



# BROTHERS MAJERE

— KEVIN STEIN —

**“What do you want of me?” Raistlin asked. “I am not like my brother. I am not ... attractive.”**

**“You are powerful, Raistlin. I always find power attractive. And you could become more powerful over time.”**

**“And how would we do that?” he asked, taking another drink from his glass.**

**“My magic is vast, stronger than almost any you have encountered before. I would be willing to ... share it with you.” Emptying her glass, the woman filled it again from the decanter and wandered about the library, running her fingers across the suits of armor standing guard in the room.**

**“You wear the red robes, mage, but you will not wear them forever. You do not have the patience to stand in the middle. You must make a choice, or your passions will tear you asunder.”**

**“That may be, but all in my own time. I repeat, what do you want of me?”**

**“It is, rather, what you want of me,” she said, coming close and putting her soft hand on his arm. “I am offering you the chance to control your own destiny. I am offering you an alliance with the Dark Queen!”**

## FROM THE CREATORS OF THE DRAGONLANCE® SAGA

LEAVES FROM THE INN OF THE LAST HOME  
*COMPILED BY TIKA AND CARAMON MAJERE, PROPRIETORS*

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PRELUDES

VOLUME THREE

# Brothers Majere

Kevin Stein



**BROTHERS MAJERE**  
**DRAGONLANCE® Preludes • Volume III**

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*I was about to dedicate this book to Rett, when suddenly....*

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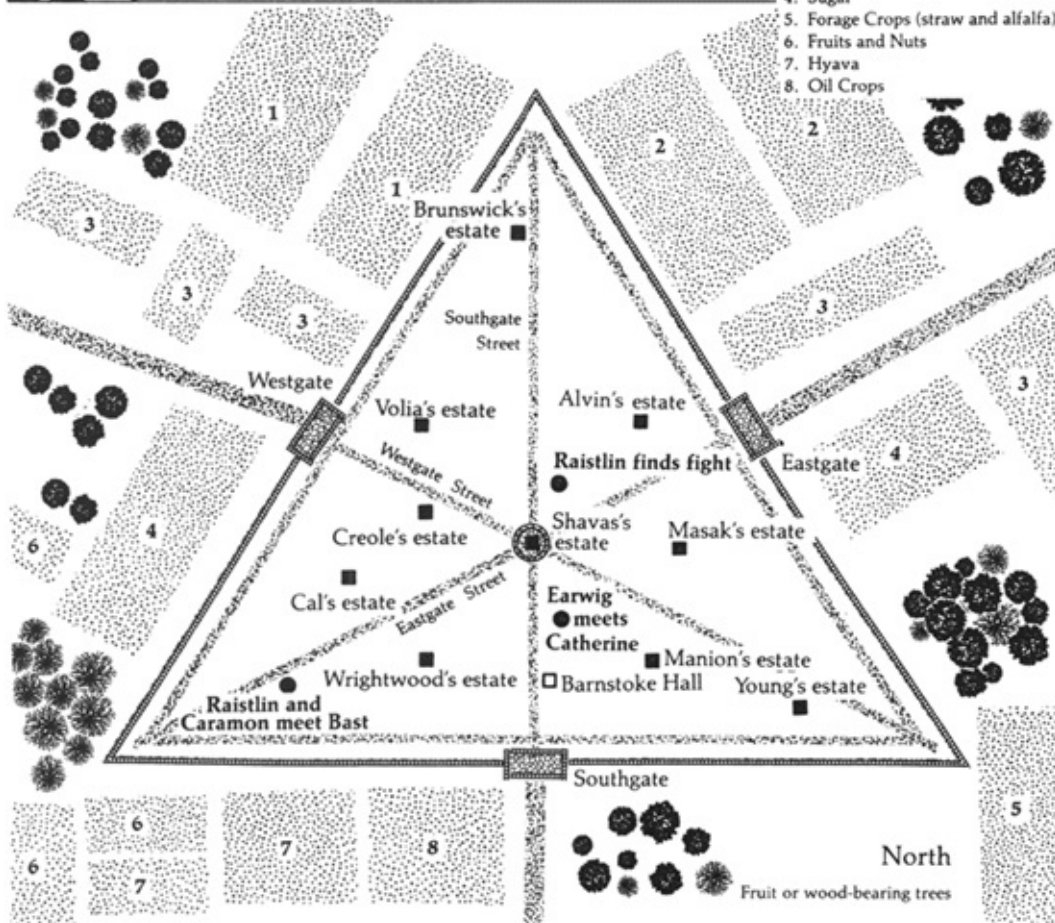
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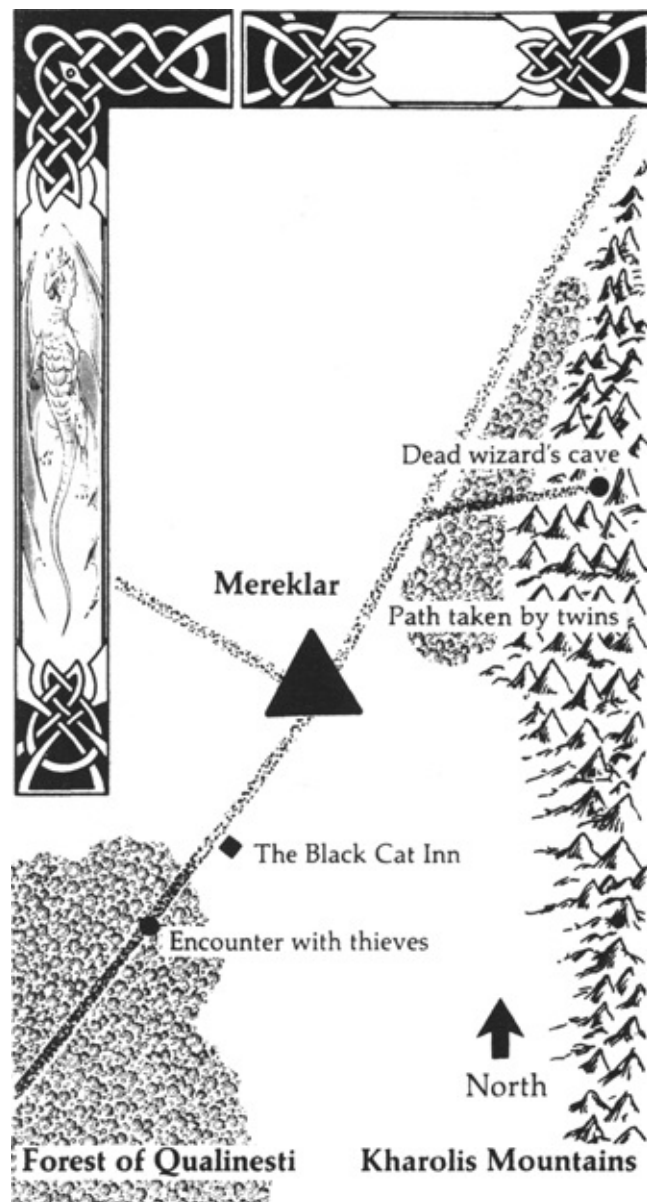




# Map of Mereklar

1. Cereal Crops
2. Fiber Crops
3. Vegetables
4. Sugar
5. Forage Crops (straw and alfalfa)
6. Fruits and Nuts
7. Hyava
8. Oil Crops





**To Bertram, Library of Palanthas**  
**From Dalamar, Tower of High Sorcery, Palanthas**

**Greetings,**

First, sir, allow me to offer my apologies for startling you and the young scribe when we encountered each other in the great library. I am so accustomed to traveling the paths of sorcery that I forget others are not used to my sudden appearances. I trust that the young scribe is, by now, fully recovered from his unfortunate tumble down the stairs.

My messenger (I hope you are not too put off by its rather ghastly appearance) holds in its “hand” the manuscript which you requested. The material of which I spoke—i.e., a collection of notations written by Raistlin Majere himself concerning his early life—cannot, I am afraid, be delivered to the library. In accordance with his secretive nature, the Shalafi had cast spells of confusion over his books. These spells would not only make it difficult for you to read the books, Bertram, but might actually cause you serious harm.

I have taken it upon myself, therefore, to rewrite the account. All information is complete and accurate to detail as far as I was able to determine from Raistlin’s notes and Caramon Majere’s memory. I searched for the kinder, Earwig Lockpicker, who was also a companion during several adventures, but I was unable to find him. (Needless to say, I did not look very hard!)

The material is divided into two parts. The first and shorter of the pieces is titled “Raistlin and the Knight of Solamnia.”<sup>1</sup> This piece is important in that it provides us with information on the kender, Earwig, and how he came to join up with the twins. The story concerns the Shalafi’s encounter with a stiff-necked knight, whose pride very nearly gets them all killed. (Considering our current good relations with the knights, you might think twice before publishing this story in Solamnia.)

The second story, which I have titled “Brothers Majere,” is interesting for a number of reasons, particularly for the account of the mysterious and fascinating personage met by the twins. As you know, there has been considerable discussion among the scholars of the land concerning this “demi-god.” Is he real, or is he merely a creature of legend and myth? I remember discussing the subject with Raistlin, and I wondered at the time at the Shalafi’s knowing smile. True to form, he never told me that he knew, firsthand, the truth about “Bast.”

That Raistlin was interested in Bast himself is best indicated by the fact that he went out of his way to collect other tales concerning the dark-skinned “thief.” These can be forwarded to you when I have time to break the spells guarding them.

Next, about your request for information regarding the chronological order

of the stories in your collection, I offer you the following for your records. (The information is based both on my notes and on discussions with Caramon Majere.)

After the separation of the Companions at the Inn of the Last Home, Raistlin and Caramon left immediately on their journey to the Tower of High Sorcery. Raistlin took the test, with results that have now become legend.<sup>2</sup>

The twins then wandered in the magical Wayreth Forest for perhaps as long as a month before being allowed to leave. It is during this period of time that popular myth would have us believe Raistlin encountered the strange woman who would, unbeknownst to the Shalafi, bear him a child.<sup>3</sup> (By the way, in regard to this rumor, I can give you no information. The stories about this liaison did not begin to circulate until several years *after* Raistlin's death. I find nothing in his notes pertaining to such a liaison.)

Upon escaping Wayreth Forest, the twins returned to Solace, where Raistlin spent several months seeking a cure for his malady. He studied and became expert in the sciences of alchemy and herbal lore and gained greatly in knowledge that would serve him all of his life. Unfortunately, his efforts failed to improve his health. Funds running low, the brothers were forced to leave Solace to seek their fortunes.

Caramon recalls that they intended to cross New Sea, but he is unclear as to why they were traveling to such wild and dangerous lands. Perhaps he himself did not know. Marginal notes in one of the Shalafi's alchemy texts indicate that Raistlin may have been continuing his search for some magical life-giving elixir.

During this time, Raistlin was also hunting for a true cleric. I venture to speculate that he was not seeking one out of a high-minded search for truth, but—again—in hopes that he would find someone to heal him. (It is, however, interesting to note that, four years later, when he meets Goldmoon, he tells her that her healing powers will not help him. What happened to him in that intervening time period to teach him this harsh lesson? Perhaps, in further explorations through his texts, we will discover the answer.)

Undoubtedly it is due to his bitter disappointment in being unable to find a true cleric that he continues to ferret out and expose charlatans. One of these is the infamous fraud of Larnish (mentioned briefly in this volume). It is shortly after this encounter that Raistlin and Caramon met the Knight of Solamnia and rid Death's Keep of its curse. Continuing on their way to New Sea, they enter Mereklar.

This adventure is not the end of the brothers' journeyings. They would travel another four years before the outbreak of the War of the Lance. My teaching, as well as the work involved in being Head of the Order of Black Robes, leaves me little time to pursue my research but, hopefully, at some later date, I will be able to decipher the remainder of the Shalafi's notes. Like you, Bertram, I must admit that I find the subject fascinating.

My Shalafi was undoubtedly the most skilled and powerful wizard who has ever lived. I am pleased that you are setting down the true facts concerning

his life. It is my profound hope that future generations will remember and honor the tragedy and ultimate triumph of Raistlin Majere.

I hope that this is helpful to you. I trust the messenger will deliver it to you safely. (If he leaves any slime on the parchment, you may remove it with a solution of lemon water and vinegar.)

Please extend my greetings and respect to Astinus.

*Dalamar*

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<sup>1</sup> DRAGON<sup>®</sup> Magazine, Issue #154

<sup>2</sup> “The Test of the Twins,” short story, DRAGONLANCE<sup>®</sup> Tales Trilogy, Volume 1

<sup>3</sup> “Raistlin’s Daughter,” short story, DRAGONLANCE Tales Trilogy, Volume 3



## Prologue

*The boy looked up from his play to see two strangers, standing at the crossroads, reading the sign. Keeping his eyes on them, the boy continued what he was doing—sailing a makeshift boat in a puddle. But when the larger and stronger of the two men—a warrior, by the number of weapons he carried—ripped the parchment off the post, the boy left the boat to sink slowly into the muddy water. Hidden by a scraggly shrub, the boy crept close to listen.*

*“Hey, Raist, look at this!” yelled the big man to the other, who stood only a few feet away.*

*The boy stared at this second man with intense interest. The child had never seen a mage before, he’d only heard about them in tales. He had no trouble recognizing a wizard, however, by his outlandish robes—their color red as blood—the mysterious pouches and feathered amulets that hung from the mage’s simple rope belt, and a black wooden staff on which he leaned when he walked.*

*“Stop bellowing! I’m not deaf. What have you found?” the mage spoke irritably.*

*“It says ... here, you read it.” The warrior handed over the notice. He watched as the mage studied it. “Well, what do you think? Unless, of course, it’s outdated.”*

*“This posting is recent. The parchment’s not even weatherworn yet.”*

"Oh, yeah. So maybe this is what we're looking for, huh?"

"Fee negotiable." The mage frowned. "Still, that's better than nothing. The reward we earned for ending the curse of Death's Keep is nearly gone. We'll never be able to cross New Sea unless we have the means to hire a boat." He rolled up the parchment and thrust it in the sleeves of his robes.

The warrior sighed. "Another night sleeping on the ground?"

"We need to carefully conserve what little money we have."

"I guess. I could sure use a mug of ale, though."

"I've no doubt," said the mage sourly.

"You ever heard of this Mereklar place?" asked the warrior after a pause.

"No, have you?"

"Nope."

The mage looked from the signpost to the road it indicated. The road was muddy and overgrown with grass and weeds.

"It doesn't look as if many people have heard of it. I—"

"Whew! Here you are! Finally!"

The boy heard someone gasping in relief. Peering around the hedge, he saw a person, smaller in stature than the other two, pumping up the road as fast as his orange-stockinged legs would carry him.

A kender! recognized the boy and immediately clasped fast in his hand all his worldly possessions, which consisted of a half-eaten apple that had been lunch and a small, broken knife used for whittling boats.

Perhaps the branches of the bush rustled when the boy moved, because he was astonished and alarmed to see the mage suddenly turn his head and cast a piercing glance into the shrubs that concealed him. The boy froze. He'd never seen a face like that, not even in a dream. The mage's skin had a gold cast to it, and his eyes were golden, the pupils shaped like hourglasses.

Fortunately for the boy, the kender began to talk again.

"I thought I'd never catch up with you two! You left me behind by mistake. Why didn't you guys tell me you were taking off in the middle of the night? If I hadn't woken up and seen you two sneaking past my door, carrying your packs, I never would have known which way you were going! As it was, I had to take a moment to gather up all my things and then I had a dreadful time keeping up and once I lost you, but I have a special device that I use for finding my way and it showed me which path you took. Do you want to see it?" The kender began to fumble through innumerable pouches, spilling out various articles and objects into the street. "It's in here, somewhere...."

The warrior exchanged a long-suffering glance with the mage. "Uh, no, that's all right, Earmite—"

"Earwig!" corrected the kender indignantly.

"Uh, yeah. Sorry. Earwig Nosepicker, isn't it?"

"Lockpicker!" The kender jabbed the forked stick he was carrying into the ground for emphasis. "Lockpicker. A highly honored name among—"

"Come, Caramon," said the mage in a voice that would have chilled boiling water. "We must be going."

"Where are we headed?" asked the kender, cheerfully falling into step.

The mage came to a halt and fixed the kender with his strange eyes.

"We aren't headed anywhere."

The boy thought that anyone but a kender would have curled up and sunk into the ground under the mage's baleful stare. But the kender just gazed up at him solemnly.

"Oh, but you need me, Raistlin. You really do. Wasn't I a help to you in solving the mystery of Death's Keep? I was. You said so yourself. I gave you the clue that made you think the maiden was the reason for the curse. And Caramon never would have found his favorite dagger if it hadn't been for me —"

"I never would have lost it, if it hadn't been for you," muttered the warrior.

"And then Tasslehoff told me— You remember my cousin, Tasslehoff Burrfoot? Anyway, he told me that you always took him with you on your adventures and that he was always getting you out of trouble and since he's not around you should take me to do the same thing. And I can tell you lots of interesting stories, like the one about Dizzy Longtongue and the minotaur—"

"Enough!" The mage pulled his cowl farther down over his head, as if the cloth could shut out the monologue.

"Ah, let him come along, Raist," said the warrior. "It'd be company for us. You know we get bored, just talking to each other."

"I know I get bored just talking to you, my brother. But I do not think the situation will be alleviated by taking on a kender!"

The mage started off down the road, leaning heavily on his staff and walking slowly, as if he had just been through a recent illness.

"What did he say?" the kender asked, coming to walk beside the warrior.

"I'm not sure," said the warrior, shaking his head. "But I don't think it was a compliment."

"Oh, well," said the kender, twirling his forked stick in the air until it made a shrill, whistling sound. "I'm not much used to compliments anyway. Where did you say we were going?"

"Mereklar."

"Mereklar. Never heard of it," stated the kender happily.

The boy saw the three well on their way before he ran to an old, dilapidated inn that huddled in the woods near the crossroads. A man sat at a table, an untasted drink in his hand.

The boy went up to the man and told what he had seen.

"A warrior, a mage, and a kender. All three heading for Mereklar. And now that I've done what you wanted, where's my money?" the child demanded boldly. "You promised."

The man asked a few questions, wanting to know what color robes the mage was wearing and if the warrior appeared to be very old and battle-hardened.

"No," said the boy, considering. "He's only about the age of my big brother. Twenty or so if he's a day. But his weapons seemed well used. I don't think



you'll pick him off so easily.”

The man fished a steel piece from his pocket and tossed it on the table. Rising from his seat with unusual haste, considering he'd been sitting in the inn for three days—ever since he'd posted the sign—the man ran out into the woods and was soon lost to sight in the shadows.



## Chapter 1

*Raistlin awoke from deep slumber to the sound of pipes—a haunting, eerie sound that reminded him of a time of everlasting pain, a time of torture and torment. Propping himself up on weak elbows from his red, tattered sleeping roll, he stared into the embers of the fire.*

The dying coals only served to remind Raistlin of his ill health. How long had it been since he took the test? How much time had passed since the wizards in the Tower of High Sorcery had demanded this sacrifice in return for his magic? Months. Only months. Yet it seemed to him that he'd been suffering like this all his life.

Lying back down, Raistlin lifted his hands up in front of his face, examining the bones, veins, and sinews, barely discernible in the dimly lit grove. The firelight gave his flesh an unearthly reddish tinge, reflecting off his golden skin—the gold skin he had earned in his gambit for personal power, gold skin he had earned fighting for his life.

Smiling grimly, Raistlin clenched his hand into a fist. He'd won. He'd been victorious. He had defeated them all.

But his moment of triumph was short-lived. He began to cough uncontrollably, the spasms shaking and convulsing him like a battered puppet.

The pipes played on while Raistlin managed to catch his breath. He fumbled at his waist to find a small burlap bag filled with herbs. Holding this

over his nose and mouth, he breathed the sickly sweet scent of crushed leaves and boiled twigs. The spasms eased, and Raistlin dared let himself hope that this time he'd found a cure. He refused to believe he would be this feeble all of his life.

The herbs left a bitter taste on his lips. He stashed the pungent bag away in a purse under his cloth belt, which was a darker red than the rest of his robes from constant use and wear. He didn't look for the blood that was beginning to slowly dry on the medicine pouch. He knew it would be there.

Breathing slowly, Raistlin forced himself to relax. His eyes closed. He imagined the many and varied lines of power running through his life—the glowing, golden weave of threads of his magic, his mind, his soul. He held his life in his hands. He was the master of his own destiny.

Raistlin listened to the pipes again. They did not play the eerie, unnatural music he thought he had heard upon waking—the music of the dark elf, the music he dreamed about in his worst nightmares since his indoctrination into the higher orders of sorcery. Instead it was the shrill, lively music of an inconsiderate kender.

Throwing off the heavy blankets piled on top of him, Raistlin shivered in the cold evening air. He clutched his staff with hands eager to feel the smooth wood once again safely in their grip, and pulled himself upright.

*"Shirak,"* Raistlin said softly.

Power flowed from his spirit into the staff, mingling with the magic already housed in the black-wood symbol of the mage's victory. A soft white light beamed from the crystal clutched in a dragon's claw atop the staff.

As soon as the light flooded the grove, the music stopped abruptly. Earwig looked up in surprise to see the red-hooded figure of the magician looming over him.

"Oh, hi, Raistlin!" The kender grinned.

"Earwig," said the mage softly, "I'm trying to sleep."

"Well, of course, you are, Raistlin," answered the kender. "It's the middle of the night."

"But I can't sleep, Earwig, because of the noise."

"What noise?" The kender looked around the campsite with interest.

Raistlin reached out his gold-skinned hand and snatched the pipe from Earwig's grasp. He held it up in front of the kender's nose.

"Oh," said Earwig meekly. "That noise."

Raistlin tucked the pipes into the sleeve of his robes, turned, and started back to his bed.

"I can play you a lullaby," suggested Earwig, leaping to his feet and trotting along behind the mage. "If you give me back my pipes, that is. Or I could sing one for you—"

Raistlin turned and stared at the kender. The firelight flickered in the hourglass eyes.

"Or maybe not," said Earwig, slightly daunted.

But a kender never stayed daunted for long. "It's really boring around

here,” he added, keeping up with the mage. “I thought being on night watch would be fun, and it was for a while, because I kept expecting something to jump out of the woods and attack us since Caramon said that was why we had to keep watch, but nothing has jumped out and attacked us and it’s really getting boring.”

“*Dulak*,” Raistlin whispered, starting to cough again. The light from the globe dimmed and died. The mage sank down onto his sleeping mat, his tired legs barely supporting him.

“Here, Raistlin, let me help you,” offered Earwig, spreading out the blankets. The kender stood, gazing down at the mage hopefully. “Would you make the staff light up again, Raistlin?”

The mage hunched his thin body beneath the heavy quilt.

“Could I have my pipes back?”

Raistlin closed his eyes.

Earwig heaved a gusty sigh, his gaze going to the sleeve of the mage’s robes into which he’d seen his pipes disappear.

“Good night, Raistlin. I hope you feel better in the morning.”

The mage felt a small hand pat his arm solicitously. The kender trotted away, small feet making little noise in the dew-wet grass.

Just as Raistlin was finally drifting off to sleep, he heard, once again, the shrill sound of the pipes.

\* \* \* \* \*

Caramon awoke hours before the dawn, just in time for his watch. The companions had agreed to set two guards, Earwig taking the first watch, Caramon the second. Caramon preferred to take the last watch of the night, known as “the dead man’s watch” because it was a time when there was the greatest possibility of trouble.

“Earwig, turn in,” said Caramon, only to find his order had already been obeyed.

The kender lay fast asleep, a set of pipes clutched tightly in his hand.

Caramon shook his head. What could you expect from a kender? By nature, kender were not afraid of anything, living or dead. It was extremely difficult, therefore, to impress upon a kender the need to set a guard on the campsite.

Not that the warrior believed they were in any danger; the lands around them were peaceful and calm. But Caramon could no more have gone to his rest without setting a watch than he could have gone for a day without eating. It was one reason—at least so he had told his brother—that they needed Earwig to accompany them on their journey.

The warrior settled himself beneath a tree. He enjoyed this time of night. He liked to see the moons and stars fade into morning’s first light. The constellations turned and wheeled and faced each other—the platinum dragon Paladine, the five-headed dragon Takhisis, between them the god Gilean, the symbol of balance. Few others on Krynn believed in these ancient gods anymore, or even remembered the names of their constellations. Caramon had