifferent reentry into the house was not for the faint of heart. “We’ve got to figure out some action-steps here, Mary.”

“Why did God have to take Matt from us so early, Mom? Nick adored him. Every word he said was gold. I thought with time Nick would start to heal and start to find things to smile about again. But ever since he turned fifteen, his anger has just exploded at everything around him—especially me.”

“A gentle answer turns away wrath,” The elderly woman replied. “It’s obvious Nick is at a crossroads here, Mary. He’s going to have make a choice about his anger. He needs to know his mom is not his enemy.”

Mary turned to answer her mom, whose crackled but kind voice calmed her. She sat covered with a crocheted comforter. “I’m afraid. He’s been staying out later and later. I don’t like the influence his friends are having on him. And that kid knows how to push my buttons,” she said. “What am I supposed to do?”

“You know what to do.”

“I don’t know what to do, Mom.” She ran her hands through her hair, then stepped into the foyer which connected the two rooms and hall. “Was I this stubborn as a child? Was it this hard?”

Anna smiled. “Harder. It always feels harder when it is your own child. But remember, it is hard for Nick too.”

She let those words sink in for a moment, then added, “I think it’s time for you to pass on the story.” With those words a second shadow fled down the hall.

Mary paused, “I’ve thought about it. But what if it doesn’t work or if he thinks I’m trying to tell him what to do? What if he makes fun of it? What if he doesn’t read it?”

“He’ll read it. You remember how the story takes hold of you. Plus, it becomes a scary story when you realize that it is not just a

tale; that it is real. Teenagers love a scary story. It is not every family that has a legend to pass on to its children.”

“Do you think it’s true?” Mary had always wanted to ask her mom that question.

“The story? I know it’s true.”

“Not the story. The part about how we got the story,” Mary said.

“Doesn’t much matter if he was our great far-off grandfather or not. He was someone’s great far-off grandfather, living among the tombs, possessed by evil, hearing voices all the day long until he was set free.”

“But do you think it’s true? Was the story passed down from him, or was it made up by your father or grandfather?”

“My father passed it to me, saying his father passed it to him. That is all I know,” Anna said, and then continued, “I believe it’s true. I’ve seen a shadow lurking about that boy. Give him the book, Mary. The time is right. You must give it in the right season, you know. Pass it on too early and children forget it. Pass it on too late—well, then it is just too late. But I think the time is right now. The shadow is already filling his heart. That is why it is so easy for him to disrespect you. And yet he is not so far given over that he won’t read the story.”

“I don’t know—are you sure?”

“Go on, you know where we keep it,” she said and pointed to the center of the brick fireplace.

Mary walked across the room to the left side of the fireplace. She slid out the last brick on the left, which sat directly under the massive oak mantel. She slipped her hand into a cavity, and pulled down a thin, dark brown book.

“Okay, Mom,” she said as she rubbed her index finger across the leather-bound cover. She remembered the day when, as a thirteen-year-old, the story had been passed on to her. Back then, she had taken the book from her father’s hand, intending not to read

it. She had been angry too, but curiosity compelled her to turn the first pages. Then the story drew her in.

She couldn't bear the thought of losing Nick. For a moment she stood paralyzed, too afraid to walk down the hall to Nick's room but even more fearful to return the book to its hideaway.

Nick pounded his fist against his bedroom door. The shadow swirled about him, but he didn't sense its presence.

"I'm sick of this. I can't do anything around here."

"You're older now. You're not in kindergarten anymore. She doesn't let you do anything. You could just sneak out again later. What could she say?" The tempting words spewed from the shadow, filling Nick's thoughts, playing on his desires.

Nick slipped his backpack off his shoulder, dropped to his knees, and reached into the half-zipped main compartment. Two heavy schoolbooks crashed against the wall as he emptied the pack. Into the void he stuffed a sweatshirt that was clumped up next to his dresser. Looking over to the door, he eyed the center of the knob. He half crawled a step, stretched his arm far out, and turned the lock with a flip of his finger.

"If Tony goes, I go," Nick said to himself. Digging further in the bag, he pulled out a phone with a web of cracks across the screen and slipped it into his pocket. *What Mom doesn't know won't hurt her.*

"You're a smart man, Nick," the shadow whispered.

Nick stood to his feet and paced up and down the football rug next to his bed. Suddenly the toe of his shoe tripped on a hidden sock stuffed underneath and sent him stumbling forward across his beanbag chair into his desk. Anger bubbled up to the surface as he blurted a few choice words.

"Stupid rug! Stupid room!" he bellowed. He reached to the open desk drawer next to his window and pulled out a two-toned

golf ball that had started rolling around. It was all he could do to not throw it straight through the window in disgust.

Mary, encouraged by her mother's words, walked the long central hall to her son's bedroom door. Her footsteps sounded on the wooden floor, announcing her approach.

"Hey Nick, it's Mom," she said loud enough to carry through the hollow bedroom door.

"What do you want?" he growled as he pulled the phone out of his pocket. He slid it and the golf ball under his pillow.

"We need to talk. For a few more minutes."

Nick looked around the room, kicked his pack aside, then unlocked and opened the door. He briefly caught her expression, then looked away from his mom and sighed.

"There's that look of disrespect. You've seen it a thousand times." The shadow spoke the temptation to Mary as she stood before the open door.

"I wish you wouldn't lock the door on me," she said.

"It's your door." The shadow whispered to Nick.

It's my door. I'll lock it if I want, Nick owned the thought, and rolled his eyes in disgust. "Sometimes I like the door locked," he said.

Mary took a deep breath, and paused before she spoke. "Look, I don't want to start arguing again. You've got to figure out what you're going to do about this disrespect. This is a real problem that's not going to just go away. But right now, I'm not here to talk about that. Can I just sit down and show you something?" Her calmer, steady tone, in spite of Nick's harsh words, caught him off guard. His shoulders relaxed. The shadow shrunk back.

"All I want to talk about right now is you not watching my every move like you're the police or something. It's not like I'm two and need you to arrange all of my little playdates."

"Nick, I don't think your attitude is a wise choice."

“Whatever.”

Mary took another steadying breath and lowered herself to the edge of Nick’s bed, holding out the book. “I’ve been waiting to give this to you,” she said simply.

“What is it?”

“A book. Mom-Mom calls it our family legend. This story has been passed down through our family. I think it’s time you take a look at it. You want to be treated like you’re older? Well, here’s the first step. Read it. It’s been in our family for generations.”

“What’s it about?”

“Dragons and things,” she said as she moved it closer still.

“Dragons? Our family has a dragon story?” The thought seemed a little ludicrous, yet the idea of a family legend intrigued him.

“Your dad liked it too. Take a look for yourself.” Mary handed the book to her son.

Nick felt the well-worn cover. It was soft. It smelled like an old box that had been in the attic. The book drew his curiosity, and he had always loved to read.

“Will you read it?” Mary looked into her son’s eyes, hoping he would say yes.

A part of Nick wanted to say no, but would this get his mom off his back for awhile? It might be worth skimming a few pages just to get a break from the nagging. Plus, something about her tone had changed from their fight in the living room. Her calm, steady gaze was like a foot in the door to his heart, preventing him from shutting it tight against her.

Nick paused, glanced into his mother’s eyes, and answered, “I’ll read it.” He jerked the book from his mother’s hand, then burrowed into the corner of his bed, signaling her to leave. As she stood and started back down the hall, he shook a nagging thought from the corner of his heart. *You didn’t need to yank it from her.*

Back outside the door, a tear coursed down the side of Mary's face. She paused and called back, "Thanks Nick." Then she turned and made her way back to the front of the house.

Nick glanced down and read the cover. *Dragon Seed*? He flipped the book to the first page of the story. The opening chapter started with "Introductions." *So far, so boring*, he thought. But he kept reading anyway.

The Antidote

The secret to uprooting the seed of the dragon.

A twelve-day prescription.

Day One

The First Law of Pride

God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

James 4:6

You can do some fun experiments with gravity. If you drop a marble or small pebble in a glass of water, it will always fall to the bottom. The force of gravity in the earth's core pulls the marble down because it is heavier than the water. Scientists use the word "law" to describe the way gravity works because it always works the same way. Drop a million marbles in a million glasses of water and every one will sink. That is because God designed the world we live in to operate under laws like the law of gravity.

There are also spiritual laws that govern our lives. One of these spiritual laws is that "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). Think about that: If you are proud, God will be against you. That's a spiritual law that will always be true, no matter what. Since God made us and is in charge of the whole world, it would make sense to figure out what pride is and how to get rid of it. So what does James mean by pride? It's simply wanting to be in charge of our lives instead of acknowledging that God is really in charge.

Our enemy, the one the Bible calls “The Dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan” (Revelation 20:2) is always ready to tempt us toward pride. The Dragon is very aware that we are sinners who can be tempted to turn away from God and live for ourselves. Any time we live for ourselves and do what we want over what God wants or any time we boast in our own glory instead of giving God the glory we can be sure that sinful pride is active in our heart, sprouting and growing like the dragon seed of the story.

Sinful pride is at work whenever we reject God’s Word and do what we want instead. When we tell lies, we are rejecting God’s direction to tell the truth. When we take something that doesn’t belong to us, pride is at work because we are following our selfish desire and making it more important than God’s Word, which tells us not to steal. Pride is at work behind the scenes with every sin. That is why God opposes the proud.

God is perfect. There is no sin in him at all. He is completely good and holy. That is why he must oppose sin. We would expect a police officer to chase down a robber and arrest him for taking a lady’s purse. By doing so he is protecting us. We would expect a judge to find him guilty. That would be just. In the same way, God must go after lawbreakers and judge them.

Since we are all proud, you might be wondering what hope is there? But James give us the way forward—humility. Humility is the opposite of pride. Pride is lifting ourselves above God, but humility is embracing our rightful place below him and accepting that God is in charge of our lives and not us. Humility is like when a person bows before the throne of their king. Bowing symbolizes submission. It says to the King, “I am your subject. You are in authority over me.” Likewise, whenever we obey God’s word instead of our own sinful desires, we bow before the Lord in our hearts. That’s what humbling ourselves means. If we do that, James tells us that God will help us by giving us grace. What does this mean practically? Among other things, when you obey God’s

Word by obeying your parents even when you don't feel like it—that's humility. And God gives grace to the humble!

What does grace look like? It's help from God to do what he asks us to do. God's grace helps us to do something hard even though every part of us wants to say *No!* But God's grace also means that whenever you ask for forgiveness in Jesus's name, you are forgiven. God never holds our sins against us when we confess them and ask for his help. Can you think of any sins that you might want to confess and be forgiven for?

Just like the law of gravity is constant and never changes, so God will always oppose the proud, and he will always give grace to the humble.

Look for opportunities to walk the path of humility. Think about your relationship with your parents and your teachers. Is it hard for you to take direction? Ask Jesus to help you walk in humility with those in authority over you. What are some ways you can express yourself that show humility instead of pride? God promises that if you do, it will go well for you and you will live a long life (Ephesians 6:2–3).

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

1. Usually we are blind to the work of pride in our lives. Have you ever asked someone where they see pride at work in your life? If you were to ask someone this question, who would you ask? Who knows you best?
2. Where in your life do you see pride at work? In other words, where do you do what you want to do instead of what you know God wants you to do? Make a short list and share that with someone else so that you can pray for each other.