

THE CHESS QUEST SERIES



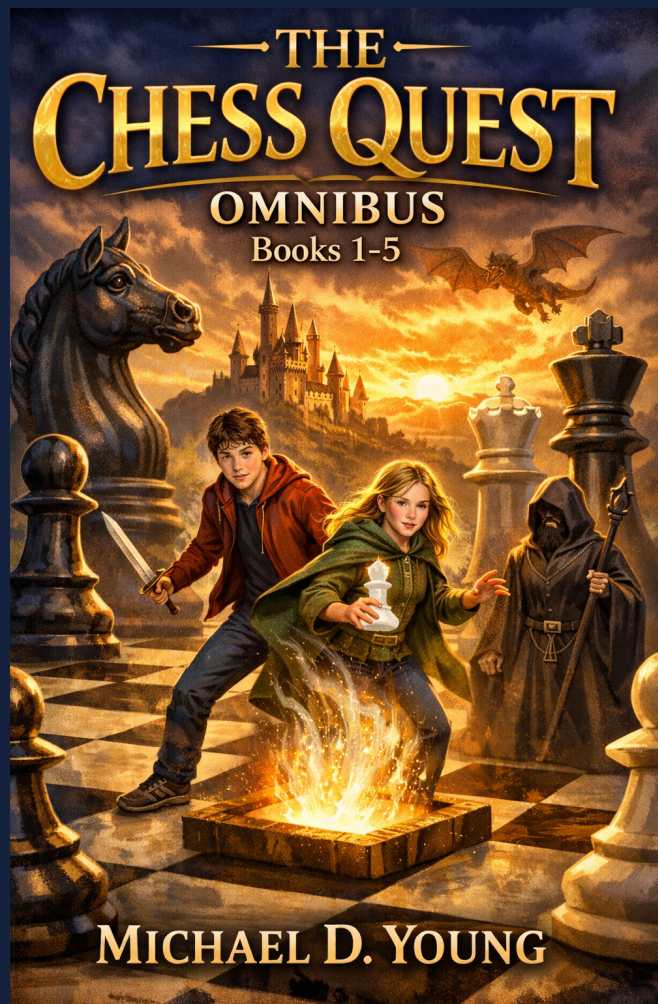
THE CHESS QUEST RECRUIT'S HANDBOOK

A reader field guide to Books 1-5

*Know the board. Choose your path.
Make every move matter.*

MICHAEL D. YOUNG

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Welcome, Recruit!

Dear Recruit,

You are about to enter a hidden conflict that reaches from ordinary school halls to ancient strongholds, impossible mazes, and worlds beyond the familiar. In *The Chess Quest*, a pawn is not powerless - it is a beginning.

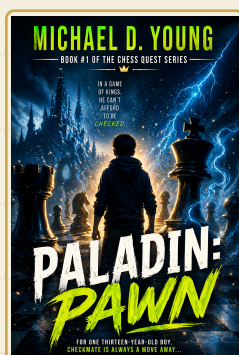
Rich Witz starts as an imaginative eighth grader who must prove courage, wisdom, compassion, and sacrifice in everyday life before the board grows larger around him. As the series continues, ranks change, family secrets deepen, the Corridor of Keys opens, and the struggle becomes much bigger than a single duel.

Use this handbook to learn the orders, ranks, people, places, dangers, and values that shape the series. Then take the Recruit Exam and claim your certificate.

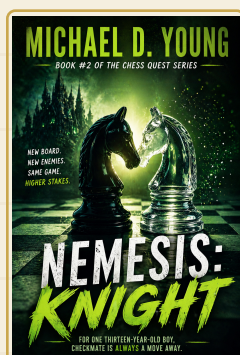
Study well. Choose carefully. The next move is yours.



YOUR READING ROAD



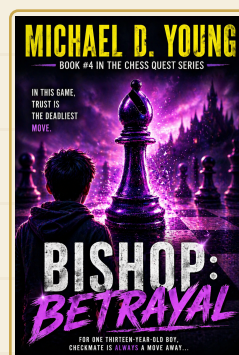
BOOK 1



BOOK 2



BOOK 3



BOOK 4



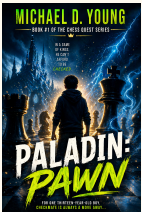
BOOK 5

Spoiler-light note: This companion introduces concepts from across the five-book series but avoids major endgame revelations.

Know the Orders

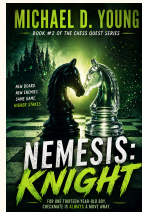
PALADINS / WHITE KNIGHTS

Champions aligned with the light. A white pawn can mark the beginning of a paladin path. Quests test character and awaken abilities. The first book centers on proving courage, wisdom, compassion, and sacrifice.



NEMESSES / DARK KNIGHTS

The opposing side has its own ranks, pieces, quests, and powers. A nemesis is not simply a random villain: each champion may face a dark counterpart whose choices exploit weakness, pride, anger, or fear.



KNIGHTS TEMPER

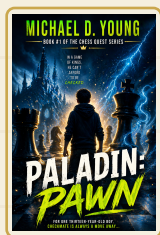
A third branch comes from Temperance. These gray-armored knights do not take the paladin or nemesis side. They act as referees, record-keepers, and guardians of rules around places such as the Corridor of Keys.

The Board Is Bigger Than Two Colors

Later books complicate a simple light-versus-dark struggle. The Gray Knight, changing rules, shifting loyalties, and the need for balance force characters to ask whether victory alone is enough.

Recruit reminder: Pay attention to motive as much as action. Throughout the series, the same move can look heroic, selfish, compassionate, reckless, or necessary depending on why it is made.

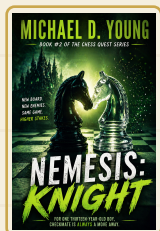
Guide to the Chess-Piece Roles



1

PAWN

The beginning rank. In *Paladin: Pawn*, Rich must prove courage, wisdom, compassion, and sacrifice. In the Sir George story, completed quests awaken gifts in the pawn.



2

KNIGHT

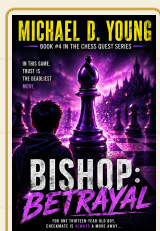
The next major rank after pawn. Sir George rides to Camelot to exchange his pawn for a knight, and Rich later becomes a full-fledged knight.



3

ROOK

A path of greater strength. Rich is told a rook should be a fortress. His rook quests center on patience, virtue, and discipline.



4

BISHOP

A path of greater wisdom. Bishops are described as healers and illusionists who can overcome enemies through wisdom and sleight of hand.



5

SOVEREIGN

The king-and-queen level of leadership. By Book Five, Rich is King Heinrich Witz, and the conflict expands to Sovereigns and the fate of entire realms.

PATH NOTE

After knight, rook and bishop are alternative specializations; the story explicitly notes that it is possible to learn both paths eventually.

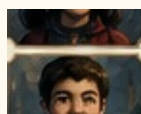
Character Profiles

RICH / HEINRICH WITZ



An imaginative eighth grader who begins as a white-pawn paladin. His vivid inner world is both a strength and a weakness. Across the series he grows from recruit to leader.

AARON WITZ



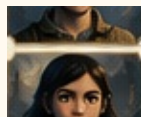
Rich's centuries-old seventh great-uncle, restored to a youthful physical form. He serves as guide, mentor, comic relief, and loyal companion.

ANGELA ALFREDSON



A kind classmate who understands embarrassment and bullying. Her friendship gives Rich repeated chances to practice honesty and reliability.

NADIA PETRENKO



A blunt, courageous classmate whose relationship with Rich changes dramatically. Later books pull her directly into the knightly conflict.

MINERVA WITZ

Rich's grandmother and a leader among the paladins. Her choices connect Rich to a much older family struggle and the responsibilities of the order.

ARLENEN

A stern dream-guide who appears when Rich is ready to listen. He explains ancient stakes and refuses to soften difficult truths.

Also watch: Mallory Morray, Rich's recurring nemesis counterpart; the Gray Knight, whose rise changes the Corridor; and the powerful Nemes family, whose secrets shape the conflict.

Important Locations

THE MODERN WORLD



Rich's junior high, home life, St. Louis, and ordinary places matter because the earliest quests are proved through everyday choices.

PALADIN STRONGHOLDS / SANCTUARY

Hidden places where councils meet, portals open, training occurs, and the paladin family prepares for larger missions.



THE CORRIDOR OF KEYS



A floating, patchwork building and maze of doors. Its rooms can follow different rules, limit powers, and force travelers to solve puzzles with what is available.

FINLAND TRAINING CAVES

In *Bishop: Betrayal*, Rich and other knights travel to a secret training location in Finland as the wider conflict becomes more dangerous.



THE NEMESIS STRONGHOLD



A dark fortress and prison associated with the Nemes side. It becomes central when Rich's friends are taken and pressure mounts to choose sides.

MIDDLESPLACE & CENTERSPACE

After the Corridor is shattered, Book Five expands into strange realms beyond the old maze, including the Middlespace and Centerspace.



Creatures and Dangers

1

Gargoyle twins

Puzzle guardians in the Corridor can produce water and fire. They are a reminder that the obvious attack is rarely the whole solution.

2

Dragons

The series features dragon encounters, including a three-headed dragon and transformed or shape-shifting foes.

3

Golems

Rook: Revenge even includes a "Golf Golem" chapter - a good sign that dangerous constructs and absurdity can occupy the same board.

4

Gigantaurs

The Gray Knight commands the Gigantaurs as the Corridor changes and the rules harden.

5

Specters and gray mists

Later books bring specters, mind-altering gray mist, and environments that can erode will as effectively as any weapon.

6

Armies of stone and bone

By Book Five, the scale reaches armies of unnatural warriors and threats to entire realms.



Corridor Rule Zero: Each room may have its own rules. Powers can be weakened, altered, or made useless, forcing knights to solve the challenge in front of them rather than rely on the same trick every time.

The Recruit's Knightly Code

1

COURAGE

Move toward what is right even when fear is real.

2

WISDOM

Think before you strike. The first move is not always the best move.

3

COMPASSION

Help people because they need help, not because they have earned it.

4

SACRIFICE

Be willing to surrender comfort, pride, reward, or advantage for someone else.

5

PATIENCE

Not every door opens now. Some strength comes from waiting well.

6

DISCIPLINE

Train when there is no applause and keep your promises when no one is watching.

7

LOYALTY WITH DISCERNMENT

Stand by people, but do not confuse loyalty with following a lie.

8

BALANCE

Remember that winning by destroying everything worth saving is not victory.



This is a reader-facing code inspired by values and training emphasized across the novels; it is not presented as a verbatim in-story oath.

Recruit Qualification Exam

1. Rich begins his paladin path with which piece?

A. Rook B. Pawn C. Bishop D. King

2. Which four qualities shape Rich's first major quests?

A. Courage, wisdom, compassion, sacrifice B. Speed, luck, charm, wealth

3. Who is Aaron Witz?

A. A school principal B. Rich's centuries-old great-uncle and guide C. A nemesis scribe

4. What is the Corridor of Keys?

A. A floating maze of strange rooms B. A chess tournament C. A school hallway

5. Which branch tries to remain neutral?

A. Nemes B. Paladins C. Knights Temper

6. Which path emphasizes greater strength and becoming a fortress?

A. Bishop B. Rook C. Pawn

7. Which path emphasizes wisdom, healing, and illusion?

A. Bishop B. Rook C. Knight

8. What spreads after the Corridor is shattered?

MY SCORE: _____ / 8

7-8: Ready for ceremony 5-6: Knight in training 3-4: Promising pawn 0-2: Review and retry

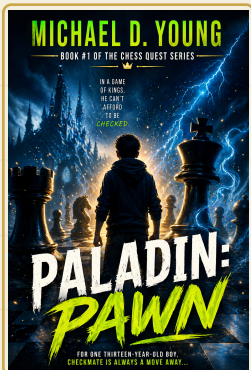
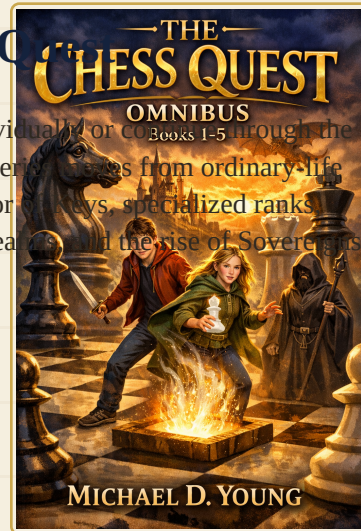
Answers and Your Next Move

Answer Key

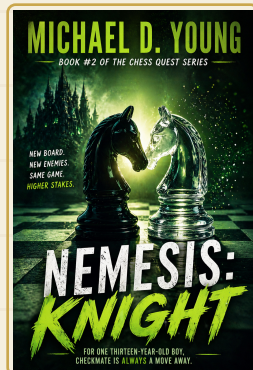
1. B - Pawn
2. A - Courage, wisdom, compassion, sacrifice
3. B - Rich's centuries-old great-uncle and guide
4. A - A floating maze of strange rooms
5. C - Knights Temper
6. B - Rook
7. A - Bishop
8. A - Gray mists

Continue the Chess Quest

Read all five novels individually or CO Books 1-5 through the complete omnibus. The series takes us from ordinary-life virtue tests to the Corridor of Keys, specialized ranks, shattered rules, strange realizations, and the rise of Sovereigns.



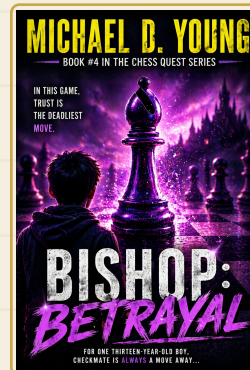
PALADIN: PAWN



NEMESIS: KNIGHT



ROOK: REVENGE



BISHOP: BETRAYAL



SOVEREIGNS: SONG

EXPLORE THE CHESS QUEST SERIES

authormichaelyoung.com/the-chess-quest-series/

THE CHESS QUEST SERIES

RECRUIT CERTIFICATE

By courage, study, and the willingness to make the next right move,

Recruit Name

has completed *The Chess Quest Recruit's Handbook* and is recognized as a

CHESS QUEST RECRUIT

prepared to seek courage, wisdom, compassion, sacrifice, patience, discipline,
loyalty, and balance - and to remember that every move matters.

RECRUIT OATH

I will think before I move, protect what matters, learn from every quest, and keep
going when the board changes.



Signature

Date



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